

Effects of Radio and Television Media on Language

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to bring out a practice observed in the local media today. The presenters in the local media industry have tendency to mix two languages (Sinhala and English). In English language this is referred to as code switching. The presenters code switch profoundly and affects the language purism. In this study it will be found whether code switching is a must in programmes and find out as to why code switching takes place. The methodology used is quantitative. Self-observations will be included. The target includes presenters, audience, lecturers in mass media and language, and students.

Keywords: Code switching; FM channels; Language destruction

Introduction

The reason for the selection of the topic is that in the fast moving world, radio plays a great role in the lives of the people. It has changed the lives of people in such a way that, it is an accepted fact that people cannot live without radio media. People turn to radio for many purposes and these purposes show a discrepancy from person to person. Some of the purposes as to why the listener opts for radio are, it soothes the mind of the listener after a hard day's work, it entertains the listener, the radio educates the listener, it chases away the loneliness of the listener, radio unlike the newspaper does not require a literacy level up to some extent, it is affordable. For the above reasons the listener turns to the radio more often than they turn to any other media. After a stressful day of work people find it a necessity to relax in order to get their mind to function better for the following day. Therefore people have made it a tendency to turn to media of their preference which would soothe their minds [1]. Many are inclined to desire the radio as it is cheaper than the other media and every household now has a radio. When the listener makes a choice on to as what media they select they do it wisely according to their preferences. Nevertheless it becomes a responsibility of the media to grasp the listeners by catering to their requirements. If the respective media does not provide the listener according to their tastes then there is a likelihood that the listener would seek out for another mode of media.

Radio, hence so far has been able to detain the minds of the listener with the programmes that they gratify. Nonetheless the reason as to why this subject matter was selected is to the fact that the language that is used in radio media in the recent times has undergone a rapid change in relation to the verbal communication that is being utilized. The area that is concerned is on the FM channels in Sri Lanka and the language that is utilized in the respective channels. Many radio presenters be it a habit or something which flows in naturally are in the convention of using English terms in the speech that they use to present the relevant programme e.g. fan *ekadanna* Song *eka* play *karanna* [2].

This in terms of English Language is referred to as code-mixing or code switching. It is the term that is used to refer to at least two languages combined in different ways. For an example English and Sinhala mixed or English and Tamil mixed. A code here is referred to a language. Thus the term code mixing is referred to the hybridization. This code mixing may occur to some extent that there is a sense in which a person is capable of using two languages.

Code switching is broadly discussed and used in linguistics. The history of code switching is dated from Blom and Gumperz. What is

stated is code switching is not a linguistic phenomenon but rather a psychological one and its' causes are obviously extra linguistic. Code switching is extensively observed in multilingual and multi-cultural communities.

According to Vogt code switching is not only natural but also something which could be commonly seen in the society today. There exist many reasons as to why people code switch. It might be due to the fact that the prestige of knowing the out group or what could be called as the dominant language many a times associated with a religion, education, and a wide sphere of operation and interest.

However it is not always the case that borrowing or switching occurs because speakers do not know the words in one or the other language. Therefore the main purpose of this research is to find out the exact reason as to why the presenters in Sinhala fm channels code switch or in other words use a mixture of Sinhala and English

It however has now turned to a pathetic side. Therefore it became necessary to research into, as to why the language is used in such a manner when there are existing Sinhala terms for the majority of the speech utilized and what are the reasons that are behind these factors and also as to how the society sees this convention. What attitude do they hold with regard to this practice of English words in a Sinhala radio programme? Do they believe that they bring to a positive outcome or a negative outcome? How does it affect with regard to the policies of the respective radio stations.

Further the reason as to why this topic was selected was to find out if the listener prefers this or whether they have any objection towards this utilization of the language? Hence above are the reasons that led to research on the particular topic [3].

Why the radio plays an important role in the society

In the ancient times the radio was utilized for the purposes where maritime was concerned. This included sending telegraphic messages

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using the popular Morse code between ships and land. It was at first used by the Japanese navy. During the sinking of Titanic in the year 1912 this method was used between the nearby vessels and the sinking ship. Radio was further used to pass on orders and communications between armies and navies on both sides in World War I. Another use of radio in the pre-war years was in relation to the development of detection and locating of aircraft and ships by the use of radar.

Today, radio takes many forms, including wireless networks and mobile communications of all types, as well as radio broadcasting. Before the advent of television, commercial radio broadcasts included not only news and music, but dramas, comedies, variety shows, and many other forms of entertainment. Radio was unique among methods of dramatic presentation in that it used only sound. It was adopted by the people as means of soothing, to chase away the loneliness and the day to day stresses. When the television was not even thought of, the radio played a dramatic role. The radio made the public imagine the dramas thus radio, in a way helped to broaden the creativity of the people [4].

Therefore how the programmes were presented to the listener, the mode of presentation the language that was utilized, all these mattered to the listener. Not only did it matter to the listener but paying extra attention to the above mentioned factors mattered even to the producers for it was important to grab the listener and to hold them on. This matter not only in the earliest times but even in the modern era, as radio media competes with many other media, it becomes necessary to pay extra attention to how a programme should be put through to the listener.

Radio language

Language could be defined as one of the important forms of communication which plays an important role in terms of human communication. In language there is a collection of signs whose meanings have been agreed upon by the people who use them and also another by the set of rules that combine the signs into meaningful messages. The signs here that are referred to are the words or vocabulary whereas the rules that were mentioned here are in terms of grammar (find out about Grammar). These grammatical rules tend to control the way that the words could be arranged in the form of sentences and this formation of word order or the way that the words could be arranged is referred to as "syntax". In relation to language, it could be stated that, it could be related in two forms namely, Speech and Writing.

Writing boasts of a history of 5000 years old and thus when compared the two that is both speech and writing. It could be hence stated that writing is the most recent form. It is stated that the scholars involved in the study of language in other terms the linguists take much more interest in the spoken form than on the written.

Spoken form could be defined as a system of sounds and therefore it should be stated that majority of the languages are built up out of only 30 to 50 basic sounds. These are called as "atoms" or in other words phonemes. Phonemes are hence combined to make words and in return the words are linked to form sentences. As a result at this point the rules of syntax come into use. In language, Grammar gives a firmer structure [5].

It is necessary hence to question as to why language plays an important role in the lives of people. It is mainly because they evolve meanings on our minds. Language could be slated as the root of communication. Certain words have more than one meaning which mean at times a sentence would not give a precise meaning.

Thus when the sounds are arranged in such a way to make words and words hence are arranged to create sentences. Further, additional meanings are produced by the manner in which we speak and through which words that are made to stress on which occurs with the rise and fall of the voice. These take place through hesitations and silences. Hence it would be stated that language has a whole range of communicative functions as brief talks for keeping up good relationships, storytelling, and persuading, expressing ideas in relation to science or philosophy or even in terms of expressing feelings where poetry is concerned. Today many of the scholars argue that through the structure of the language it is determined how the world is perceived and how people perceive you. It could be said that language is specially a method of classifying what we perceive.

Language policies in radio

First and foremost, it becomes a necessity to define as to what a policy is? In general terms a policy is a plan or course of action that is in relation to government, political party or business which is intended to influence or determine decisions and other matters. To be more precise on the definition, it could be highlighted as a course of action which includes guiding principle or procedure whether it is practical or advantageous.

In Canada very important principle of composition of the Radio and Television Council is observing ethnic balance. In Part VII of the Official Languages Act calls for the federal government and its institutions to commit to "enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and to support and assist their Development and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society". Every year CBC/Radio-Canada tables with the department of Canadian Heritage, which is responsible for coordinating the efforts of all federal institutions involved, an Action Plan together with a Summary of the achievements of the previous year [6].

Research Problem

The contemporary language usage in Sri Lanka in the Sinhala FM channels badly effects to the existing linguistic purism of the Sinhala language as the presenters tend to code switch in their presentations.

Hypothesis

Linguistic purism of Sinhala language will soon vanish as a result of code switching that is being utilized by the radio presenters in the FM channels in Sri Lanka.

Methodology

In order to conduct this research successfully to find out as to why the radio presenters code switch during the time of their programmes the methodology used played an all important role. For the respective research the target group included linguists, heads of language institutions, lecturers, students (school going and undergraduates) and also regular listeners of radio media. Therefore it became a necessity to utilize the mode of questionnaires in order to collect data. Apart from the above

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Self-observations were conducted in order to support the argument.

The questions posed at the language specialists and the heads of media institutions aided immensely with regard to the research in order to support the argument.

From the interviews conducted it became quite useful in order to understand and get the opinions held by the media personnel on their respective radio channels and also they aired their opinions on the other parallel radio channels and also about their language conduct. Hence, it was understood how one channel sees at another channels weakness where language was concerned [7].

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in order to proceed with the argument. For these particular reason lecturers on Language, Media Personnel belonging to various Radio and TV channels, authors were chosen. The reason as to why the media personnel belonging to TV channels were selected was to the fact that, it was believed that they too hold a strong view on the utilization of the language that is being used. The lecturers on language especially Sinhala and English were selected as they were believed to be the best of the people on judging the use of the conduct of language in Radio channels.

Data collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the research. Primary data were used in order to get the listeners awareness on the language that is being used in fm radio channels and also to get the knowledge on their attitudes towards code switching that is being used in fm channels.

In order to gather information as previously mentioned interviews, questionnaires and self-observances were used. The questionnaires were given among university undergraduates, language teachers and people randomly selected from the society (the fm radio listener).

Where university students were targeted the investigator had to visit respective universities in order to collect the facts. Further in order to support the research an online questionnaire was distributed which here should be stated that was indeed was very effective.

With regard to the online observation there was no age limit as it was open to all. Further it was also observed comparing many fm channels as to how they code switch and when this code switching took place.

Where secondary data was concerned variety of books, articles, periodicals on mass media and language were utilized. Further dissertations written by others too were taken in to consideration with regard to code switching and also dissertations based on mass media [8].

Hence with both the primary data and the secondary data collected it became a fruitful task to proceed with the research. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques and general information.

Limitations Faced in the Study

- During the survey, data collection was affected by the communication problem. There was a problem of communication in relation to English language. At some points the data collection was difficult and some respondents had to be assisted by translating the questionnaire.
- Data was collected by visiting. Therefore the time limitation

was a major problem in relation to data collection.

- Some data was not accurately produced. Especially with regard to certain media institutions who were in fact reluctant to give the accurate information for they openly admitted that they engage in code switching. Nevertheless with the help of a friend who was working in the respective radio channel some of the facts were gained.
- There were problems that aroused where typing was concerned for due to a computer breakdown as the backup system went off majority of the facts that were typed were lost however it became necessary to start from the very beginning.

Comparison between channels

In order to support the argument further comparison between a state owned radio channel and private channels were drawn out in this their policies and utilization of language will be discussed in depth.

Competitions among the radio

Competition is natural to every human being. Even today the world is faced with a rat race that many have forgotten their values, traditions and cultures. Everyone in the society is in the mentality of being somebody than being nobody in this competitive world. The reason as to why this completion exists is mainly due to the fact that each individual is hungry to obtain a respective uniqueness which indeed is hard to achieve especially when everyone is striving their level best to reach their targets.

Nevertheless the competition among the radio channels could be highlighted as something very much related with the economy of the respective country. The channels compete with each other according to the competition in the market. For an example, the promise of lower transaction costs, increased sales productivity, and more fitting service has lured banks into setting up new electronic and product-specific channels.

Thus the more productive a channel is better do they excel in the market. But they have quickly found that their delivery capabilities are outstripping the traditional branch-centered model they use to manage them. As a result, they face intractably high efficiency ratios, expected revenues that never materialize, and channel managers at odds with the standards by which they are measured and rewarded. In order To solve such problems, banks should adopt a new approach to the management of multiple channels. In relation to media there is a lot of competition taking place in the modern day.

Do all radio stations sound the same or is it possible to have a unique positioning and this is where the competition for the radio begins. Increasingly, FM radios channels too are finding the need to brand and put something in a new place themselves. For an example Mumbai's Red FM 93.5, in a bid to differentiate content, the channel recently repositioned itself as the voice of the common man [9].

Other radio stations too have taken the mass tack, targeting the "common man". "The basic fact is that all radio stations are targeting the common man. Radio is a local business and the common man is the listener. Thus it is the common man that most of the radio stations are targeting.

Getting the attention of the masses is main concern for all the radio stations, especially when they would like to reach out to the bulk of radio listeners in the country. Thus the Radio channels are looking at ways to stand apart with their programming, trying to create a difference in

both its content as well as positioning. It is true that at present there is hardly any difference in relation to the content but over time when the number of radio stations increase, they will have to stand for something and the positioning has to get stronger. Radio channels have to connect emotionally with their audiences. The reason as to why the common man is being targeted is due to the fact that the common man's issues vary from city to city. Most radio stations have been busy appointing creative agencies for their campaigns. Nonetheless, catering to the masses seems to be the main purpose and in the process there seems to be hardly any differentiation in content for the 'listening masses' [10].

Researches done on radio listeners gave found out that more and more people are turning to radio which gives rise to the radio Listenership. This further indicates there is an increase level of completion between fm channels now that more and more listeners opt for the radio. With viewers turning more and more to media there is high competition among the television channels. Similarly, competition takes place with Radio channels in Sri Lanka as well. For here at radio channels the producers, presenters are dealing with an audience that only hears their voices. Therefore the voice is the weapon. Many radio stations try their best to engage attractive voices in order to keep their listeners from changing to another radio channel. One method that they tend to utilize is code switching which targets the common man [11].

Unlike in Television channels there are no fascism or bodyism that could be used therefore it should always be kept in mind that new creations is the best way to attract the listener. Thus this is to say that the competition in radio is higher than any other media. In order to compete and to hold the listener groups lot of talent is required. Many radio channels engage in broadcasting variety shows to captivate the listener.

With the voice the presenters have to do wonder in order to keep the listener from turning away to another channel. The competition among thus is very much higher than any other type of media. Thus many radio stations try to utilize the voice to the fullest and also bring through colorful programmes that would motivate the listener who turn to the radio to chase stress away. The radio listener is lonesome thus it should be always should be kept in mind to cater to their needs and to soothe the listener.

Data

In this section the data which were collected in order to support the research would be analyzed. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the research. Primary data were used in order to get the listeners awareness on the language that is being used in fm radio channels and also to get the knowledge on their attitudes towards code switching that is being used in fm channels.

The target group where data collections were concerned was undergraduates, linguists, teachers of various languages, listeners of radio channels and heads of radio channels. According to majority of those interviewed and among those whom the questionnaires were distributed many opposed the usage of English terms in Sinhala fm channels which is popularly known as code switching.

According to the data that were obtained with the use of questionnaires in order to support the research many opinions with regard to language usage in Sinhala fm channels were obtained. For this matter hundred questionnaires were distributed that is to say fifty among undergraduates and another fifty among teachers of language, linguists and listeners of radio [12].

The undergraduates belong to the age category of 16-30 where as other fifty among whom the questionnaires were circulated fell into the category of more than fifty, years of age. Areas that the latter fifty who were questioned were from urban, sub urban whereas as the undergraduates came mostly from village and urban. It should be highlighted that two of the undergraduates were blind students. In relation to the data that were obtained majority of the undergraduates listened to the radio during weekdays and the reason given to this was to relax after laborious hours of studying. It was seen from the questionnaires that majority of the listeners preferred listening to private radio channels.

Further they favored listening to programmes such as news, musicals and features. When asked the reason for their selection, they stated that it was in-order to gather information and also for entertainment. Some even said that these types of programmes are important to life [13].

In relation to the most important part of the questionnaire that is, their views on language code switching it was found that majority have stated that the radio stations of today mix two languages.

For an example: Song *eka* play *karanna*. However they have stated that this too depends on the respective radio channels that they listen to. When asked the opinion they hold about use of one language what they stated was that in this manner the message could be easily grasped. However when asked about mixing of two languages what we in general refer to as code switching what they stated was that the listener is unable to grasp the message and further more they were harsh enough to say that there should be limits to everything and it ruins the language. With code switching further it was aired that the quality of the style of announcing too is degraded. Nevertheless there were some who believed that the mixing of two languages would help them to develop their knowledge in English [14].

According to interviewees, many DJs use the trend of Sinhala and English especially Sinhala private radio channels. Another important factor that was highlighted was that they not only mix English into their programme presentation which is primarily done in Sinhala but also they tend to speak the Sinhala that they use with an English accent.

If carefully observed in a Sinhala fm channel what could be witnessed is that they use more English words than Sinhala and he further referred this to a destruction of language. Why this was said was that our country is the only country that speaks Sinhala and it is our right to protect our mother tongue and not to destroy it. It was further stated that before people learn English they have to master their mother tongue and this point was brought against a response given by another interviewee who believed that when English terms are used then they would be able to apprehend English words [15].

Further it was argued that we must be proud of Sinhala and Tamil which are the two main languages that are used in our island and many who were interviewed believe that it is only when you speak fluent Sinhala that one would be able to apprehend any other language.

As an example he drew out the sentence stated below:

"Ada weather eka"

Which is in English:

"Today's weather"

According to this sentence what the interviewee states is that in the year 2009 the DJs will say "Weather" ignoring "kalagunaya" and the next generation they will not hear of a word such as "Kalagunaya" but

only "Weather" and as a result of this their children will never know of an existence of word such as "Kalagunaya" If the whole of Sri Lanka speaks in English then our identity would be lost. He puts it this way.

Our mother speaks and understands Sinhala and Tamil and the day that we don't speak our mother language our communication would be lost. There is hence nopatriotism. Further we would believe that we don't have a mother and are either orphan or have been adopted.

A head of a leading university stated that people code switched for their convenience and there is no mistake in it.

However he emphasized that it does not mean we could make it a practice to use English words in the middle of Sinhala sentences. He brought an example "Pariganakayenaraganna".

What he says is many will be at ease by using the word computer instead of the word "pariganakaya". He further showed how convenient it would be to the presenter.

Although the trend of code switching has attracted many a youth when comparing the results of the survey that It was seen how many opposed the mixing of the two languages. They believe it destroys our mother tongue. In the end they believe it is the future generation who would not have a language of their own. Therefore many opposed towards the mixing of the two languages. It was observed that the state owned channels were less likely to code switch. The reason for this may be due to the fact that state owned channels followed following certain policies and on the other hand the private channel due to the commercialization was profoundly engaged in code switching. It was rare to find the presenters of Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation being engaged in code switching whereas in the case of majority of the private channels code switching was not something new.

Whilst listening to a Children's programme, of many a private channels it was quite surprising to find that they were engaged in code switching. The conclusion that could be come into is the fact that the trend of code switching has already attacked the younger generation. The kids in this programme utilized the words such as

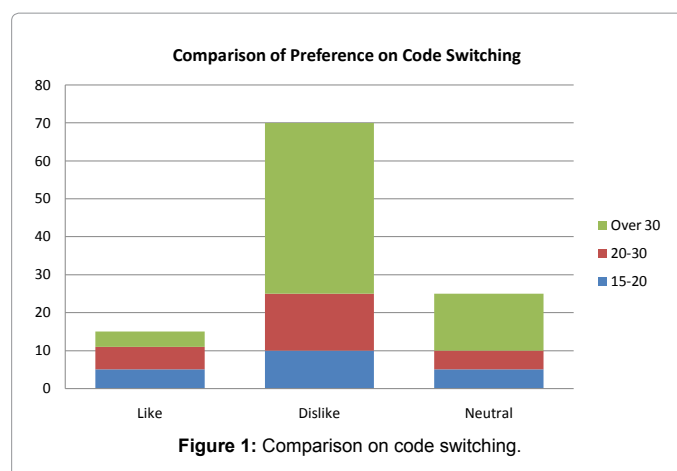
- Washroom
- Driving
- Copy

It was observed that when one presenter used the word "copy" the other presenter used "balagenaliyanawa" If one could use the actual Sinhala word; hence it is questionable as to why the other too couldn't use the same. Thus what could be seen is English words were used amidst Sinhala for fashion. It is understood that the code switching has influenced not only the present generation, which indeed is pathetic. There is a tendency hence for destruction of the Sinhala language (Figure 1) [15].

Conclusions

From what was seen in this study was that many trends have immense effect on the media such as the political influence, the western influence, urbanization and the competition among the radio. The study of the purpose was to find out as to why the presenters code switch in Sinhala FM channels in other sense the use of language in FM channels and as to why they code switch.

What was revealed from this research is that majority were Sinhala fm channel listeners and they were totally against the use of English language in the middle of Sinhala sentences. For they believed that



it destroys the mother tongue and which would ultimately leave our country without any language of our own.

However when comparing with the trends that have affected media over the years especially with regard to the competition among the radio a conclusion that we could come to is that the presenters engage in code switching for the fact that they need to be ahead of the rest. This is due to the competition among the radio. Further to say that they wish to use code switching as a tool to approach the common man. In order to grasp the common man it is seen how the Sinhala-English mixed language is utilized in the radio.

It was seen that a larger number of women listened to the radio in comparison to the men. The majority of the listeners believed that the use of English amidst the Sinhala presentation would harm the mother tongue. In the introduction as mentioned this research was carried out to find out as to why the presenters code switch, for what purpose and to find out the attitude of the people towards this code switching in Radio channels.

Thus it could be clearly stated that they code switch due to the competition among the radio and also as a trend. In one particular radio channel-they admitted that they code switch therefore refused to talk on it and what they stated was they are left with no choice as the sponsors ask them to do it for to be able to reach the common man and to be unique.

Hence it could be highlighted as part of advertising and consumerism. The society holds a totally negative attitude towards this concept for they hesitate to see a destruction of the mother tongue. Therefore many linguists stated that due to the economic purposes it is our mother tongue that is in danger which in near future would result in the disappearance of a language unique to us. Though some stated that it is convenient to utilize English words in the middle of Sinhala words others argued against stating that it helps to hasten up the disappearance of the language.

Thus opinions brings out that code switching totally destroys the Sri Lankan identity of having Sinhala as its mother tongue. It would soon be the reason for the disappearance of Sinhala. Thus majority are against the code switching trend used in Sinhala fm channels and oppose such trend from taking place. Thus the findings of the research are that they reject the use of English words amidst Sinhala presentation skills.

Recommendations

- In order to avoid code switching that takes place in Sinhala fm

channels those who are highly responsible of the media policies should take action in order to maintain a good command of languages utilized.

- Linguists should more and more involve in the media institutions in order to set up a good role model concerning the presentations in the radio channels
- The presenters should be trained so that they would minimize the usage of English equivalents in presenting the programmes.

Media Institutions should not only consider of the economy but also should give consideration to the value that Sinhala Language has and they should take it more deeply into consideration that it is also their mother tongue that they are destroying.

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