

CODE-SWITCHING

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Abstract. This article investigates code-switching as a systematic bilingual practice shaped by interactional goals and sociolinguistic constraints. The study aims to integrate structural and pragmatic perspectives in order to explain when and why speakers alternate languages within a single communicative event. Methodologically, it applies qualitative discourse analysis to a small corpus of naturally occurring bilingual conversations collected from urban university contexts, complemented by a rule-based linguistic annotation of switch types and their sequential positions. The scientific novelty lies in proposing an integrative analytical model that links switch placement to turn-taking organization, stance marking, and domain-sensitive lexical choice, while also specifying how morphosyntactic compatibility limits switching opportunities. The findings clarify how code-switching functions both as a resource for meaning-making and as an index of contextual alignment, offering implications for bilingual education and for the description of emerging urban bilingual norms.

Keywords :code-switching; bilingual interaction; discourse pragmatics; morphosyntactic constraints; stance and alignment; language choice; urban bilingualism

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada kod almashinuvi (code-switching) muloqot maqsadlari va sotsiolingvistik omillar ta'sirida shakllanuvchi ikki tillilik hodisasi sifatida tadqiq qilinadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi bir kommunikativ vaziyat doirasida so'zlovchilarning qachon va nima sababdan tillarni almashtirishini izohlash uchun strukturaviy hamda pragmatik yondashuvlarni uyg'unlashtirishdan iborat. Tadqiqot metodologiyasi sifatida shahar universitetlari muhitida qayd etilgan tabiiy bilingval suhbatlarning kichik korpusi asosida sifatli diskurs tahlili amalga oshirildi. Shuningdek, kod almashinuvi turlari va ularning nutq ketma-ketligidagi pozitsiyalarini aniqlash maqsadida qoida-asosli lingvistik annotatsiya usulidan foydalanildi. Tadqiqotning ilmiy yangiligi kod almashinuvi joylashuvini navbat almashish jarayoni, munosabat va pozitsiyani ifodalash hamda kommunikativ sohaga xos leksik tanlov bilan bog'lovchi integrativ tahliliy model sifatida taklif etilganida namoyon bo'ladi. Tadqiqot natijalari kod almashinuving (code-switching) hodisasi ma'no yaratish vositasi, balki kommunikativ kontekstga moslashuv ko'rsatkichi sifatida ham xizmat qilishini ko'rsatadi. Olingan xulosalar bilingval ta'limni rivojlantirish hamda zamonaviy urban bilingval me'yorlarni tavsiflash uchun muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi.

Kalitso'zlar :kod almashinuvi, bilingvizm, diskurs tahlili, sotsiolingvistika, pragmatika, morfosintaktik moslik, bilingval muloqot, navbat almashish, lingvistik annotatsiya, urban bilingval me'yorlar.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье исследуется переключение кодов как систематическая двуязычная практика, обусловленная интеракционными целями и социолингвистическими ограничениями. Цель работы состоит в интеграции структурного и прагматического подходов для объяснения того, когда и почему говорящие чередуют языки в пределах одного коммуникативного события. Методологически используется качественный дискурс-анализ небольшого корпуса естественных двуязычных разговоров, собранных в городской университетской среде, а также разметка типов переключений и их позиционирования в последовательной организации речи. Научная новизна заключается в предложении интегративной модели, связывающей размещение



переключений с чередованием реплик, маркированием позиции и выбором лексики по доменам, при одновременном учете морфосинтаксической совместимости. Результаты уточняют роль переключения кодов как ресурса смыслообразования и индекса контекстного согласования, что важно для двуязычного образования и описания городских двуязычных норм.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА : переключение кодов; двуязычный дискурс; прагматические функции; морфосинтаксис; интеракционное согласование; языковой выбор; городской билингвизм

1. Introduction

Code-switching has long been treated as a diagnostic phenomenon for understanding what bilingual competence entails and how social meaning is built in interaction. Early accounts sometimes framed switching as deficient mixing, yet contemporary research has shown that alternation is typically patterned and sensitive to both linguistic well-formedness and situated purposes. A persistent problem, however, is that structural and pragmatic traditions often proceed in parallel: constraint-based models prioritize grammatical loci for switching, while discourse-analytic accounts emphasize local action, identity work, and contextualization. When these strands are not integrated, descriptions risk either reducing switching to formal mechanics or, conversely, treating it as unconstrained stylistic play. For applied contexts such as bilingual education and academic communication in multilingual cities, this gap becomes consequential, because pedagogical decisions depend on whether switching is understood as rule-governed competence, as strategic meaning-making, or as both simultaneously [1].

Recent literature increasingly calls for models that map the grammatical availability of switching points onto the sequential organization of talk. In natural conversation, the same bilingual speaker may avoid switching at some junctures but exploit it at others, even within similar syntactic frames, suggesting that social action and grammar jointly condition outcomes. At the same time, switching is not merely responsive to immediate interlocutors; it is also shaped by domain expectations, institutional frames, and circulating norms about what counts as appropriate language choice in a given setting [2]. In post-Soviet and Central Asian urban centers, for instance, bilingual repertoires often involve dynamic alternation among Uzbek, Russian, and globalized English resources in education and professional life. Yet scholarly descriptions remain uneven across languages and registers, and many studies focus either on broad attitudinal surveys or on isolated examples rather than on systematically annotated interactional data.

The present study addresses this need by proposing and testing an integrative analytical model that links code-switching placement to both morphosyntactic compatibility and interactional function. The research is guided by three questions. First, which switch types are most frequent in a small corpus of spontaneous bilingual conversations in an urban university environment, and where do they occur within turns? Second, what recurrent pragmatic functions are associated with switching, particularly in relation to stance marking, alignment, and topic management? Third, how do grammatical environments enable or restrict switching, and how do speakers appear to exploit such environments for interactional ends? The study's novelty lies in articulating a single descriptive framework in which constraint-sensitive annotation is paired with sequential analysis, enabling empirical generalizations about how bilingual speakers coordinate form and action. The practical relevance concerns bilingual pedagogy and academic communication, where recognizing patterned switching can support realistic norms for classroom discourse and the design of language-aware curricula

2. Materials and Methods

The study employs a qualitative-dominant mixed analytical design, combining discourse analysis with structured linguistic annotation. The dataset consists of naturally occurring, audio-recorded bilingual conversations collected in an urban university context, involving peers engaged in informal planning, study coordination, and everyday discussion. The sampling rationale prioritizes interactional naturalness and comparable participation frameworks, rather than demographic representativeness.



Recordings were transcribed with attention to turn boundaries, overlaps, and salient prosodic cues that are relevant for identifying switch timing. For analytic tractability, the corpus was restricted to a manageable number of conversations while preserving variability in topics and participant constellations. Ethical procedures included participant consent, anonymization, and the exclusion of personally identifying content.

Annotation proceeded in two layers. The first layer classified switches by type: intersentential switching, intrasentential switching, insertional switching of single lexical items or short phrases, and tag-like switches. The second layer coded the sequential position of each switch: turn-initial, turn-medial, pre-completion, post-completion, and repair-related positions. In parallel, a grammatical environment code captured whether switches occurred at clause boundaries, at phrase boundaries, within noun phrases, or near functional morphemes, as well as whether the surrounding structure showed congruence between the two languages. This procedure is informed by established constraint-based and usage-based insights on switch points, without assuming a single universal constraint; instead, compatibility is treated as an empirically observable property of local structures [5]. Discourse-analytic interpretation then examined how switches contributed to actions such as emphasis, mitigation, alignment, quoting, and metalinguistic commentary. Reliability was supported by iterative recoding and analytic memoing, focusing on category stability and explanatory adequacy rather than on purely quantitative agreement metrics, which is consistent with qualitative corpus approaches in interaction research [6].

Results

Across the corpus, insertional switching of lexical items and short phrases occurred more frequently than full intersentential alternation. Most insertions were content words associated with academic routines, digital practices, or evaluative stance, while function-word switching was comparatively rare. Intrasentential switching beyond single-word insertion was present but concentrated in environments where phrase boundaries aligned with plausible syntactic segmentation in both languages. Intersentential switching was less common overall but appeared in stretches of narration, joking sequences, and explicit stance-taking, where speakers used language alternation to demarcate discourse units.

In terms of sequential placement, turn-initial switches often coincided with topic launches, responses that indexed a shift in footing, or resumptions after overlap. Turn-medial switches clustered around evaluative components, such as assessments and intensifiers, and around institutionalized lexical items linked to study life. Switches near turn completion were frequently associated with summarizing formulations and with “closing” tokens that signaled readiness to yield the floor. Repair-related switches constituted a smaller but analytically salient subset: speakers sometimes switched when searching for a precise term, when clarifying a reference, or when reformatting an utterance for recipient design.

The mapping between grammatical environments and switching revealed a strong tendency for switching at clause and phrase boundaries where morphosyntactic compatibility was higher. Insertions within noun phrases occurred primarily as embedded items that did not require cross-language agreement marking, or where agreement could be realized in the matrix language without structural conflict. Switches adjacent to bound morphemes and within tightly integrated functional projections were relatively infrequent, suggesting avoidance of environments that would require complex integration. Nevertheless, some speakers produced well-formed mixed constituents in recurrent formulaic frames, indicating that routinization can expand the set of available switch points within a community.

Functionally, switching repeatedly served to mark stance, especially through evaluative adjectives, intensifiers, and short metacommentary. It also indexed alignment with interlocutors by adopting a language associated with shared academic experience or with a locally salient peer style. Quotation and voicing were commonly marked by a shift into a language associated with the reported speaker or with an institutional voice, thereby differentiating narrative layers. In several conversations,



speakers used brief switches to manage epistemic positioning, differentiating what they knew directly from what they inferred or had heard, and to modulate politeness in requests and negotiations.

3. Discussion

The results support the view that code-switching is best modeled as the joint product of grammatical affordances and interactional work. The predominance of insertional switching aligns with claims that many bilingual communities develop stable patterns of borrowing-like insertions that remain sensitive to the matrix language's morphosyntax, particularly in contexts where institutional and technological lexicons are unevenly distributed across languages [1]. At the same time, the sequential analysis shows that insertion is not merely a lexical convenience; it is systematically timed to accomplish actions such as assessment, alignment, and topic management. This finding refines purely lexical explanations by demonstrating that even single-item switches can carry interactional force when placed at action-relevant moments within turns.

The observed avoidance of switching near bound morphology is consistent with a compatibility perspective: speakers prefer switch points that minimize the risk of morphosyntactic conflict, especially in spontaneous talk where processing demands are high. Yet the presence of routinized mixed frames suggests that experience and local norms can partially override structural conservatism. This resonates with usage-based accounts in which repeated community practices entrench specific mixed constructions, making them accessible as ready-made resources. The implication is that constraints should be treated not only as abstract grammatical prohibitions but also as gradient tendencies shaped by frequency, conventionalization, and recipient expectations [5; 6].

From a pragmatic standpoint, stance and alignment emerged as central organizing functions of switching, which accords with discourse-pragmatic literature emphasizing contextualization and footing shifts. The turn-initial clustering of switches at topic launches and resumptions indicates that language choice operates as a boundary marker in interaction, segmenting sequences and highlighting changes in participation framework. Repair-related switching further underscores that bilinguals deploy their full repertoires to maintain intersubjectivity: a switch can be a resource for precision, for ensuring recognition, or for reformatting an utterance to fit the recipient's presumed knowledge. For educational settings, these findings argue against simplistic classroom prohibitions. If switching is used to manage understanding and coordination, then pedagogical approaches should distinguish between switching that supports task achievement and switching that replaces opportunities for target-language development. The data suggest that such distinctions are not captured by counting switches alone; they require attention to where switches occur and what actions they implement [2; 4].

The study has limitations. The corpus is small and context-specific, focusing on an urban university environment and on informal peer talk; patterns may differ in family interaction, formal institutional encounters, or digitally mediated writing. The analysis is qualitative-dominant, and while frequency tendencies were observed, broader generalization would benefit from larger corpora and statistical modeling of predictors such as topic domain, participant relationship, and proficiency asymmetries. Future research could extend the integrative model to tri- or multi-lingual settings, incorporate acoustic-prosodic measures to track emphasis and stance, and compare spoken interaction with social media discourse to examine how platform constraints reshape switching practices.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that code-switching in an urban bilingual university milieu is neither random nor reducible to a single explanatory dimension. Switching is patterned by a preference for morphosyntactically compatible environments, particularly at clause and phrase boundaries, and by the interactional demands of turn-taking, stance marking, alignment, topic organization, and repair. Insertional switching is especially prominent, functioning as a compact resource for evaluation and contextual indexing, while intersentential switching more often segments discourse units and differentiates narrative layers. The proposed integrative framework contributes by linking switch placement to both grammatical affordances and sequential position, enabling more precise descriptions of how bilingual speakers coordinate linguistic form with social action. These insights support more



realistic applied approaches in bilingual education and communication training, where code-switching can be addressed as a competence-based practice that is strategically deployed rather than treated as a uniform deficit.

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