

LANGUAGE SHIFT IN THE MAITHILI SPEAKERS
(A CASE STUDY OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY)

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled LANGUAGE SHIFT IN THE MAITHILI SPEAKERS (A CASE STUDY OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY) is written by **Mr. Rakesh Kumar Yadav** under my supervision. I recommend this dissertation for evaluation.

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ABSTRACT

Sociolinguists and sociologists have studied code-switching in various ways. Code-switching is taking place in various sociolinguistic contexts of Nepal. It varies in its nature and function. To name a few, switching takes place from a minority language to a majority language and an immigrant language to the dominant regional language. This study investigates the code-switching from the standard Maithili to the switched variety of Maithili and the functional and formal dimensions of language switch of the Maithili speakers residing in the Kathmandu Valley. Recent developments show that the Maithili speakers are switching in various domains of language use. Nepali is the official language of Nepal and also the medium of instruction in schools and offices. In spite of being the mother tongue of more than 16 million people, the use of Maithili is confined to restricted domains. The domains of language use can broadly be divided into two, i.e., formal and informal situations. Formal situations include schools, offices, public speeches, meeting with strangers, etc., whereas informal situations include religious gatherings, family meetings, meeting with friends. The use of Maithili is restricted to informal situations. The distinction between the two domains is such that in a formal situation even two Maithili speakers switch over to Nepali. After a careful observation of all the formal domains, we have concluded that two Maithili speakers discussing politics, business, or any topic that would normally take place in formal situations which invariably switch to Nepali or Hindi.

Result showed that the differences between the structures of the standard Maithili and the switched variety could be taken to represent the phenomenon of switched code in which the Maithili speakers are mixing Nepali. But in literature, code-switching does not take place at the level of nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, locative adverbial clauses, adjectives, prepositions, genitive case, verbs, adverbs, Maithili absolute clauses, and negativization. The data presented in this research for discussion show that in the switched variety of Maithili, speakers are code-switching at the level of nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, locative adverbial clauses, adjectives, prepositions, genitive case, verbs, adverbs, Maithili absolute clauses, and negativization. On the other hand, the functional dimensions of the switch in the Maithili speakers show that the domains of Maithili use are being reduced. Nepali is used by the Maithili speakers in functional domains (formal situations) which are enforcing the switch. That is to say, the frequent and regular interactions of the Maithili speakers with Nepali are influencing the switch in the Maithili speakers. Thus, on the basis of arguments like limited domains of Maithili use, day-by-day reduction of the domains of Maithili use, and the influence of these at the structural level, we argue that Maithili is highly influenced by Nepali and the phenomenon is code-switching.

Maithili community showing traits of code-switching is basically a linguistic phenomenon. This phenomenon is actually prevalent in all multilingual societies. It facilitates the need to communicate with other people who speak different languages. If this phenomenon exists temporarily, the language which is undergoing the shift is not in a position to be endangered. However, if this shifting takes place continuously or permanently, then this may be threatening for the host language.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC/DAT	Accusative-Dative
ADJ	Adjective
AGGREG	Aggregative
AUX	Auxiliary
CLAS	Classifier
CP	Conjunctive particle
DEF	Definitizer
DEMONS	Demonstative
EMPH	Emphatic marker
FUT	Future tense
GENIT	Genitive
H	Honorific
IMP	Imperative
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect
INF	Infinitive
INSTR	Instrumental
MH	Mid Honorific
N	Noun
NH	Non honorific
NP	Noun phrase
PASS	Passive
PERF	Perfective aspect
PL	Plural
PP	Postpositional phrase
PR	Pronoun
PRES	Present tense
PROG	Progressive aspect
PST	Past tense
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person