

Variation in Discourse Strategies in a Multilingual Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to study empirically a sample of spoken narratives of Hindi, Telugu and Dakkhini speakers in the multilingual setting of Hyderabad. After a brief account of multilingualism and variation within a language as commonly occurring phenomena, the paper examines the spoken narratives of the three languages mentioned above with a view to identifying the major discourse connectives. The findings show that the linguistic devices employed by a language for bringing coherence in a discourse are interconnected and come as a package. It is further observed that the presence of common structures across languages do not imply that they will show the same degree of preferences. The study points out the use of 'clausal repetition' as a discourse connective which needs to be explored further.

Keywords: Multilingualism, variation, connective, conjunctive participle, null anaphora, narratives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism is a growing phenomenon all over the world both at the level of individuals and social groups. But in spite of its wide spread prevalence, it has not received much attention from theoretical linguists, psycholinguists and applied linguists. Researchers in these fields still tend to look at language from monolingual speaker's point of view ignoring the bilingual and multilingual speakers' language competence and behaviour. The present study is a preliminary step in this direction in that it studies empirically the spoken narratives of Hindi, Telugu, and Dakkhini in the multilingual setting of Hyderabad.