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## **CODE SWITCHING IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

### **Summary**

Language switching, also known as code-switching, is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which speakers switch between two or more languages. This research aims to determine the types of teacher code-switching that occurs during the teaching and learning process in English classes. The study applied a study of semantic and interpretation research. Fragments of Modern English fiction were used to collect the illustrative data, analyzed on the basis of code-switching theory. Specifically, this study examines types and functions of code switching in the characters' conversations to exemplify the types of code-switching, whereas the functions of the phenomenon under consideration are viewed through the prism of methodology in connection to the English language teaching and learning. The study states that teachers apply three types of code switching, namely: intrasentential code switching, inter-sentential code switching, and tag switching. By using code switching, the teacher is primarily aiming to reduce students' misunderstanding of the lesson or their difficulty comprehending the English lesson offered by the English teacher.

**Keywords:** code-switching, intercultural interaction, cultural identity, communicative competence, intrasentential code switching, inter-sentential code switching, tag switching

# ПЕРЕМИКАННЯ КОДУ У ФОРМУВАННІ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ

## Summary

Перемикання коду є соціолінгвістичним явищем, під час якого мовці переключаються між двома або більше мовами. Дослідження має на меті визначити типи та функції кодового перемикання під час навчально-виховного процесу на уроках англійської мови. У дослідженні застосовано семантичний та інтерпретаційний методи дослідження. Для збору ілюстративного матеріалу використано фрагменти сучасної англійської художньої прози, які проаналізовано на основі теорії перемикання кодів. Зокрема, для ілюстрації типів та функцій перемикання кодів у розмовах персонажів розглядаються типи та мета перемикання кодів, а функції досліджуваного явища розглядаються крізь призму методики у зв'язку з викладанням та вивченням англійської мови. У дослідженні зазначено, що вчителі застосовують три типи перемикання кодів, а саме: внутрішньосмислове, міжсмислове перемикання кодів та перемикання тегів. Змінюючи код, вчитель, прагне зменшити нерозуміння учнями уроку або їхні труднощі, пояснити конотативний зміст повідомлення чи скерувати напрямок роботи зі студентами.

**Ключові слова:** перемикання коду, міжкультурна взаємодія, культурна ідентичність, комунікативна компетенція, внутрішнє перемикання кодів, міжсистемне перемикання кодів, екстрасистемне перемикання

## Introduction

Code-switching is a fruitful area of language research of communication in multilingual and multicultural settings, as well as a tactic of teaching and learning a foreign language [2; 4; 8; 15]. In the 1980s, code-switching as a phenomenon and tactic used by foreign language teachers attracted attention [3; 12]. Code switching is the alternate employment of two or more languages in the same discourse [16], which occurs under the condition when the communicant is bilingual or multilingual.

Code switching is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be considered from different theoretical perspectives, including sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and pragmatic approaches. The *sociolinguistic approach* emphasizes the relationship between linguistic behavior and social factors such as status, identity, and social roles. *Psycholinguistic approaches* focus on the cognitive processes underlying code-switching, examining how bilingual individuals select and switch language systems depending on the situation [1; 10].

In addition, a *pragmatic approach* to the study of code switching emphasizes the functions and motives of using different codes in communicative acts. Code-switching can be used to express emotions, change the social context, or emphasize certain information in a conversation [17]. Thus, theoretical approaches to the study of code switching provide a multifaceted understanding of this phenomenon, which is important for the analysis of multilingual communication. Language codes are various systems used in the process of communication to transfer information between participants of communication. The main types of language codes are national languages, dialects, sociolects, professional jargons and other variations used depending on the context of communication, region or social group. Codes can switch between different languages or variations of the same language depending on the conditions in which communication takes place, which makes their study important for understanding the processes of interlanguage interaction and bilingualism.

Modern investigations assume undeniably that the mechanisms for language switching follow directly from general principles of grammar. Theories based on this assumption tend to refer to inter-constituent grammatical relationships like case assignment, and lexical categories. It is evident that code switching differs from lexical borrowing that is the other distinctive manifestation of language contact. Loanwords assume the morphological, syntactic, and phonological identity of the recipient language; they are recurrent in the speech of even monolingual speakers and widespread across the community; the speakers use them normally along with the rest of the recipient-language lexicon [10: 2062].

The classification of language codes involves the division into different categories depending on social, functional and linguistic characteristics. This classification helps to better understand the nature of code switching and its impact on communication in different sociocultural contexts. Knowledge of code varieties is key to the study of language behavior in multilingual environments.

## Purpose, subject and research methods

The phenomenon under study plays an important role in understanding communication in multicultural environments, where interaction occurs between speakers of different languages and cultures (P. Bourdieu, J. Fishman, V. Labov). In the general context, code switching is defined as the use of elements of several languages by a bilingual person during one speech act (J. Blom, J. Gumperts, K. Myers-Scotton). Other researchers consider code switching as a process when a speaker changes language, dialect or style in the course of communication, depending on the context within a certain ethnic culture (F. S. Batsevich). The purpose of the study is to analyze code switching in the formation of students' communicative competence. To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set: to characterize the concept of switching language codes; to analyze theoretical approaches to studying the phenomenon of code switching and its functions from the cultural, communicative and cognitive perspectives; to illustrate the possible kinds of code switching in the classroom on the basis of the fragments from modern English fiction; to determine the place of communicative competence among other constituents of the cultural one. To obtain the goal, semantic and interpretative analyses are to be engaged into the research.

## Research results

Research on code-switching in bilingual classrooms appear to be cross-disciplinary in nature engaging educational research on classroom interaction and teacher's talk styles, conversational analysis, pragmatics and the ethnography of communication, the theory of intercultural communication [8].

According to P. Gardner-Chloros, R. Charles, J. Cheshire [5; 12], three **kinds of code switching** are differentiated: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag code switching.

*An intra-sentential switching* happens when a word, phrase, or clause, of a foreign language is placed in the middle of the sentence in a base language. The following illustration demonstrates appealing to the an intra-sentential switching in the utterance: "And they'll never put a smart old whatsis like me in jail. It's fun...I'd wait till we go to a pile of gravel and then I'd stop and say, 'Gitout, Miss Priss.' She'd git out, all right." [14: 57, 62]. The girl switches to her usual way of speaking with the expressions in the colloquial style in the middle of her speech to signify that she wouldn't like to change her destructive habits.

***Inter-sentential code switching*** occurs when a complete sentence is imbedded into a foreign language uttered between two sentences in a base language or outside of a phrase. Inter-sentential code switching is illustrated in the greeting of an Indian man in his native language: “But he set it down right in the street and shook my hand. ‘Hau, Takoza, Grandchild’, he greeted me formally in Sioux.” [13: 32]. Used at the beginning of the greeting, switching to the mother tongue in the conversation with his grandchild signals the old man’s calm and confidence while being in a big city in an embarrassing situation when the growling dogs approached the family.

***Tag or extra-sentential code switching*** appears when a bilingual inserts short expressions from a different language at the end of the utterances at the moment. This tag change occurs at several points throughout the utterance. In other words, when a bilingual adds short statements (tag) from a different language at the conclusion of his or her utterances, this is what happens. There are three types of tag switching in accordance with S. Poplack theory [11]. First, discourse markers such as you know, I mean, by the way, then, so, oh my god, and than, right and anyway. Second, sentence fillers such as like, literary, basically, well, eventually, propably and seriously. Third, interjection such as wow, hello, hi, bye, oh, and no.”Hau, hoksilas, boys” he greeted and held out his hand” [13: 35]. The old Indian Grandfather greeted the American grandson’s friends in the city in his native language eventually changing for the English one for the expressive perpose.

To perceive the role of code switching in the formation of students’ communicative competence, it is crucial to be aware of **the functions of code switching**.

Code-switching serves a variety of functions in communication, helping to adapt speech behavior to the context of communication. One of the main functions is ***pragmatic***, which allows speakers to change the tone or formality of their utterances, depending on the listener or social situation. In the next example, Flannery O’Connor uses language and code-switching as an important means of emphasizing the cultural and social divisions between characters. Code-switching in the story is more about stylistic shifts and transitions between different social registers of speech that reflect the class and moral differences of the characters. O’Connor emphasizes the contrasts between the main character, the grandmother, and the other characters, especially Misfit, through language to demonstrate their beliefs, values, and internal conflicts: “*In my time,*” said the grandmother, folding her thin veined fingers, “*children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else. People did right then. Oh, look at the cute little pickaninny!” she said and pointed to a Negro child standing in the door of a shack. “Wouldn’t that make a picture, now?” [9: 74]. In this example, the grandmother uses a formal, somewhat old-fashioned style of speech that emphasizes her*

conservative views and idealization of the past. Her speech is laced with Southern idioms and phrases that reveal her racist beliefs and naive perception of the world. She shifts from a moralizing tone about living the right life to an almost every day racist remark that demonstrates stylistic code-switching.

Code-switching can also serve as *a marker of group identity*, emphasizing belonging to a particular social or ethnic community. This phenomenon is especially common in bilingual and multilingual societies. The code-switching between English and the languages of the Indian diaspora is an important element in revealing the characters' cultural duality. The following example illustrates an intra-sentential code switching in communication. They change their language depending on the situation, which symbolizes their struggle between preserving traditions and adapting to Western society. This creates a contrast between their personal identity and the outside world: "Baba, look, a cow!" Bobby shouted, pointing out the window. Mr. Kapasi smiled and said in Bengali, "Ha, shob thik ache," then switched back to English: "Yes, it's a cow" [7]. This is an example of code-switching between Bengali and English, where Mr Kapasi, the guide and interpreter, first responds in Bengali and then switches to English for better understanding. By using Bengali, he emphasises his cultural identity, while his use of English demonstrates his professional necessity and attempt to accommodate to his clients who do not understand Bengali. Thus, code switching gets implemented to signify the cultural identity of communicants.

Another important function is *metacommunicative*, when speakers use code-switching to change the topic or to signal the importance or confidentiality of certain information: "*Do you like music?*" he asked me as we entered the building. "*Yes, I like corridors.*" I answered. *He then picked up a trumpet, blew on it and handed it to me*" [6: 75]. In the conversation between a Mexican pupil and an American teacher the girl uses a Mexican unit 'corridos' to denote 'ballads' to provide a sincere and truthful answer to the given question fulfilling the metacommunicative function.

Another function of referring to code switching in teaching and learning a foreign language is the implementation of both teachers' and students' *cognitive flexibility*, which appears to be of great significance in multicultural education, that is the educational strategy in which students' cultural backgrounds are considered to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments. It is employed to support and extend the concepts of culture, differences, equality, and democracy in the formal school setting. [17: 2-3]. It means that any participant of intercultural academic interaction is supposed to possess cognitive flexibility to avoid communicative failure. Cognitive flexibility can also assist in protecting against a number

of biases. Educators today are faced with an overwhelming challenge to prepare students from diverse cultural backgrounds to live in a rapidly changing society and a world in which some groups have greater societal benefits than others because of race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, religion, ability, or age. Cognitive flexibility occurs in two main ways: the ability to think about multiple things at the same time and the ability to modify thinking based on a change in expectations or demands. Cognitive flexibility is required to adapt the behavior and thinking in response to the environment, i.e. to get adjusted to cultural peculiarities of the participants and avoid destructive communicative deviations in the teaching process. To find a proper communicative strategy and change the approach to solving a problem, both teachers and students need to demonstrate flexible thinking revealed in the semantic content of the words used in the utterance irrespective of the language chosen.

Thus, code-switching is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but an important tool in interpersonal interaction that contributes to more effective communication in multilingual environments.

The success and outcome of code switching in the interaction depend on the linguistic and **communicative competence** of the interlocutors.

To define skills that provide successful intercultural communication, it is necessary to consider the notion of **cultural competence**. Cultural competence is the most essential factor necessary for effective intercultural communication. Cultural competence presupposes understanding of presuppositions, background knowledge, value systems, psychological and social identity, peculiar to a culture. It should embrace the ability to interpret correctly such cultural language units as toponyms, anthroponyms, political terms, book and film titles as well as to differentiate between their importance for intercultural communication. Cultural competence is a combination of two components: linguistic and communicative.

The term **linguistic competence** was first suggested by Noam Chomsky who defined it as "linguistic intuition", as "linguistic knowledge", as the individual's ability to use the abstract system of language rules embracing the phonological, syntactic and semantic components. Though language is only one of the aspects in the individual's psychological ability to sustain communication. **Communicative competence** is a set of skills necessary for effective communication, it consists of mechanisms, tactics and strategies that provide effective interactions. Requirements to communicative competence in ICC are quite high, since it presupposes that the individual knows not only rules of human communication as such but also takes into account cultural differences and feels slightest changes in communicative situations and partners' behaviour.

Communicative competence involves the ability to predict a communicative situation and ability to operate in a current situation; to choose a communicative tactic, adequate for the topic of communication, to gain the goals; to understand the psychological potential; to overcome psychological obstacles and spend one's efforts rationally [1: 30].

The contemporary investigations [12] prove that all types of code-switching such as intra-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and tag switching are used by the teacher to develop the students' communicative competence. The teacher uses intra-sentential switching when teaching the lesson, translating their explanation, and translating unfamiliar words to the pupils, interpreting the explanation, stressing the lesson, and asking questions to explain the lesson. Tag switching also is often practiced by the teacher. The teacher switches a code to reduce either students' misunderstanding of the lesson or their difficulty grasping the English lesson offered by the English teachers in the classroom. Consequently, code switching is a real phenomenon in foreign language learning classroom.

It is revealed that there is a need to raise EFL teachers' awareness on when to use code-switching [3], i.e. switching can be a useful tool in assisting classroom management, that is for the employment of a management technique, classroom atmosphere, in-class rules, agenda and patterns, pedagogical practices, syllabus and discipline precautions. It is considered that teachers' code-switching is an effective teaching strategy when dealing with low English proficient learners which is deeply related to learners' affective support [2].

Code switching is applied in the monolingual conversations to mark or reinforce significant moves in the interaction (e.g. emphasis, change in voice quality), or to introduce structural contrasts, manage the conversational pauses, or highlight the referential connotations in the utterance [5].

In the process of forming lexical competence in the context of language code switching in a foreign language lesson, the key is creating conditions that promote the active use of native and foreign languages during learning. It is important to provide students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in contexts where natural code switching helps to acquire new lexical units, improving the understanding and use of the foreign language in real situations.

First of all, it is important to consider that language code switching is a natural phenomenon in multilingual environments, and it can be used as a teaching tool to increase lexical competence. The teacher is recommended to create tasks that stimulate students to switch between the native and foreign languages depending on the context of communication. For example, when discussing complex topics, students can start a dialogue in their native



language to clarify the general idea, and then gradually switch to using the foreign language to detail and clarify terms.

Another method to build lexical competence through code-switching is translating the context from the native language to the foreign one, without requiring a literal translation. This can be the performance of creative tasks, where students, having read a text in their native language, have to formulate its main points in the foreign language. For example, after reading a news story in Ukrainian, students write a summary in the foreign language, using not only the translation but also their understanding of lexical and grammatical structures. In addition, it is important to include tasks that promote the active use of new vocabulary by creating situations at the lessons where students have to interact with native speakers or by simulating real communicative situations. For example, role-playing games, in which one part of the students represents a foreign culture and the other part represents their native culture, or simulation of dialogues with natural code-switching depending on the situation [1: 33]. Another effective approach is the integration of authentic texts, videos and podcasts that contain elements of code-switching. These can be interviews where participants switch from one language to another, or podcasts that present multilingual communicative situations. Such material allows students not only to passively perceive new vocabulary but also to actively apply it in different contexts.

Finally, the practical component in the formation of the students' communicative competence may include tasks that simulate real-life situations, where participants can test their code-switching skills. Such activities not only allow them to develop linguistic flexibility but also increase the level of lexical competence, helping students adapt to different language contexts. An important part of this process is understanding the cultural features of language behavior, which will help students avoid typical communicative failures in the future.

## **Conclusions**

Code-switching is one of sociolinguistics phenomenon when a speaker of bilingual or multilingual switches from one language to another one. The research aims to determine types of teacher code-switching in the teaching and learning process in English classes. The study applied a study of semantic and interpretation research. Fragments of Modern English fiction were used to collect the illustrative data, analyzed on the basis of code-switching theory proposed by Poplack (1980). Specifically, this study examines types and functions of codeswitching in the characters' conversations to exemplify the types of code-switching, whereas the functions of the phenomenon under consideration are viewed through the prism of

methodology in connection to the English language teaching and learning. The functions of code switching in the classroom are established through the prism of cultural, communicative and cognitive perspectives, which impact the participants' pragmatic and metacommunicative features, cultural identity and cognitive flexibility. The study states that teachers apply three types of code switching, namely: intrasentential code switching, inter-sentential code switching, and tag switching. Code switching is mainly used by the teacher to reduce either students' misunderstanding of the lesson or their difficulty understanding the English lesson offered by the English teachers in the classroom.

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