Code-Switching in Persian-English and Telugu-English Conversations: With a Focus on Light Verb Constructions

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ABSTRACT

*Depending on the demands of a particular communicative situation, bilingual or multilingual speakers (*bilingualism - multilingualism*) will switch between language varieties. Code-switching is the practice of moving between variations of languages in different contexts. In an educational context, code-switching is defined as the practice of switching between a primary and a secondary language or discourse. In this article we are going to investigate code switching in two languages which are considered completely separate in the Language Family Tree. We compared code switching in Persian which is an Indo-European language and Telugu which is a Proto-Dravidian language. A short history of each language will be presented. In spite the fact that Persian and Telugu are from different language family tree, they have some magnificent similar characteristics. We focus on the hypothesis that typologically similar languages follow similar patterns for code-switching. Persian and Telugu have similar syntactic structures. For example, both languages have the same canonical word order as Subject-Object-Verb. One of the most productive structures in both Telugu and Persian language is Light Verb Construction (LVC). Our data in Persian/English and Telugu/English code-switching reveal that bilingual speakers of Persian or Telugu follow similar patterns when code-switching, especially in light verb constructions. In Persian and Telugu bilingual light verb constructions, an L1 light verb or its inflected form is attached to an English noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or verb.*

The code switching data used in this study were collected from separate spontaneous conversations involving 10 Iranian students and 13 Telugu students. All were students in postgraduate degree living in Hyderabad, India. A two-hour conversation for each group was recorded and was transcribed by a native Telugu and a native Persian speaker for further analyses.