

Code Mixing in Folk Songs: A Journey towards Linguistic Creativity

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Abstract

Folk song is a true gift of culture. It is one of the traditional, intangible and indigenous pieces of the art of performing the melodious expression with the help of soft pipes that are forever invaluable cultural assets and musical property as well. In view of making a brief survey of the use of multiple languages in folk songs, different folk melodies have been selected randomly from seven provinces of Nepal where the folk melodies are more fertile. This paper aims at exploring the use of multiple languages in folk songs I, myself as a researcher in the field, encountered with in written and audio- or video-recorded form. Therefore, the main source of relevant data includes me and other written and audio or video documents of folk songs I found. As a multicultural country, Nepal is rich in terms of its folk songs. In this paper, I analyze how folk song can be a creative space where linguistic boundaries are challenged and new language practices are invented. Taking of folk songs as a social and cultural identity, I examine how folk song embraces local diversity and redefines the use of language a creative tool for public.

Keywords: folk song, code mixing, linguistic creativity

Introduction

Nepal being a multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic, and multi religious country full of rural lives, it is full of varieties of folk songs. Folk songs are originated from ordinary people as part of their local lives; they are sung by ordinary people of countryside and are orally transformed from one generation to another subconsciously. Following Bandhu (2058 BS), folk song is a spontaneous, passionate and rhythmic expression of local indigenous lives. Therefore, folk songs are not originally deliberately constructed but are collected. Collection here refers to the collection of both: words and rhythm of a song. Love and hatred, hope and despair, happiness and sorrow, and so on hidden in the heart of a person are spontaneously expressed in a folk song. Some definition of folk songs and its characteristics are presented below.

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Neupane(2013 B.S., p.1). defines it as “the etymological meaning of ‘folk’ is people and ‘song’ means the people’s voice. It is also called rural song/ local song/village song. These are existed orally and are identified by the people of local/ remote dwellers”.

Likewise, “folk song is like the sentence/expression of god, that has neither producer, nor the voice of self, but it is automatically expressed in the human community and establishes tradition through mixing up mouth to mouth” (Satyarthi 1971A.D., pp. 326-327). On the other hand, “folk song is the quotation of nature, detached from fancy/ glamour, but transparent like clean glass which includes simplicity and has melodious quality.”(Kandangwa 2020 B.S., p.10)

Nepal’s first recordist artist was SeturamShrestha a famous musician a singer and a composer too in Radio Nepal. Likewise, Mitrasen, was the first to record song on a gramophone. Similarly, Nhuchhe ManDangol, the best drummer and also the creator of indigenous folk musical instruments was also the popular folk artists did remarkable contribution in the field of folk song. Most /majority of folk songs are performed or recorded used with *ḍamphu*, *dhime*, *ḍholak*, *khĩ*, *mādal*, *sārñgi*, *ṭuñgnā*, *ektāre*, *bāsurī*, *murcuñgā* etc. Nowadays, if we tune radio, watch TV, surf internet, we will hear how much influence Nepali folk song has been drawn from western musical culture.

Some of the folk songs in Nepal are: *ḍeuḍā*, *cuḍkā*, *roilā*, *sālaijo*, *ṭhāḍobhākā*, *ḍeuḍāṭhāḍībhākā*, *huḍkelī (rāmkalī)*, *hākpāresāmlo*, *hākpārepālām*, *khyālīpālām*, *limbuhākpāre*, *masalejhyāure*, *mādalegarrā*, *jhyāure*, *samalā*, *mārūnībhākā*, *khyālibhākā*, *paisājhāremārūnī*, *sāgīnī*, *tīj*, *bibāhagīt*, *mañsirekaṭhegīt*, *asāregīt*, *ghāsegīt*, *deusī*, *bhailī*, *dailekhijhyāmrebhākā*, *dārculeḍeuḍa* and so on. These folk songs are connected with one or the other indigenous ethnic or cultural group(s) of people in Nepal. For example, RaiBantawa, Magar, Gurung, Tharu, Maithili, Newari, Bhojpuri etc. However, they are influenced by one another in many ways. In other words, the impact of multilingual turn, which argues for multilingual practices, identities and voices (Ruiz, 1984) exerts not only in school education but also in the field of folk songs in Nepal. In other words, the present-day global linguistic diversity extends into the field of folk songs. Behind such diversity in various practices lie the theory of multilingualism which advocates equity among different languages and attempts to involve all the languages of a community in practice in various fields. The term multilingualism is a concept in sociolinguistics which promotes the social integration and social cohesion. In this context, I am curious to explore the examples or extracts from the folk songs that illustrate the use of multiple languages in them.

Code-mixing is the mixing of two or more languages or language varieties in speech. Some scholars use the terms “code-mixing” and “code-switching” interchangeably, especially in studies of syntax, morphology, and other formal aspects of language. Others assume more specific definitions of code-mixing, but these specific definitions may be different in different subfields of linguistics, education theory, communications etc. Code-mixing is similar to the use or creation of pidgins; but while a pidgin is created across groups that do not share a common language, code-mixing may occur within a multilingual setting where speakers share more than one language. Finally, every folk singer was found to believe that folk singers in Nepal should not be strict enough to use only their home language in the multilingual world/turn. The singers are the pride of the family, nation and country. Folk singers’ identity and their musical mind reflect the whole culture and the behavior, civilization and creative system.

1. Linguistic diversity can be used as a resource for recording and preserving our multilingual awareness in heterogeneous society/community.
2. Bilingualism or multilingualism practices in the creativity of the songs are not the barrier and not a threat to social cohesion and harmony.

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The term linguistic creativity, “infinite use of finite means,” (Humbolt, 2013) has various meanings attached to it, ranging from a folkloristic understanding of linguistic creativity (mental models of the world (Chomsky, 1971) as some kind of special gift or unusual way with words, to an exclusive use of the term for the verbal arts (Ricoeur,1981, p. 340). Our mental constitution permits us to arrive at knowledge of the world insofar as our innate capacity to create theories happen to match some aspect of the structure of the world. Human discoveries in the sciences and technology creativity in the arts, literature, music, use of the imagination etc are all casually related to the way god organized. Musical creativity comes under linguistic creativity, where one is gifted in composing music and or plying musical instruments. Linguistic creativity is a power of creation in which one can be said to

have a flair or gift with words such as lyricists, writers, poets etc. Sociocultural and linguistic boundaries influencing intercultural communication between folk singers and their creative use of language in the song with the people of diversified zone: focused ethnography (Ibid). There is a growing awareness that over the past two decades, globalization has altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world. Due to the diffuse nature of migration since the early 1990s, the multiculturalism of an earlier era (captured, mostly, in an 'ethnic minorities' paradigm) has been gradually replaced by what Vertovec (2007) calls 'super-diversity'. Super-diversity is characterized by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, but also in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, processes of insertion into the labour and housing markets of the host societies, and so on (cf.2010). The predictability of the category of 'migrant' and of his/her sociocultural features has disappeared. An example can start to show some of the communicative effects.

One of the crucial design features of language was creativity (or productivity). Charles Hockett: "Language users can create and understand completely novel messages." In a language, new messages are freely coined by blending, analogizing from, or transforming old ones. This says that every language has grammatical patterning." In a language, either new or old elements are freely assigned new semantic loads by circumstances and context. This says that in every language new idioms constantly come into existence. "How is it possible for human beings to do this? Folk songs have its own linguistic boundary and ideology. It is believed that folk songs are still fix and pure in its nature that has made the culture a more fixed and beautiful with social unity and solidarity.

Multilingualism is a demanding term in a sense that folk songs are dispersed through the code mixing of the languages from the nation's languages and the languages abroad. Multilinguals differ from bilinguals and monolinguals in several respects. Research has shown, for example, that multilingual demonstrate superior metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities, such as the ability to draw comparisons between different languages and to reflect on and employ appropriate learning strategies (for reviews, see Cenoz, 2003; De Angelis, 2007; Jessner, 2008). However, a number of researchers (e.g. Bono & Stratilaki,2009; De Angelis, 2011; Hufeisen& Marx, 2007; Moore, 2006; Singleton & Aronin,2007; Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, & Hart,1990) emphasise that multilingualism does not automatically enhance further language learning; for example, when learners are not literate in their home language, when learners are not aware of the benefits of multilingualism and 'when children are not encouraged in the school situation to rely on their different languages and language knowledge as positive resources' (Moore, 2006, p. 136), multilingualism may not provide an advantage. In fact, the general view

Within the field seems to be that learning multiple languages is best enhanced when learners are encouraged to become aware of and use their pre-existing linguistic and language learning knowledge. Cited in *International Journal of Multilingualism*, (2016:Vol. 13, No. 1, 1–18) .The results have been described under two headings, namely identification and classification of code mixing in folk songs

Methodology

For this, the data were collected from different renowned folk singers and some other contemporary duet folk singers of some parts or provinces of our country by using questionnaire and interview techniques. I digged out the thick description of the story of the stories of the folk singers and included their opinions as the themes too. And I drew some of the folk songs through listening and through telephone call and directly visited with the folk singers as well.The responses were analyzed and interpreted descriptively as well as intuitively.This study has been carried out employing simple quantitative survey design in which I have identified and prepared an exhaustive list of examples showing the code mixing in Nepalese folk songs in my repertoire of such songs. That is to say, I observed through singing (humming) or reading and listening or watching the folk songs or by some combination of these activities, and reviewed to identify the code mixing used in the songs, prepared an exhaustive list of the use of code mixing, and categorized them into various types in different perspectives. This section reveals the Folk singers' explanations for their believes or ideologies elicited through the questionnaire and even their responses to counter-arguments specially in relation to the use of multiple languages and home language elicited through interview with them. The singers' responses were found paradoxical or contradictory within and/or across them in the very beginning. But quite interestingly, all the singers were found to believe and support the importance, to some extents, the code mixing of the languages to further creativity power of selecting and using songs and its words.

Results and Discussion

During the interview, I had encouraged the respondents and I was very much careful during note taking along with the recorder. I did not loss my control, and I became very much careful about the ethical or privacy,which is ethically more important in such non-technical social and life sciences. Several data were collected but due to the time and word frame or boundary I edited much and highlighted the related and genuine ones only.

After interview I did not forget other responsibility and duty to transcribe the raw data taken from the respondent or co-researcher. I used paper pencil,I followed the convention of transcription like discourse features,what the respondents spoke in

which context and content I have mentioned in my write up section. I have mentioned the conventions of respondent during interview like: incomplete sentence, noises, fillers uh, uhh, yeah, uss, no etc.

Different conventions during interview like author deletion, author's comment, short untimed pause, long pause word speaker emphasis laugh images, etc. are highlighted in my paper. At least as a researcher I have tried my best to mention the basic convention during qualitative research interview. I have tried my best, and the shown report speaks or addresses the real interview from the real story from the respondent.

To make the report trustworthy some of the interview questions through objectives with the certain theme and its analysis and write up with inductive approach as a researcher I have tried to mention in my paper.

The results obtained from the analysis of the data have been discussed under three different themes as follows:

Theme: 1

Weak sensor board/copyright in music in present scenario

One of the respectable and veteran folk singer or collector of folk songs from province no. five has his own story that I have included here. He had prepared to record a song in Radio Nepal but due to the sensor board, the words used in the song had been removed, the song entitled '*rail ma chadhisarajaula, piratimabessariramaula*' here the word "rail" is not suitable in the context of Nepal so it should be omitted. "The system is weak and poor in the field of music in Nepal. The system is weak and poor in the field of music in Nepal. There is a big communication gap among the two generations in musical field. Present generations/youngsters have contact and in touch with the senior singers due to the time changing world in musical field. Many more multilingual words are haphazardly used in the field of folk music and culture. Sadly, speaking, folk melodies are twisted and made weak that never uplift the cultural navigation in the field of folk music and culture.

Theme: 2

Folk songs are our soul; preservation is inevitable

One of the veteran female folk singer of province no. 1 of Nepal has her perception here and the experiences of her study shows that folk songs are sung by ordinary people of our country Nepal and we used to get sentiment and real smell with sweet cultural flavor that enrich and preserve our identity and place culture of that place.

Unsystematic use of the words, freedom of expression has been dismissed, it is the sad news in the context of Nepal, she further argues that the Hindi language has badly affected and started removing the existence of the Nepalese folk songs. Musical mind of a singer/performer and his/her identity and the language ideology of language are very much crucial. The melody always attracts the people's attention. The more the person expose to the certain cultural aspect, the more he/she becomes acculturate, adjust, accommodate and assimilate. The performer of the folk music (song) can only attract the audience's attention.

Theme: 3

Multilingual awareness and multilingual ideology

One of the popular folk singer of province no. 1 of Nepal has his personal opinion here and the experiences of his study shows that Nepali language is not only alone itself and has not been detached with other neighboring languages. Using solely the Nepali words and rejecting other language here is not so much tolerable, we have to have the solidarity and have to show our international brotherhood with other culture to culturally acculturate. We intellectual beings should have "multilingual awareness" (Garcia, 2008) to be aware of multilingual ideologies, to internalize them, and to practice them in performing songs and its preservice for linguistic creativity that always break linguistic boundary. Following Garcia (2008), all human beings should have "language awareness", which encompasses the following understandings:

Knowledge of language (proficiency). The language used in folk songs Includes ability to use language appropriately in many recording songs; awareness of social and pragmatic norms. Knowledge about language (subject-matter knowledge). The language analyst Includes forms and functions of systems -grammar, phonology, vocabulary.

To know the exact reason that why folk singers of Nepal are using the words beyond their mother language in their songs especially the folk songs. The queries arise here automatically, to make it more clearly I have conducted the interview with some of the veteran folk singers in Nepal who have used such derived words/codes in their songs before singing/performing

The results have been described under two headings, namely identification and classification of multiple language use in folk songs.

Data of multiple language use in folk songs

*hiḍḍaithië ehajjoḍābātomābāphre,
hāku-hākumaicāle handsome re,
setoghoḍāehajjoḍābhokurāchoḍa
maipani ta kamtikokāchura*

The above folk song is conceptualized at the time of stage programme, according to the performer of the song, the different four languages (Hindi, Newari, Nepali, English) have been mixed up to address the mass of the varied community, especially the Newari community was the true listeners/ spectators. The theme of above song is; the male singer has been addressed 'handsome' by the very beautiful black colored young Newari girl during the time of walking on the way to village. Above folk song data clearly addresses the linguistic gap and cultural territory with its boundary has been broken because of the creativity in the songs with melody..social and cultural solidarity have been found through this song)

*bāukoṭīkāmākoāśīrbād
keicāīdainapharkanukhālīhāt
pardainakeicinū
pardeśīmāyālesamjheraāidinu*

The above folk song brings the message of the brother from the abroad. His sister requests him to come at home. She does not expect anything as a gift but wants true love, care and support for her and the aged parent. She wants her brother to stay at home with family care and scaffold.

*ākāsaiuḍnegaruḍaibanchībhuĩ ghumnebesāra
tyā meropitātyā meromātā
yā merokochara*

The above folk song talks about the eagle flying on the sky. The singer's parents are very far in the rural / remote area. She has been sent very far after marriage. She expresses her internal feelings, sadness in loneliness setting. Some words (mātā, pitā) in the above song are in Sanskrit language.

*phulaikojobannijobāraimaināūcha
hāhāhaimanuśyakojobanaekaibār
hāhāhāhai ā hāhāhā*

The above folk song was collected by late JB Ale, and his wife folk singer Kabita Ale sang it in her beautiful and melodious voice. She mixed other languages at the time of singing. (jo) Hindi and Sanskrit (manuśya) language have been mixed. Eastern dialect of Nepali culture has been attached here in different and in a unique style. The theme or crux of above folk song is our life is transience. Human life and flower's life have been compared. Here, the life of flower comes time and again. But human life comes as a short time which is temporary.

Educational Implication

At the first lesson the language teacher will ask the students about their favorite type of music, and set goals to help to accomplish whatever musical aspirations they have for themselves or their children. What we will do for further to preserve such folk songs. Nepali typical folk songs and dances 'social and cultural gatherings are not limited only in the typical society but it has dispersed all over the world. (setting) dhānnāc, pālām are not celebrated only in eastern rural Nepal. In classroom there is not only one language used, so in the case of folk songs there is no single language or dominant language. Some of the music schools have initiated musical curriculum and rare research has been started). As there is fluidity in language used in folk songs, there should be translanguaging in classroom so the minority students feel safe in their identity as well. So teacher as a researcher should have multilingual awareness as the folk singers do. Criticism: contamination either in folk songs and languages used by students (lack of mastering) Classroom itself is more diverse like kitchen garden. He /she should speak the students' melody through teaching melody is flowing in their mind, so he should let them to learn with the therapy of music that reflects their cultural practices, then only teacher as a classroom technician and transformative agent/intellectual can adjust accommodate and acculturate in that miniature society like classroom. There are many similarities in languages under studies in the domains of sound systems, morph syntax and lexicon. Similarities ease the learning of these languages. There are a number of differences in these languages. While teaching and learning the languages, the main focus should be placed on the differences. There is no loss learning languages. Learning more languages means learning human beings and enhances harmony and peace in the society. Each language is equipped with its basic formal and functional characteristics. Language is for communication. Thus a language should be taught and learned from this perspective. *Nepali, Rai-Bantawa, Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Tamang, Maithili, Tharu* reveal very interesting features in the domains of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Lawati, H. (2017)

Conclusion

As I listened many folk songs, and noticed genuine information from the stakeholders and concerned personalities which were related to the folk song and culture. After digging out the thick description of the story hidden as a reality that why monolingual or dominant use of the language could not address the present social reality in the field of multiple culture and the era of globalized world, acculturation and multilingual turn. Why the folk singer of different provinces of the nation used fluidity of language in their folk songs at the time of performing for the public listeners/fans. There is always a question, that is entertained by them and as a researcher I detected and tried my best to explore the issue and found out

that the world is like common village and the multiplicity of language has high demand even in the present context too. It was willingly or unwillingly practiced from *Seturam* period to *Jhalakman* and from *Kumar Basnet* period to *Saroj Lamichhane* period. This is the era of super diversity and the present day world is full of fusion and mixed. So the code has been mixed or switched, due to this, the linguistic creativity has been dispersed and as a result the linguistic boundary has also been broken. Undoubtedly saying, the present generation who are following the present folk song, are not well acquainted to the old folk musical culture but they have gone further in their own way, this is the symbol of acculturating the whole world globalizing scenario. I drew on some folk songs to look at how they mix multiple languages and interviewed singers to understand the purpose behind fluid language use. My argument is that understanding folk music provides as critical insights into examining how the dominant ideologies of language as a fixed entity does not embrace social reality.

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