Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
Doctor Om Prakash
School of Humanities and Social Science
Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida
Lecture 25
Mixing and Switching Creative Outcome of Bi/Multilingual Mind

Welcome to class. Today we are going to talk about the phenomena of mixing and switching languages and how a bilingual or a multilingual speaker tends to mix from one language, items from one language with the other language. What are the reasons? Why do we do so? What is the outcome of such tendencies? And what are the social linguistic implications of these tendencies?

What are the settings in which we mix from one language into the other, or what are the context in which we do so? Is it normal, is it natural, is it regular? These are the things and these are the questions that we are going to take up in this class today. So, you are familiar with the concept of bilingualism and multilingualism.

So, bilingualism is a phenomenon where a speaker has access to two different linguistic resources. The person has the ability to use two languages with equal ease. The degree of competence and proficiency in a second language may vary because of other social linguistic and personal factors, but the fact is that the person has access to two different languages.

And what happens when you have access to two different languages, what happens when you speak when you do conversation when you are engaged in conversation? How do these two linguistic resources coordinate and mix? Is it deliberate? Is it spontaneous? Do we do it with some agenda? Does it happen on its own?

There are multiple questions that we can ask and so mixing and switching is a very natural productive and regular phenomenon for a bilingual person multilingual person. If you look at Indian linguistic ecology, where we have so many languages, and all these speech communities are in close contact with each other, their contact has survived and sustained for hundreds of years. So what is the implication, what is the result of these long contacts?

We have a lot of borrowing from one language to the other language. We have a lot of items borrowed from one language to the other language, and concepts borrowed from one language to the other language. And these borrowings are not in isolation, sometimes we have a whole package borrowed from one language, the whole concept borrowed from our

language, and all the lexical items and words associated with these concepts are also borrowed.

But we are not going to talk about borrowing from one language to the other. We are going to talk about the tendency of a bilingual speaker or a multilingual speaker who frequently mixes two languages or three languages. In literature, it is called code-mixing and code-switching. We have to understand that code mixing and code switching are natural phenomena.
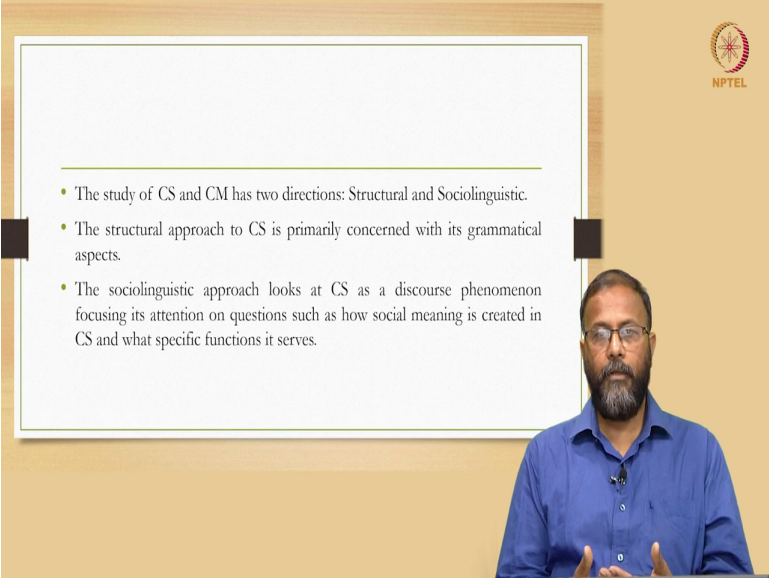
They are not deliberate and artificial. It is a very natural phenomenon and this is done for maximum communicability. The ultimate objective of language is to communicate and such mixings and switchings are done to achieve maximum communicability. That is the reason why these bilinguals or multilingual mix.

It is also beautiful to see how this mental faculty call language or access to two different languages with sometimes a single semantic system so where the compound bilingual will have two sets of structural systems but one semantic system, a coordinate bilingual may have two different semantic systems and two different structural systems.

Does not matter whether he is a compound bilingual, she is a compound bilingual or coordinate bilingual or subordinate bilingual, early bilingual, late bilingual or you have native-like competency in both languages or you have successive bilingualism concept and, does not matter the degree of your competence and proficiency.

What matters is the tendency of mixing and we call it a creative outcome. Why do we call it creative? Because the language user or the speaker has the ability to appropriately mix these two codes without interruption in meaning and that is the beautiful thing about it. So, mixing and switching may be looked at, and may be viewed as a creative outcome of a bilingual or multilingual mind. So today we are going to talk about some aspects of it.

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So, the study of code-switching and code-mixing has two directions. We can look at code-mixing and code-switching from two perspectives, one is a structural perspective and the other is a social linguistic perspective. When we look at a structural perspective, we look at the patterns of mixing how in a single sentence, items from one language is brought in and inserted. That is called insertion.

Then another pattern could be alternation. So, how a grammatical item or a lexical item is borrowed or brought in from language B and alternated in language A? The third is congruent lexicalization. So, how the grammatical element and lexical item can be placed in language A from language B and in inside the position, and how they are mixed?

Mixing happens within a sentence, so we say code mixing when we have to mix within two full stops, within a sentence, so intra-sentential level but switching refers to, again switching is also mixing but the level is higher. At a higher level that is called the discourse level where you bring in sentences from language B into language A discourse, so you are having an extended conversation.

And you frequently bring in sentences from, a full sentence from the other language. So, I have two three sentences in Hindi and then I bring in one or two sentences from English, and I continue my discourse, my conversation. So, switching happens beyond the sentence level at a higher level called discourse and mixing happens within a sentence intra-sentential level.
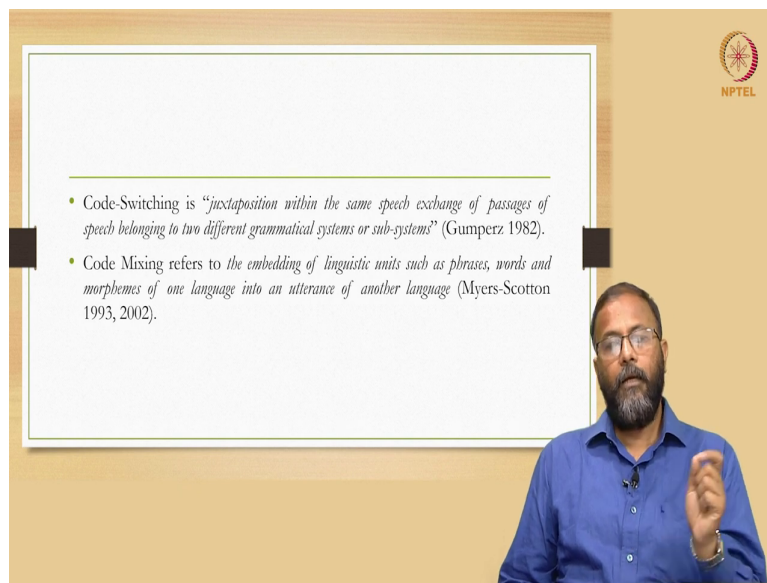
The socio-linguistic approach to such mixing and switching looks at them as a discourse phenomenon focusing its attention on questions such as how social meaning is created in code-switching events and what specific function it serves. Now there can be two theoretical positions in one scholar's belief, early research if you look at Bloomfield and other people, it is believed that you have a deficit.

So, a bilingual or a multilingual person has some deficit and the person finds no equivalent of a particular concept in language A which is the native language of the person. So, the person brings in such lexical items and linguistic units from language B and compensates for it so this whole mixing and switching happens because of a deficit in language A. So, this is the deficit hypothesis. Bloomfield was the one who pointed it out and many other scholars.

Other scholars believe that no, it is not a deficit thing. In fact, a bilingual augments linguistic resources so it is an augmentation hypothesis where a bilingual willingly and creatively brings in items from lexical items and linguistic units from language B to language A to make the communication more effective for maximum communicability. And there are certain social factors and linguistic factors which are responsible for this choice where the speaker or the user brings in items from linguistic items and lexical items from language B.

So, it is augmentation system augmentation thing it augments so so the speaker has a very, good command fairly good command and access to two linguistic resources. And given these two or three or more linguistic resources at disposal the speaker or the user of language has free will to bring in items from one language to the other. And why he or she does so? To make to achieve maximum communicability, to connect to the audience and achieve maximum communicability, which is the ultimate goal of language.
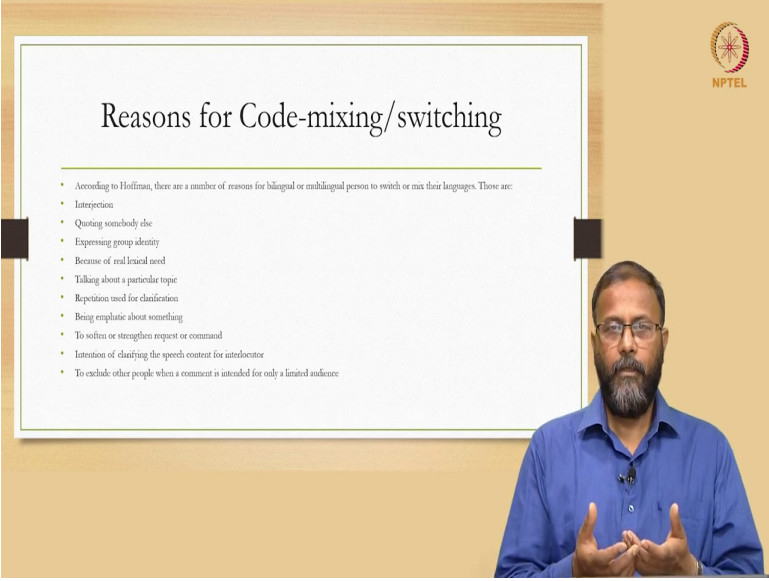
So, there are scholars, I will not list the quotations and catalog the quotations from other scholars but there are certain quotations and certain quotes we should be familiar. Certain scholars who have profound impact on such works on such phenomena. So one of them is Gumperz, he says, switching is, code-switching is juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passage of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems.

So, they are simply units juxtaposed in a structure, the units belong to two different systems but the chunk of the linguistic chunk is one in that we have two units brought from two different languages, juxtaposed, and a whole sentence or a discourse is created. If you look at Myers-Scotton 1993, 2002 code mixing refers to the embedding of linguistic units such as phrases, words, and morphemes of one language into the utterance of another language like "file ko" file is an English word, ko case marker of Hindi, chapattis, *chappati* is Hindi word and the plural marker "s" from English, so embedding.

Now the question is why do we mix? The question is why does mixing or switching happen in natural languages? Why a bilingual or a multilingual person has this tendency of mixing? Hofmann lists a number of reasons for bilingual or multilingual persons to switch or mix their languages and what are these? Number one, interjection, number two, quoting somebody else, number three expressing group identity.

Number four because of a real lexical need. Next, talking about a particular topic, repetition is used for clarification, being emphatic about something, to soften or strengthen the request or command. The intention of clarifying this speech content for the interlocutor and to exclude other people when a comment is intended for only a limited audience and there can be many reasons. What do they mean?

So, first and foremost of course, if I am quoting from some source, I tend to quote originally from the source without translating it into the language of my conversation, so of course, quotations are the reasons, so when you quote, we have a tendency of quoting from an original source in an original sentence without changing or translating it. So, this is one reason.

Sometimes identity is a big issue when you want to identify or express your solidarity with the audience you try to bring in expressions and linguistic units from the languages of the audience. In India, the mixing of Indian languages with English is very rampant and prolific.

Tamil-English, Kannada-English, Marathi-English, Hindi-English, Punjabi-English, so such hybridity is very common and mixing is very common.

An average educated Indian who has some exposure to English, he may not be or she may not be excellent in English, but some exposure to English, peer pressure, or issues of identity also forces one to mix English words just to reflect and express that you are elite and educated because English is considered as a language of social upward mobility.

So that elitist attitude or the urge to be considered as educated we have this tendency of bringing in a lot of English words in any language that you speak no matter whether you are speaking Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Bangla, whatever you are speaking, does not matter, English word. So, Hindi and English mixing, Tamil and English mixing, and Punjabi and English mixing is very common and very natural.

It also underlines peer pressure and identity, so you want to show solidarity sometimes to express that you are educated, we do it. Sometimes it is the theme or the topic that determines when and how we mix or switch. For example, let us say taboo words which are not expressed and shared in public but we feel comfortable talking about taboo themes in English.

So even if I am a Tamil speaker, I will deliberately bring in the English equivalent of that taboo word to avoid embarrassment or to shed my innovation and to reach out to the audience, so I bring in that. Sometimes if I am talking about some serious intellectual topics, where my training education has been in English and I am speaking in Tamil or Telugu or Hindi, I have a normal and natural flair for expressing and talking about those topics in English, so I do that.

Sometimes it is also a very exclusive idea where if you want others not to understand what you are saying and you intend only a few people to understand or a limited audience to understand what you are saying, we do it deliberately, certain portions or certain words that you want only a limited audience to understand and exclude the rest we switch to another language or specifically English in India.

Sometimes, in fact, it emphasizes placing our major thrust and emphasis on what we are saying we repeat and the repetition happens in English. For example, close the door, *Darwaza band karo,* or the same thing is said twice but not in the same code. So, it also does not sound

repeated, and at the same time it underlines the emphasis, so to place emphasis on what you are saying sometimes we say the same thing twice, once in your language A and once in language B, so repetition.

So, quoting somebody repeating what you want to say but you do not want to see obviously repeat it so you change the code and you use code B to repeat translate and repeat the same thing that you already said in language A, we do that. Sometimes it may be possible that you do not find an equivalent concept or word in the language you are speaking, so you have to bring it in from the other language.
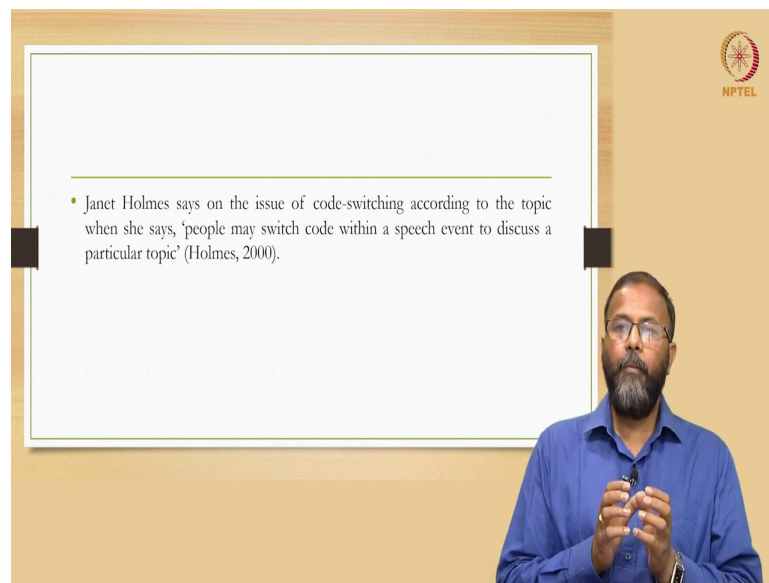
You may not find an equivalent word and you bring it in from another language, so you compensate for that deficit. So, it is a compensatory mechanism where if you lack some concepts and words in language A, you compensate them or bring them in from language B. May be possible there are certain topics certain themes you are familiar with and comfortable talking about in language B.

So even if you are talking in language A, you bring in, expressions and words and utterances and sentences from language B to emphasize and express yourself in a better way. Sometimes, for clarifications, you may find that what you said is not clear to some of your audiences then what you do is, you try to compensate for that with other code with the belief that the repetition and the repeated representation of what you already said will make them understand. So, for clarification also we do it.

And sometimes, out of some politeness, or sometimes out of conversational needs, we feel like bringing in expressions from language B. There are multiple reasons, identity issues, for that matter. If you look at Bollywood, let us take some examples of Bollywood songs. These days and not only Bollywood songs, look at all the entire songs, all kinds of songs, folk songs also I find a lot of English words mixed. And they are not random. they are not non-volitional; they are volitional and they have a pattern. Look at for example conversations and sentences related to technology these days for example download, upload, and save. Look at the Hindi compound *"download karna, upload karna, save karna, surf karna, search karna."* These are all compound verbs where the lexical element or the content comes from an English word and *"karna"* which is a Hindi word and they together make a compound verb. It is a very productive phenomenon.
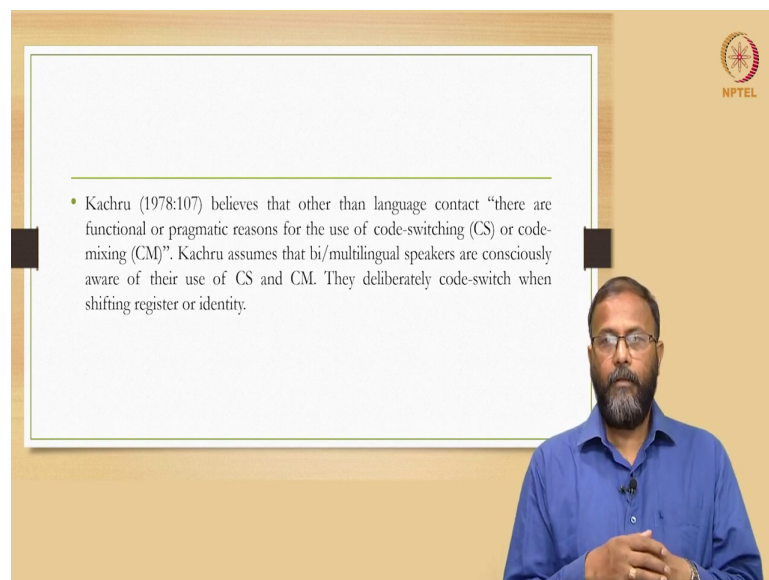
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So now why people do so, we have already described in detail. Sometimes Janet Holmes says on the issue of code-switching, people may switch codes within a speech event to discuss a particular topic.

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Similarly, Kachiru believes that other than language contact there are functional or pragmatic regions for the use of code-switching or code-mixing. He assumes that bilingual or multilingual speakers are consciously aware of their use of CM and CS. They deliberately code-switch when shifting, when they want to shift their register and identity.

So, there are multiple factors, but the underlying point is that mixing or switching is a beautiful phenomenon of a bilingual mind that represents the accessibility and proficiency of a person or language user who can draw comfortably and creatively from two distinct linguistic sources. This happens with a pattern, and this happens spontaneously.

There are other motivating factors for why they happen. Possibly, for expressing solidarity and your identity you want to mix or you want to switch from one language to the other. Sometimes if you want to exclude a set of audience from things that you do not want them to know so it is like a secret code where you switch and mix to keep them excluded from your conversation.

Sometimes it can be the non-availability of the concepts and the topics on which you are talking and you compensate for it by bringing in linguistic and lexical items from other languages. Sometimes it is a direct quote, so you are quoting a source where you do not want to translate and change the structure, so you quote verbatim as it is in the other language.

At times when you feel that you need to emphasize and say something emphatically, you tend to get an equivalent in other languages, so you say the same thing and then you repeat. For repetitions and placing emphasis on that, we deliberately do so. There are multiple factors right, but what we have to remember is this is not impurity because we do have this tendency of labeling it as an impurity, and in the background of your mind it is believed that because the person lacks an equivalent word or a phrase or a clause or a concept in language A he or she tries to compensate it with language B.

That is not the case it is an augmentation of two resources where the speaker has equal accessibility and brings in items from other languages in language 1 from language 2 to make sure that he or she achieves the communication goals. This phenomenon is very natural, and normal and it does not amount to impurity, nothing is called pure language. If you look at language, human language is always in flux it is a dynamic concept it is fluid. So, you do not know where the language boundary ends.

For example, if you look at the history of borrowing or if you do a detailed analysis of let us say lexical items in a language you happen to find that many of them are borrowed from one language to the other, and after borrowing they have sustained, assimilated, and neutralized. "File" for that matter, in Hindi, is a word, I do not know I have not come across anyone so far in my life that has used any Hindi equivalent of "file".

We do not usually use it and if deliberately you use documents, now the document is "*dastawej*" again you say that this is a Hindi word, but actually, this is not a Hindi word. Again, in Hindi it is not a Hindi word, so it is borrowed from Persian-Arabic background. There are many words in Hindi or many words in Tamil, many words in Marathi, and many words in Punjabi that mean take any language, we have a huge list of borrowed words, borrowed concepts, and borrowed items.

So, but when they are established, stabilized, and neutralized and used as the word from the same language, I mean even the native speakers do not realize that they are neutralized and accepted to such an extent that you do not even realize. Now "road" for that matter, "building" for that matter, "park" for that matter, "garden" for that matter, look at all these words.

We hardly find people using the actual Hindi equivalent of these words so these words are borrowed and now neutralized high-frequency words and in an unmarked speech event, we see these words frequently occurring without any conscious effort because they come to you so naturally.

So that is borrowing, but code-mixing code-switching is an individual bilingual multilingual speech event where the speaker or the user deliberately uses mixes and brings in linguistic items and sources from one language to the other for various reasons, various social reasons, various linguistic reasons and this is a very natural productive and regular phenomenon.

So, with this, we finish the idea and we will request all of you to look at how speech events are happening around you. Does not matter what is your mother tongue but you will see this tendency of mixing very common, specifically if you are looking at your mother tongue and English mixing it is still very common in nature and normal.

What is the pattern? How do they mix? What are the contexts in which they mix? What the idea behind mixing is? How it impacts you? How it influences you? What kind of, influence it has on you as a listener or as a participant in the communication? You can see it yourself. So, thank you very much and we will continue discussing such issues in other classes. Thank you.