

Code-Mixing in Standard Khasis: A Comparative Study of Urban versus Rural Speech Behaviour in Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

Code-mixing represents one aspect of internal change brought about in languages which consequently give rise to linguistic variation in a particular geographical area. Central to this theme, the present work attempts an investigation on some aspects of code-mixing with respect to standard Khasi language, an Austro-Asiatic language spoken in and around Khasi and Jaintia Hills in the state of Meghalaya. The preliminary study indicates that indirect contact with English in the different hierarchical domain of language use (given that English is an official language of the state, Meghalaya) has resulted to borrowing and incorporation of many of the English words which has been use as a regular vocabulary item by the Khasis in the urban setting compared to that of the rural counterparts. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, attempt is therefore made to depict the linguistic behaviour and idiosyncratic differences of standard Khasi, brought about by code-mixing that eventually leads to regional variation in the use of Khasi language in the urban and rural settings in Meghalaya.

Keywords: Standard Khasi, code-mixing, regional differences, urban versus rural setting

1. INTRODUCTION

Meghalaya, popularly known as “the abode of clouds” is one of the eight states of North East India. It became a full-fledged state