Relexicalization:
A Study of Cultural Lexicon of Kashmiri

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Abstract

The process of language change is quite evident in the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri in the form of processes like semantic shifts and relexicalization. Semantic shift occurs as a word moves from one set of circumstances to another, resulting in an extension or narrowing of the range of meanings. There are a number of examples of this process in the cultural lexicon of the Kashmiri. The process of relexicalization (or simply renaming) highlights the importance of the influences of education, fashion and developments as a result of information technology. This process is very well illustrated in the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri.

Key words: language-change, culture, lexicon, relexicalization, kinship

Introduction

According to Naylor (1996:37), "Change is a necessary part of culture whereby groupings and individuals adjust or alter their beliefs, behaviors, and material and socio-cultural productions. If humans and their cultures are to survive, they must adjust to the constantly changing environments." Change is a word that depicts and denotes, among many other things, development, growth, and expansion. As a matter of fact, it is change that, in a way, keeps on to the way leading to continued existence. The phenomenon of language change has probably gained more public notice and criticism than any other linguistic issue.

David Crystal (2003:256,257), while defining language change, writes, "In Historical linguistics, a general term referring to change within a language over a period, seen as a universal and unstoppable process. The phenomenon was first systematically investigated by comparative philologists at the end of eighteenth century, and in the twentieth century by historical linguists and sociolinguists. All aspects of language are involved, though most attention has been paid to phonology and lexis, where change is most noticeable and frequent."

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It is an attested fact, nowadays, that all languages are continually changing. For instance, at any given moment the English language, for example, has a huge variety within itself, and this variety is known as synchronic variation. From these different forms comes the effect on language over time that is known as diachronic change. So, the tendency for languages to this process of change seems somewhat unavoidable and inevitable, but in most of the cases unobservable, and marks its imprint over a period of time.

Causes of LanguageChange

Languages are constantly changing and the causes are many and varied. In this regard, Campbell and Mixco (2007:60) point out that important factors in "the explanation of language change is the identification of causal factors, both those that always bring about change and those that create circumstances known to facilitate change but in which, even when the factors are present, the change does not always take place." Generally, linguists talk about two general ways in which language change takes place: "External change" and "Internal change".

Language change occurs in accordance with both the external and internal causal factors. The external causal factors, according to Campbell and Mixco(*Ibid*,60) " lie outside the structure of language itself and outside the human organism; they include such things as expressive uses of language, positive and negative social evaluations (prestige, stigma), the effects of literacy, prescriptive grammar, educational policies, political decree, language planning, language contact and so on."

According to Campbell and Mixco (*Ibid*,60), "Internal causal factors rely on the limitations and resources of human speech production and perception, physical explanations of change stemming from the physiology of human speech organs and cognitive explanations involving the perception, processing or learning of language. These internal factors are largely responsible for the natural, regular, universal aspects of language and language change." Thus, the kinds of changes that result due to the way speakers of a language steadily alter and change their language over time are the internal causes of language change.

Thus, language change can be defined as the process of modification and alteration of features at different levels like phonetic, morphological, syntactic and semantic over a period of time. The present paper deals with the change at the lexical level paving the way to the process of relexicalization.

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Relexicalization

The term *relexicalization* as coined and defined by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday is a process in which there is substitution of invented, unofficial words in certain areas of vocabulary in languages. It is defined as the process of systematic alteration of words, and the creation of new words, which are lexically opaque (their meaning is obscured). In such a process, new words are used for the older ones

The use of new words and concepts in place of the old words and concepts is what is known as relexicalization. It can also be taken as the process of renaming. There are a number of factors that attribute to this process like

    i)   Convenience

    ii)   Ease in lifestyle

    iii)   Acceptance, and

    iv)   Need, etc.

All these factors are interconnected in one way or the other and pave way to this process of relexicalization.

Relexicalization is the process which signifies the process of language change. There is a large list in the Kashmiri cultural lexicon consisting of new words and concepts that are used in place of the old ones. Not only this, there is a large number of additions or new entries to the repertoire of Kashmiri cultural lexicon.

Relexicalization is an important process in the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri to meet the challenges and demands of the contemporary times. The renamed (or the relexicalized) terms make it possible to ease the way leading towards successful communication which is acceptable to the majority of people by avoiding obsolete terms and deficiencies. It is the need because of the strong influences of education, fashion and the revolution brought about by the developments in the field of information technology and the processes of modernization, globalization, etc. There is, also, the presence of social pressure to accept these terms and make them part and parcel in the everyday communication. For example, the uses of the terms like sir, madam, and bread etc in place of '*masterji*', '*madamji*' and '*dabaltsot*', etc.

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Here, the process of relexicalization in cultural lexicon of Kashmiri is studied with reference to the categories as mentioned below:

1. Kinship terminology
2. Modes of greetings
3. Food

1. Kinship Terminology

Kinship terminology refers to those words and terms that are used in a specific culture to describe a specific system of familial relationships. All human languages have a kinship term system, which is clearly highlighted in address system of a language. Without exception, all kinship term systems make use of such factors as sex, age, generation, blood and marriage in their society.

Kinship terminologies distinguish between relatives by blood and marriage. This distinction has been labelled as consanguine (for relatives by blood) and affinal (for relatives by marriage).

CONSANGUINE	AFFINAL
Father(F)	Husband(H)
Mother(M)	Wife(W)
Sister(Z)	Husband's brother(HB)
Son(S)	Son's wife(SW)
Daughter(D)	Sister's husband(ZH)
Brother(B)	Daughter's husband(DH)
Brother, elder(EB)	Wife's sister(WS)
Brother, younger(YB)	Wife's brother(WB)
Father's father(GP)	Husband's mother(HM)
Mother's mother(GP)	Husband's father(HM)
Son's son (GC)	Wife's father(WF)

The study of kinship terms is an interesting field of study in Kashmiri. Here again the terms are distinguished into relatives by blood (i.e., consanguine) and relatives by marriage (i.e. affinal). Kinship terms in Kashmiri distinguish between sexes, e.g., the difference between a brother and a sister, and between generations, e.g., the difference between a child and a parent.

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Some of the terms listed in the consanguine category include:

KASHMIRI	GLOSS
mo:l	Father
mo:j	Mother
beni	Sister
nečuv	Son
ku:r	Daughter
bo:y	Brother
buDibab	Father's father
na:nʲ	Mother's mother
zur	Son's son
piturbo:y	father's brother's son
pitɨrbeni	father's brother's daughter
ma:sturbo:y	mother's sister's son
ma:stɨrbeni	mother's sisters daughter
ma:mturbo:y	mother's brother's son
ma:mtɨrbeni	mother's brothers daughter
pɔphturbo:y	father's sister's son
pɔphtɨrbeni	father's sisters daughter

Some of the terms in the affinal category include:

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Kashmiri	English
kha:vand	husband
zana:n	wife
druy	husband's brother
dɨrɨka:kɨn^j	husband's brother's wife
za:m	husband's sister
zə:mi	husband's sister's husband
be:mɨ	sister's husband
za:mtur	son-in-law

The Kinship terminology in Kashmiri is studied in accordance with:
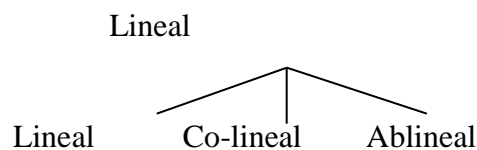
i)   Generation-different generations are labelled in relation to 'ego'.('ego' is the person in discussion i.e. for whom relation exists)

For example, g-1, g-2, g-3, g-4, and g-5

g-1	*buDibab(grand-father), na:n^j(grand-mother)*
g-2	*mo:l(father), mo:j(mother), pitɨr(uncle)*
g-3	*bo:y(brother), beni(sister)*
g-4	*nečuv(son), ku:r(daughter)*
g-5	*zur(grand-son/daughter)*

Ego stands in g-3 group

ii)   Lineality- The relations may be direct or indirect.

Lineal

Lineal   Co-lineal   Ablineal

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For example:

Lineal	*buDibab(grand-father),mo:l(father), nečuv(son)*
Co-lineal	*bo:y(brother), petɨr(uncle)*
Ablineal	*pitur-bo:y/beni,ma:mtir- bo:y/beni(cousin)*

iii)   Sex: Kashmiri distinguishes between male and female cousins by suffixes like *–ur* in case of males, and *–ir* in case of females.

For example:

+male(cousin)	*ma:mt-/pit-/ma:st-urbo:y*
-male(cousin)	*ma:mt-/pit-/ma:st-irbeni*

+male	*mo:l(father)*
-male	*mo:j(mother)*

The above terms in the consanguine and affinal categories of Kashmiri kinship terminology are in use. However, large number of terms have undergone a sort of relexicalization in the sense that other terms are nowadays being used interchangeably in their place. Some of the examples are given below:

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RELATION	*OLD TERM*	NEW TERM
Father's brother	*pitɨr*	Uncle
Mother's brother	*ma:m*	Uncle
Father's sister's husband	*pɔphuv*	Uncle
Mother's sister's husband	*ma:suv*	Uncle
Father's sister	*pɔph*	Aunty
Mother's sister	*ma:s*	Aunty
Mother's brother's wife	*ma:min*[j]	Aunty
Father's brother's son	*piturbo:y*	Cousin
Father's sister's son	*pɔphturbo:y*	Cousin
Mother's brother's son	*ma:mturbo:y*	Cousin
Mother's sister's son	*ma:sturbo:y*	Cousin
Father's sister's daughter	*pɔphtɨrbeni*	Cousin
Father's brother's daughter	*pitɨrbeni*	Cousin
Mother's brother's daughter	*ma:mtɨrbeni*	Cousin
Mother's sister's daughter	*ma:stɨrbeni*	Cousin

There are several factors like education and urban/rural setting etc. which determine the use of these new terms in the kinship terminology of Kashmiri. For example, majority of the educated class prefer to use the term cousin for *'piturbo:y', pitɨrbeni', 'ma:sturbo:y', 'mastɨrbeni', 'pɔphturbo:y', 'pɔphtɨrbeni', 'ma:mturbo:y',* and *'ma:mtɨrbeni'.* Likewise the people in urban areas mostly use the terms papa/daddy, and mummy for father in place of '*To:Th/bab'* and *'mo:j'* respectively.

2 Modes of Greeting

Greeting is defined as the word or gesture of welcome and salutation, or the act or an instance of welcoming or saluting on meeting.Greeting is not only to be looked upon as a usage of certain rules but it is a social practice which is governed by the situation in which the greeter says what is expected by the one being greeted**.** The key constitutive essentials of a greeting situation can be identified in terms of certain sociolinguistic variables, which determine the use of different types of greetings like the spatio-temporal setting of the greetings (i.e.In a greeting situation time and place are the two important dimensions that bind a social occasion. There are certain forms of greetings which are prescribed for one place but are not prescribed at another), participants (it means the the caste, age,

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gender, education, religion, profession and status of the greeters and the persons being greeted), and communicative intent or the purpose of greetings (i.e. the function of a greeting is in due course derived from a certain communicative intent, or the purpose for which the two parties are engaged in interaction.) etc.

Modes of greeting vary from culture to culture and from person to person. In a greeting situation, two persons come in contact in ethnic situation, which is characterized by means of some paralinguistic features like gestures accompanied with certain statements.

Many changes and additions are seen in case of modes of greetings in the context of Kashmiri cultural lexicon. The greetings between man and man may vary from that of a greeting between woman and woman, or man and woman. The greetings between man and man are less complicated than that of the greeting between woman and woman and/or man and woman.Between man and man, the participants may just say '*sala:m'* or *'namaska:r'*, or enquire about the health of one another. The greetings of women addressing other women are a bit complicated and are likely to have as their content comments expressing appreciation about each other's appearance or dress. However, the greetings between a man and a woman area bit more formal and restricted.

The mode of greeting is also determined by the factor like age, education, and religion etc. For example, the people of same age prefer to be less formal and use the terms in a simple manner like '*sala:m'* and '*namaska:r*'. The greetings like hi and hello is common among educated people. The factor of religion is also very important as far as the mode of greeting is concerned. For example, '*assala:mualaykum'* is used between two Muslims, '*namaska:r'* is used among Hindus, and *'a:da:b'* is the term used by a Muslim while greeting a Hindu, and vice versa.

One can observe relexicalization in greeting also. For example, the greeting situation between persons of same age exemplifying the process of relexicalization is given as:

Earlier -- *salam, assala:mualaykum, namaska:r*
Now – relexicalized: hi, hello

Hi, hellos are addition to the list of greeting between the persons of same age, while *salam, assala:mualaykum*are in use. But the grownups prefer the additions.

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In the contemporary society, parents greet their kids and in response get the same or different greeting. For example, hi*beta*, hi mom, good morning *beta*, good morning *papa*, etc.

The two social classes, namely,the Muslims and Pandits, used mainly '*a:da:b'*, '*namaska:r'*, and *'assala:mualaykum'* as given below:

Muslim to Muslim	*assala:mualaykum*
Pandit to Pandit	*namaska:r*
Muslim to Pandit and vice-versa	*a:da:b*

But, nowadays, this type of distinction has been replaced by lexical items like Hi, Hello, even though the above listed ones are also in use. The choice, between the two, is mainly determined by the context of formality. For instance, students use both '*assala:mualaykum'/a:da:b/namaska:r'* and 'hello' while greeting their teachers, but very rarely use 'hi'. While as 'hi' and 'hello' is a routine among students. Similarly, the words like good morning, good evening, good night, ta ta, bye bye, and many others are becoming common day by day.

Modes of Greeting/Earlier

> *assala:mualaykum*
>
> *a:da:b*
>
> *namaska:r*
>
> *salam*
>
> *khuda: ha:fiz*

Modes of Greeting/Relexicalized

> Hi
>
> Hello
>
> Good night
>
> Ta ta
>
> Bye bye

3 Food

The first and the most pressing demand of man, as of any other living creature, is food. Earlier the category of food was very simple in Kashmir with rice, wheat, meat and vegetables constituting its

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main components. But now, in addition to these, a number of items have been added, that are prepared instantly, like active popcorn, chocolate drinks, cold coffee, juices, soft and cold drinks.

This category of food experienced a lot of additions as shown below:

1.*ka:l*- Dinner

The term *dinner* is so widely used that its earlier form *ka:l* has been completely over shadowed. This excessive highlight of 'dinner' may be attributed to the dominant influence and impact of English language in the life of a common Kashmiri.

2. *ko:j*- Lunch

The *ko:j* word faced the same treatment as that of *ka:l*.

In the category of bakery, the names like *lava:sɨ, bə:kirkhə:nʲ, kulči* are facing diminishing usage against the contemporary usage of pastry, black forest, white forest, walnut pastry etc. Moreover, snacks, chips, pizzas, etc have been added to the list of food items.

Terms/Words in Food /Earlier

ka:l

ko:j

lava:sɨ

bə:kirkhə:nʲ

kulči

katlam

na:n

tsɔčivor

girdɨ

Terms/Words in Food/Relexicalized

Dinner

Lunch

Pastry

Black forest

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White forest

Walnut pastry

Bread

Cake

Factors Determining the Use of Relexicalized Terms

It follows, from the above-mentioned account, that a change in the cultural lexicon is seen in almost all the spheres of life, and that the lexical choice, created as a result of change in culture, is determined mainly by:

a)   Language attitude – It includes the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others which play an important role in the choice of lexical items to be used. People are fast adopting languages like Urdu and English for their elitist tinge, and as a result the words from these languages have become part and parcel of the vocabulary of people, especially the kids.

b)   Education - (educated vs. uneducated person/s)

This first factor of education has made groups in which the educated and highly qualified people prefer to use the relexicalized words as compared to their uneducated counterparts.

c)   Urbanisation - (urban vs. rural person/s)

The people from the urban areas are highly inclined to the use of these new and renamed words in comparison to the people from rural areas.

d)   Level of formality – (formal vs. informal situation)

The degree of formality, in specific situations, determines the use of the words; the more formal situation, the more is the chances to use the relexicalized words, and vice versa.

All these factors play an active role in the selection of the choice of lexical items. To explain the above mentioned points, it needs to be mentioned here that the educated sect usually prefers to use the new terms, e.g. 'paper' over '*akhba:r*', 'cup' over '*pʲa:lɨ*', and 'soup' over '*ras*', etc. For example:

-UE: yipʲa:lipilɨnə:ytavyapə:rʲ / pass on the cup/

-E: yikapkər ʲtavpa:s a:n

-UE: rasčhumazɨda:r /soup is tasty/

-E: su:pčhumazɨda:r

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Likewise the people from urban areas, mostly, use the new additions of words e.g., 'sweater' over 'bənʲa:n', boot/chappal/slippers' over *'khorbanɨ'*, etc.

R: yibənʲa:nčhava:ryahasɨl /this sweater is really nice/

U: yisumeTarčhava:ryahasɨl

Similarly, the level of formality determines the use of words. For example, at a function or even in a get-together people use the new additions as compared to old ones e.g., 'hello/good morning/good evening' over 'sala:m/a:da:b/namaska:r' etc.

-IF: sala:m, jina:bčhava:ray

-F: hello, how are you

(Abbreviations used: UE-uneducated, E-educated, R-rural, U-urban, IF-informal, F-formal)

Conclusion

As is clear, the process of relexicalization form an important component as far as Kashmiri is concerned. The process of relexicalization has affected different spheres and a whole range of new terms have entered and enriched different spheres of culture. As is evident a good number of new terms have found place in food, greetings and kinship etc. In many cases the new ones are used alongside the old ones while in others the old terms have become obsolete.

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