Code Switching and Code Blending: Effects of the Morphological Blending of Punjabi and English

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Abstract
There is a famous proverb- "Rolling stone gathers no moss". It has been witnessed that the Punjabi speakers who acquire English as a second language, due to certain reasons, have become like these rolling stones. This paper attempts to find out the major reasons behind the use of English words in Punjabi with the latter's accent. Thus it gives birth to new English which is highly affected by Punjabi language and its variations. Code switching in this case also gives birth to many non-existing words, derivatives, foregrounding, and distortions. Being an English trainer, a sample of 50 students was taken for the same. These words are used by the Punjabi speakers on such a way that it becomes difficult to determine whether it is English or a Punjabi word. It is one step towards saving the Punjabi language from becoming extinct.

Keywords: Code switching, derivatives, distortions, foregrounding, English words, accent, western influence.

The terms 'Code-Switching' (CS) and 'Code Mixing' (CM) are generally used interchangeably. But there is a difference between the two. The term CM refers to the process in which words, phrases or even sentences of two or more codes (languages) are mixed to give more lucidity to the connotation. Whereas, CS refers to the process in which the speaker switches between the languages using one out of the two according to the situation or requirement. Essien defines code-switching as "the process by which the speaker or the initiator of speech, changes or switches from one language or code to another, depending on the situation, audience, subject matter etc." (271). He also defines CS as "a language phenomenon in which two codes or languages are used for the same message or communication" (272). Mercy Ugot in her paper 'Language Choice, Code-Switching and Code Mixing in Biase said, "Code mixing is usually the infusion of single words or items from the donor language into the L1 construction. Code-switching is the lifting of phrasal, clausal or sentential structures." "Code-mixing involves the deliberate mixing of two languages without an associated topic change. It is primarily used as a solidarity marker. It is not something brought about by laziness or ignorance as such, rather it requires the conversant to have a good knowledge of the grammar of the two languages and to be well aware of societal norms." (Offiong and Okon) This paper is not concerned with how people use the two terms, but why do they do it and what are the reasons for the distortion of the spoken words as a result of CS and CM .

The Punjabi language is a language of strong stress. Every word spoken in Punjabi is more stressed than is in the native language. When an English word is spoken in Punjabi accent, the vowel sound is elongated. For instance, 'File', in English, is pronounced as /fail/. But when it comes out from the mouth of a Punjabi speaker, it is pronounced something like /fæl/. This is very intriguing.

A sample of 50 random people was taken from Jalandhar district of Punjab, where, people who belong to typical Punjabi family and who are not much educated, was taken to see how do they amalgamate English words in their speech. A questionnaire with 27 such English words written on it was given to them and they were asked to pronounce them. It was observed that there is much distortion of English words on both vowel and consonant levels.

Distortion of Vowel sounds:		
Word	Actual Pronunciation	Punjabi Pronunciation
Asthma	/æsmə/	/ʌsθəma:/
February	/februəri/	/fʌrvʌri:/
April	/eɪprəl/	/ʌpræl/
Announcement	/əˈnaʊns.mənt/	/nɔ:smʌnt/
Switch	/ swɪtʃ/	/ swʌtʃ/
Mobile	/məʊbaɪl/	/məbæl/
Attaché	/əˈtæʃeɪ/	/tætʃɪ:/
Speaker	/ spi:kə(r)/	/ səpikər/
Hockey	/ ˈhɒki/	/ ha:ki/
Cricket	/ krɪkɪt/	/ kirkʌt/
Film	/fi(l)m/	/filʌm/
Pipe	/paip/	/pæp/
Dinning	/dainiŋ/	/dæniŋ/
Pencil	/pensil/	/pencʌl/
Tyre	/ ˈtaɪə(r)/	/tær/
Pants	/ pænts/	/pent/
Time	/ taɪm/	/tæm/
Laboratory	/ ləˈbɒrətri/	/ləbɒtri/
Canada	/ˈkænədə/	/kəneida:/
America	/əˈmerɪkə/	/ əmrika:/

In the above table, we can observe that usually, a Punjabi speaker replaces the /ai/ sound with /æ/ sound. They omit certain sounds completely like /e/ sound in America. In certain cases, they elongate the last vowel sound. Interestingly, they tend to replace the diphthongs, like in 'dinning' they replace the diphthong /ai/ with a strong vowel sound /æ/.

Distortion of Consonant sounds:		
Zero	/ˈzɪərəʊ/	/jiːrɒ/
Computer	/kəmˈpjuːtə(r)/	/kəmˈpuːtər/
Bulb	/bʌlb/	/ bʌlləv/
World	/wɜːld/	/bʌld/
Rubber	/ˈrʌbə(r)/	/ˈrʌbʌˈr/

In case of consonant sounds, it is observed that a Punjabi speaker finds it really difficult to pronounce two consonant sounds together. For instance, while pronouncing 'bulb', they put one more vowel sound in between to say the last consonant and that too stressing /l/ sound strongly, changing the pronunciation of the word completely. In certain words like 'February', the second consonant sound /b/ is totally omitted.

Why do Punjabi speakers do switching of languages and why do they actually mix two or more languages? Well, there are several reasons. First is the status of the English language. English is a global language used worldwide and it is a saying that the one, who can't speak English, can't do anything. People try to incorporate as many English words as they can, in order to match the stature of English speakers. The second reason is peer influence. When we see people around us using such a melange of languages, we also gravitate towards it and tend to so, again in order to match up with the social status of our peers. The third reason is the type of occupation that people are in. English is an official language in India. When people are not in any official work, they tend to speak Hindi or Punjabi using many English words in between to make their speech perspicuous to a person of different linguistic background. Last but not least; the fourth reason is the tipsiness of Canada on the people of Punjab. One person from every third family in Punjab has gone to Canada or is dreaming to go there. Parents of a Punjabi family, even if uneducated or less educated, tend to use English with their children at home to create an aura of a modern and educated family.

Here, one very indispensable question arises. Do the people using these words with this Punjabi accent actually know that they are using English? The sample that was selected for this study was of the people between the age-groups 30-60 and most of them were either 10th or 12th pass. They were people who said we do not know how to speak English. After this study, the results were startling. People were unaware of the actuality that the words they use so habitually are not Punjabi. This unintentional use of these words is the consequence of many factors which came into the limelight after this study.

But before going on to the factors that lead to the contortions, it becomes requisite to mention that English has delved so much in the Punjabi language that it is difficult to find a cognate word for the same in Punjabi. Punjabi speakers use English words as if these words are of Punjabi itself.

The first and foremost reason for this contortion during Code Switching and Code Mixing is 'Basic Education'. The English language has four pillars- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). For efficacious learning, they must be taught in the same sequence. How can we expect a child to run if he has not even learned how to stand on his feet properly? A TV host, Larry King, once said, "I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening." Learning, as he rightly said, is only possible if the person listens first. In Indian schools, Listening is not at all

focused. According to the current scenario of the Indian Education system, the chronology that is followed is RWSL, which leads to unwanted results. Listening is the base of a fluently spoken language.

The second reason is the Impact of the Punjabi language. As till now, it is lucid that Punjabi is a strong stress language. Whenever a Punjabi speaker speaks words of a weak stressed language like English, in most of the cases, the strong stress overpowers the weak stress. Mother Tongue Influence (MTI) is the term for it. When the English words like Canada, Rubber etc. are spoken by a Punjabi speaker, he will stress the consonants sounds more. He will enunciate them as / kə'neida:/ and /ˈrʌbʌˈr/ respectively, focusing the /n/ sound in Canada and last /r/ sound in Rubber. MTI plays a crucial role in molding the way a language is spoken. The third reason can be traced back to school time. The teachers, when asked the students to read the written English, might not have probably corrected the wrong pronunciation of the students. During the school education here in Punjab, students are asked to read the chapter in front of the class. The purpose was to increase their reading speed without paying attention to the words that are spoken and the way they are spoken. This also plays a vital role in the distortion of the English words in Punjabi speech. The fourth reason is the peer's speech sway. We tend to speak the word as we hear people around us speaking the words. The people, here in Punjab, have Punjabi speakers around them, who speak English in the same way. There is no one to accurate the pronunciation of wrongly enounced words.

The fifth reason is the abstract relationship between the spelling and the pronunciation of the English language. For instance, 'Colonel' which should actually be pronounced as /ˈkɜ:nəł/ but according to the spelling, the pronunciation would be very different. And a non-native speaker enounces a word according to the spelling. Similarly, the spelling of the word 'Queue' suggests to a non-native speaker something else but is actually pronounced as /kju:/. Sixth reason can be the inconsistency of vowel as well as consonant sounds in the English language. For instance, when the words 'Monkey' and 'Donkey' are spoken, the second letter 'o' is pronounced differently. In the first word, it is pronounced as /ʌ/ while, in the second one, it is pronounced as /ɒ/. Similarly, when the word 'plane' is pronounced, the letter 'a' is articulated as a diphthong /ei/ whereas when 'fat' is pronounced, the letter 'a' is pronounced as /æ/ instead of /ei/. Similarly, the sound of 'u' in the words 'Put' and 'But' is completely different. Wherein, the vowel sound in the former one is /u/ but in the latter one, it is /ʌ/. And in the word 'third', 'th' is pronounced as /θ/, whereas in the word 'there', 'th' is pronounced as /ð/. A Punjabi speaker, when reads such words, get confused that how the words should be pronounced. In the same way, the sound of 'Ch' in the words Chemistry and Chapter is different. As in Chemistry, it is /k/ whereas in Chapter, it is /tʃ/. The problem lies in the non-scientific nature of English language.

I would like to conclude the paper with a few recommendations that could be beneficial for effective spoken English by a Punjabi speaker. Firstly, the teachers should pay more attention to the pronunciation at the school level and correct the mispronounced word then and there. Secondly, in order to make people efficient speakers, English should be taught in LSRW order, focusing Listening skills more as it is the first step to reach the heights of proficiency in speaking every language. Thirdly, there should be Basic English classes for the adults also, wherein they can learn the correct elocution of commonly used English words. Fourthly, those sounds should be brought in practice which are not found in Punjabi language but are used necessarily in English language. Last but not least; teachers should use certain methods to reduce the Mother Tongue Influence. If the MTI is reduced, half of the problem of mispronunciation will be overcome.

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