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Master's thesis

**BILINGUALISM AND CODE-SWITCHING IN MODERN
COMMUNICATION**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of bilingualism and code-switching in the context of modern communication. The research investigates the theoretical foundations of bilingualism, its cognitive and sociolinguistic dimensions, and focuses on code-switching as a dynamic linguistic and social strategy used by bilingual speakers. The empirical part of the study analyzes authentic examples of code-switching across different communicative contexts, including everyday speech, digital communication, and professional discourse.

The first chapter provides an overview of the types of bilingualism and their implications for cognitive development and language use. It also discusses key sociolinguistic theories related to language contact and multilingual communities. The second chapter is devoted to the classification, motivations, and functional aspects of code-switching, with particular attention to how and why speakers alternate languages in various situations. The third chapter presents an empirical study based on interviews, surveys, and analysis of digital and spoken discourse among bilingual speakers.

The findings reveal that code-switching serves as a multifunctional tool for bilingual individuals, aiding in identity expression, emotional nuance, social alignment, and communication efficiency. It is especially prevalent in digital environments, where informal and multilingual interactions thrive. The thesis underscores the evolving nature of bilingual communication and highlights the practical and theoretical significance of code-switching in a globalized world.

Keywords: bilingualism, code-switching, multilingualism, sociolinguistics, language identity, digital discourse, communication strategies.

Анотація

У цій магістерській роботі досліджується явище білінгвізму та зміна мовного коду в умовах сучасної комунікації. Робота висвітлює теоретичні засади білінгвізму, його когнітивні та соціолінгвістичні аспекти, а також розглядає зміна мовного коду як динамічну лінгвістичну та соціальну стратегію, якою користуються білінгви у різних сферах спілкування. Емпірична частина дослідження базується на аналізі автентичних прикладів зміна мовного коду в різних комунікативних контекстах — у побутовому мовленні, цифровому спілкуванні та професійному середовищі.

Перший розділ присвячено типам білінгвізму, їх впливу на когнітивний розвиток та мовну поведінку, а також огляду соціолінгвістичних теорій, пов'язаних з мовним контактом і багатомовними спільнотами. У другому розділі аналізуються класифікація, мотиви та функції код-перемикавання, зокрема ситуації, в яких мовці перемикають мови. Третій розділ містить емпіричне дослідження, що ґрунтується на інтерв'ю, опитуваннях та аналізі цифрового і усного мовлення білінгвів.

Результати дослідження свідчать, що зміна мовного коду виконує багато функцій: воно сприяє вираженню ідентичності, передаванню емоцій, соціальному позиціонуванню та підвищенню ефективності комунікації. Особливо активно зміна мовного коду виявляється у цифровому середовищі, де поширені неформальні й багатомовні взаємодії. Робота підкреслює актуальність дослідження зміна мовного коду як важливого інструменту в умовах глобалізованого світу.

Ключові слова: білінгвізм, код-перемикання, багатомовність, соціолінгвістика, мовна ідентичність, цифровий дискурс, стратегії комунікації.

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INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the research topic. In the 21st century, linguistic diversity and bilingualism have gained increasing significance as a result of globalization, migration, intercultural exchange, and the digitalization of communication. Individuals today navigate a wide range of linguistic and cultural contexts, often switching between multiple languages within a single conversation. This has brought the phenomena of **bilingualism** and **code-switching** to the forefront of modern linguistics and sociocultural studies.

Far from being anomalies or deficiencies in speech, these phenomena reflect high levels of cognitive and social competence. Bilingual speakers draw on their linguistic repertoires to adapt to shifting social, emotional, and pragmatic contexts. Moreover, **code-switching**—the alternation between two or more languages in a communicative act—is increasingly recognized as a strategic, expressive tool for negotiating identity, solidarity, formality, and intention.

In digital and global environments—such as social media, international workplaces, and multicultural classrooms—code-switching and bilingual interaction have become routine, thus demanding deeper scholarly attention. These practices also challenge monolingual norms and offer insight into how language functions in real-life, multilingual settings. Understanding bilingualism and code-switching is not only important for linguistics but also essential in education, intercultural communication, and identity studies.

The object and subject of the research

The object of the research is bilingual communication in the context of modern discourse.

The subject of the research is the phenomenon of code-switching and its manifestation in bilingual speech across digital, academic, personal, and professional settings.

The purpose of the study. The aim of this research is to investigate the theoretical and empirical dimensions of bilingualism and code-switching, focusing on their communicative, cognitive, and sociolinguistic functions in the modern world.

The tasks of the research. In order to achieve the stated aim, the following tasks are set:

- To examine the theoretical foundations of bilingualism and code-switching;
- To classify the types and functions of bilingualism;
- To define and analyze different forms of code-switching (intrasentential, intersentential, tag-switching);
- To investigate the social and psychological motivations behind code-switching;
- To study real-life examples of code-switching from digital and spoken sources;
- To determine the impact of code-switching on identity, social inclusion, and communication efficiency.

Research methods. The following methods were used to accomplish the tasks:

- Theoretical methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization of linguistic and sociolinguistic sources;
- Empirical methods: qualitative discourse analysis, interviews with bilingual speakers, collection and interpretation of text samples from online and offline communication.

Research materials. The primary materials for analysis include interviews with bilingual individuals, written and spoken samples from platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and transcripts from informal, educational, and workplace conversations.

The practical significance of the study. The results of the research provide new insights into the role of bilingualism and code-switching in shaping communication in multicultural environments. The findings can be applied in:

- Bilingual education and curriculum development;
- Teacher training and inclusive pedagogy;
- Intercultural communication and media studies;
- Language planning and policy in multilingual societies.

This study may also serve as a reference for future research in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics.

Structure of the work. The thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a bibliography, and appendices.

- Chapter 1 discusses the theoretical background of bilingualism, including its definitions, types, cognitive implications, and sociolinguistic perspectives.
- Chapter 2 explores the phenomenon of code-switching in detail, providing its classifications, functions, and sociopragmatic roles.
- Chapter 3 presents the results of the empirical study, analyzing data collected through interviews, surveys, and discourse samples, and interpreting the role of code-switching in real-world communication.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Foundations of Bilingualism

1.1. Definition and Types of Bilingualism

Bilingualism, as a linguistic and social phenomenon, has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention due to its complexity, variability, and wide-ranging cognitive and cultural implications. Traditionally, bilingualism was viewed in a narrow sense, often defined as the “native-like control of two languages” as proposed by Leonard Bloomfield in the early 20th century [5]. However, such an idealized and rigid interpretation has since been replaced by more functional and inclusive definitions, reflecting the diversity of bilingual speakers in real-world contexts.

Modern approaches to bilingualism recognize it as a **dynamic and context-dependent spectrum**, where individuals demonstrate varying degrees of proficiency, use, and identity alignment with each language. François Grosjean, a leading figure in bilingualism studies, emphasized that bilinguals are not “two monolinguals in one person,” but rather individuals who integrate two or more languages in a functional, selective, and adaptive manner across different domains of life [6], [2]. This broader conceptualization shifts the focus from language proficiency to actual **language use** — how and why bilinguals alternate languages in specific social and cognitive settings.

Bilingualism can be categorized using several key parameters. one common classification distinguishes between:

- **Simultaneous bilinguals**, who acquire two languages from birth, typically in a bilingual household;
- **Sequential bilinguals**, who learn one language first and acquire a second later, usually in a formal or educational setting [10], [11].

Another distinction is made between:

- **Balanced bilinguals**, who demonstrate roughly equal proficiency in both languages;
- **Dominant bilinguals**, who are more proficient in one language over the other;
- **Passive or receptive bilinguals**, who understand a second language but may not actively use it [7], [19].

These classifications are not static and often shift over time, depending on changes in social environment, education, peer influence, and personal motivation. For example, a child growing up in a Spanish-speaking home who later attends an English-medium school may gradually become an English-dominant bilingual.

Additionally, some researchers propose typologies based on **cognitive processing and storage** of languages. **Coordinate bilinguals** maintain separate conceptual systems for each language, whereas **compound bilinguals** integrate both languages within a single cognitive framework [63].

At the **societal level**, bilingualism takes on a different dimension, involving questions of language policy, education, nationalism, and identity. Countries such as Canada, Switzerland, and Belgium officially recognize and support multiple languages in government, education, and media, fostering institutional bilingualism [12]. In contrast, in postcolonial or post-Soviet regions, bilingualism may result from historical imposition and carry sociopolitical tensions, such as the co-existence of Ukrainian and Russian in modern Ukraine.

In sum, bilingualism is a **multidimensional construct** that encompasses linguistic, psychological, social, and political components. The present study adopts a holistic definition that includes speakers with various levels of fluency

who use more than one language regularly in communication and self-expression.

1.2. Cognitive and Psychological Aspects

In recent decades, the cognitive and psychological implications of bilingualism have become a central focus of interdisciplinary research. Once believed to be a source of confusion or delay in early childhood, bilingualism is now widely recognized for its **positive cognitive, neural, and emotional effects**. Scholars such as Ellen Bialystok, Aneta Pavlenko, and Vivian Cook have contributed significantly to shifting public and academic discourse from deficit models to competence- and advantage-based paradigms.

One of the most important findings is the **enhancement of executive functions** in bilingual individuals — particularly in areas such as attentional control, task switching, working memory, and inhibition of irrelevant stimuli [20], [27]. These cognitive advantages are believed to result from the constant practice of selecting and managing between two linguistic systems. Bialystok's numerous experiments, including card-sorting tasks and Simon tests, demonstrated that bilinguals consistently outperform monolinguals in conflict resolution and attentional flexibility [5].

Neuroimaging studies have further shown that bilingualism **increases grey matter density** and strengthens neural pathways associated with language control, suggesting a structural cognitive benefit beyond performance alone [21]. Importantly, long-term studies also indicate that lifelong bilingualism can **delay the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease** by several years, due to more robust cognitive reserve [20], [27].

Beyond cognitive processes, bilingualism also plays a profound role in **emotional processing and psychological development**. According to Aneta

Pavlenko, bilingual individuals may experience emotions differently depending on the language they are using, with the first language often tied to early emotional memories and the second language used in more formal or distant contexts [60], [61]. This phenomenon, known as **emotional distancing**, has implications for therapy, education, and interpersonal communication. For example, bilingual speakers often report a greater sense of emotional detachment when discussing trauma or sensitive topics in their second language.

Bilingualism also shapes **self-awareness and metalinguistic consciousness** — the ability to think about language as an abstract system. Bilingual children tend to develop this awareness earlier than monolingual peers, which can support higher-order thinking, literacy acquisition, and grammatical understanding [23], [27]. Moreover, bilingual individuals often show increased **interpersonal sensitivity and empathy**, as they are accustomed to navigating diverse communicative norms and cultural codes.

It is important to note that bilingualism does not always guarantee cognitive advantages; the outcomes are mediated by factors such as proficiency level, age of acquisition, language exposure, and socio-economic conditions [7], [22]. Nonetheless, the body of evidence suggests that **bilingualism cultivates a flexible, adaptive, and emotionally nuanced mind** capable of handling linguistic complexity and cultural diversity with agility.

1.3. Sociolinguistic Dimensions

Among the various behaviors associated with bilingualism, **code-switching** stands out as one of the most visible and socially meaningful. Defined broadly, code-switching refers to the **alternation between two or more languages within a single interaction**, sentence, or even word. This phenomenon has been studied from grammatical, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and

discourse-pragmatic perspectives, each offering distinct insights into its mechanisms and implications [3], [4], [26].

Structurally, code-switching is classified into three major types:

- **Intersentential switching** — switching between sentences (e.g., “I told her already. Et elle n’a rien dit.”);
- **Intrasentential switching** — switching within a single sentence or clause (e.g., “I don’t like el clima aquí.”);
- **Tag switching** — inserting short phrases or discourse markers (e.g., “It’s really hot today, n’est-ce pas?”) [4], [56].

Contrary to the misconception that code-switching indicates confusion or linguistic deficiency, studies by **Shana Poplack**, **Myers-Scotton**, and others confirm that most code-switching follows consistent grammatical rules and demonstrates a **high degree of linguistic competence** [2], [4]. Poplack's early research in Spanish-English communities revealed that code-switching is most frequent among speakers with strong proficiency in both languages, not the reverse [4].

Functionally, code-switching can serve a variety of communicative purposes. Speakers may switch codes to **express emotion**, **mark emphasis**, **quote someone**, **clarify meaning**, or **adapt to a different audience** [33], [58]. For instance, bilingual speakers often use a particular language to express personal closeness (e.g., a native language with family), and another for academic or formal situations.

Importantly, code-switching also plays a central role in **identity negotiation and performance**. Speakers use it to align themselves with specific social groups, signal cultural knowledge, or express hybridity in multilingual environments [6], [19], [54]. In diasporic contexts, code-switching serves as a

cultural bridge between heritage and host communities, allowing individuals to maintain ties to their roots while integrating into new settings [13], [31].

In digital media, especially among younger generations, code-switching is **strategically deployed for stylistic, humorous, or emotional impact**. Social media platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok have become spaces where users fluidly shift between languages depending on audience, mood, and topic [31], [69], [70]. This has led some scholars to redefine traditional boundaries and embrace **translanguaging** as a framework that captures the fluid, integrated use of all linguistic resources by bilinguals [19], [62].

Thus, code-switching is not a marginal or problematic aspect of bilingualism but rather **a core, dynamic feature** that reflects the speaker's cognitive flexibility, sociocultural awareness, and communicative precision.

1.4. Literature Review

The phenomenon of bilingualism has been widely examined across a range of academic disciplines, including linguistics, cognitive psychology, education, neuroscience, and sociolinguistics. over the past century, a rich body of literature has developed around bilingual language acquisition, language use, cognitive advantages, identity construction, and communicative strategies like code-switching.

The foundational contribution of **Uriel Weinreich** in *Languages in Contact* (1953) is often cited as the beginning of modern bilingualism research. Weinreich emphasized that bilingualism is not just a structural linguistic state but a practical, lived experience involving the regular and purposeful use of two languages [5]. His recognition of the role of interference, borrowing, and switching laid the groundwork for generations of research into how bilinguals manage their linguistic systems.

François Grosjean later expanded on this idea by advocating a holistic view of the bilingual individual. In his 1989 and 2010 works, Grosjean rejected the “two monolinguals in one person” model and argued for viewing bilinguals in terms of how they function across domains — home, school, work, media — using different languages for different purposes [6], [2]. His dynamic approach shifted focus from comparing bilinguals to monolingual norms, toward understanding bilingualism as a distinct cognitive and communicative mode.

Ellen Bialystok, a key figure in psycholinguistics, conducted experimental studies that demonstrated the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. Her research showed that bilingual individuals outperform monolinguals in executive functioning tasks, such as selective attention and cognitive flexibility, and that they exhibit delayed symptoms of dementia [20], [27], [5]. These findings continue to influence educational policies and public attitudes toward early bilingual exposure.

From a **sociolinguistic perspective**, **Joshua Fishman** contributed greatly with his concept of *domain analysis*, which explores how bilinguals assign different languages to specific social settings (e.g., home, religion, school, government) [12]. Fishman’s work on *language maintenance and shift* is particularly influential in multilingual communities undergoing sociopolitical change. He emphasized the importance of supporting minority languages through institutional support and intergenerational transmission to prevent language attrition [13], [14].

Carol Myers-Scotton brought a new dimension to bilingualism studies with her *Markedness Model*, which explains code-switching as a speaker’s choice to index social identity, solidarity, or power relations. Her work provided theoretical grounding for analyzing code-switching as a strategic communicative act rather than a breakdown or deficiency [2], [58].

Shana Poplack, in her classic 1980 study, offered a structural analysis of code-switching patterns in Spanish-English bilinguals. She demonstrated that code-switching follows grammatical rules and is subject to constraints that ensure coherence and intelligibility, challenging earlier views that code-mixing was random or grammatically flawed [4].

Research has also explored the role of **emotions in bilingualism**. **Aneta Pavlenko** has written extensively on how emotional resonance differs between languages. Her findings suggest that for many bilinguals, the first language is associated with stronger emotional expression, whereas the second language may serve more formal or intellectual functions [60], [61].

In recent years, **digital communication and multilingualism** have become increasingly important areas of inquiry. **Jannis Androutsopoulos** and **Caroline Tagg** have examined how bilinguals use code-switching in digital discourse — particularly on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube — where language use is creative, flexible, and deeply embedded in identity performance [31], [33], [59], [69]. These studies reveal how online language practices reflect and reshape cultural belonging in real-time, multilingual spaces.

Additionally, scholars like **ofelia García** have proposed the theory of *translanguaging*, which reconceptualizes code-switching not as movement between distinct systems, but as fluid use of a unitary linguistic repertoire. Translanguaging theory positions bilingual speakers as resourceful communicators who draw from their full language knowledge to make meaning [19], [62]. This theory is particularly relevant in bilingual classrooms, diaspora communities, and youth communication.

Recent works also explore **bilingualism and identity negotiation in diaspora and migration contexts**, with contributions from **Monica Heller**, **Zentella**, and

others. Their studies show how multilingual individuals navigate shifting identities through strategic language use, often switching codes to index different cultural affiliations, generational ties, or political stances [54], [55], [63].

Finally, a growing body of research highlights the **role of media, influencers, and online platforms** in shaping code-switching practices. Content creators on TikTok and YouTube often alternate between English and their native languages to engage broader audiences, increase relatability, and signal modernity or tradition [18], [42], [69], [70]. This aligns with newer scholarship on *multimodal discourse* and *digital belonging* [33], [38].

In conclusion, the literature on bilingualism and code-switching reveals a vibrant, interdisciplinary field that spans cognitive science, sociolinguistics, media studies, and education. This broad theoretical background provides the foundation for the present study, which builds on existing research while offering new empirical insights into how bilingual youth engage in code-switching across digital, academic, and personal communication contexts.

Chapter 1 Summary: Theoretical Foundations of Bilingualism

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the foundational concepts and academic perspectives related to bilingualism. It begins by defining bilingualism as a multifaceted phenomenon, emphasizing that language proficiency exists on a spectrum and is influenced by the age of acquisition, context of use, and level of fluency. The chapter then explores the cognitive and psychological effects of bilingualism, such as enhanced executive functioning, cognitive flexibility, and metalinguistic awareness, as well as the role of bilingualism in shaping identity and emotional expression. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the chapter discusses how language choice, code-switching, and language attitudes operate within social frameworks,

influencing the way bilingual individuals navigate different domains and social expectations. Finally, the literature review synthesizes key academic contributions to the field, highlighting the shift from structuralist approaches to more dynamic, interdisciplinary frameworks that integrate identity, power, and digital communication. Together, these sections lay the theoretical groundwork for the empirical exploration of code-switching that follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Code-Switching as a Linguistic and Social Strategy

2.1. Definition and Classification

Code-switching, as a central element of bilingual speech, performs a **broad array of linguistic, social, emotional, and pragmatic functions**. These functions are not random but are shaped by communicative goals, speaker identity, social setting, and cultural context. The phenomenon has been studied from various angles, revealing how bilingual speakers skillfully alternate between languages to enhance communication, express identity, and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics.

one of the primary functions of code-switching is the **expressive function**. Bilingual individuals frequently shift between languages to convey **emotional nuance**, intensify meaning, or achieve a certain stylistic effect that cannot be easily rendered in a single language. Research has shown that speakers often prefer their first language (L1) when expressing strong emotions, such as love, anger, or nostalgia, while using their second language (L2) in more neutral or formal contexts [60], [61]. For example, a speaker might say, “I was so frustrated — *ça m’a vraiment énervée!*” to emphasize an emotion more vividly. This selective use of emotionally loaded vocabulary illustrates the affective depth associated with certain languages in a bilingual’s repertoire.

Another significant function is **compensatory**, used when a lexical gap exists in one language. In fast-paced, informal communication, bilinguals may not always retrieve a word quickly in one language and instead “borrow” it from the other. This process is not merely filling in blanks but represents a **strategic choice to maintain fluency and conversational flow** [4], [7]. It is particularly evident in technical or academic settings, where one language may dominate in terminology. For instance, many Ukrainian or Spanish speakers will insert English terms like "deadline", "feedback", or "meeting" in everyday conversation, especially in professional environments [33].

Code-switching also serves a **referential and clarifying function**. A speaker might introduce a concept in one language and then immediately restate or elaborate it in another for emphasis or clarity. This is particularly common in bilingual education settings and among bilingual parents communicating with children. It supports comprehension and helps reinforce understanding when both languages are familiar to the interlocutor [13], [19].

one of the most socially powerful functions of code-switching is related to **identity construction and negotiation**. Bilinguals use language choices to align themselves with certain cultural, ethnic, or generational groups, or to distance themselves from others [6], [54]. Switching languages can signal in-group solidarity, such as using regional dialects or heritage languages with peers to affirm shared belonging. Conversely, switching to a dominant or global language like English can express modernity, education, or openness to international culture. These subtle shifts allow speakers to perform multiple identities simultaneously — national, ethnic, generational, or professional — depending on the situation [19], [33].

The **phatic and relational functions** of code-switching also deserve mention. Bilingual speakers may switch to create humor, show intimacy, or soften

criticism. Code-switching is often used for social rituals like greetings, farewells, or teasing. For example, inserting a playful phrase in French or Spanish at the end of an English message can create a warm, familiar tone: *C'est la vie!* or *¡Qué locura!* [26], [59]. Such use signals not only language proficiency but emotional connection and creativity.

In formal or hierarchical contexts, code-switching may perform a **power or status function**. Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model suggests that speakers use language alternation to index shifts in social relationships — such as asserting dominance, showing deference, or managing face-saving strategies [2], [58]. For instance, an employee might switch from casual Ukrainian to formal English when addressing a supervisor, signaling respect or professional distance.

Digital communication, particularly among youth, adds **new layers of functionality** to code-switching. on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, multilingual users switch codes to engage multiple audiences, highlight identity hybridity, or enhance relatability [18], [33], [69]. often, code-switching is combined with hashtags, emojis, or memes, creating **multimodal messages** that rely on linguistic play and cultural knowledge. For example, a bilingual influencer might post: *“When your mamá catches you skipping class... #oops #niModo”*, blending English with Spanish for comedic and emotional effect.

Moreover, code-switching in digital discourse often supports **topic or role switching**. A speaker may use one language for informative or instructional purposes and switch to another for storytelling or humor. This strategic use enhances engagement and audience connection, allowing bilingual content creators to shift tone, mood, and perspective fluidly [33], [42].

Finally, code-switching serves a **pedagogical function** in bilingual education. Teachers and learners frequently switch codes to clarify grammar points, introduce new vocabulary, or manage classroom dynamics. In this context, switching is not only natural but a **tool of scaffolding** that supports academic development across both languages [19], [31], [66].

In conclusion, code-switching is a **highly versatile communicative strategy** that goes far beyond lexical substitution. It reflects the speaker's cognitive agility, cultural competence, emotional range, and social awareness. The functions it serves — expressive, clarifying, identity-based, relational, humorous, strategic — make it a central feature of contemporary bilingual communication, especially among youth navigating complex multilingual realities both offline and online.

2.2. Motivations for Code-Switching

Code-switching, as a sophisticated linguistic practice, operates not only at the social or identity level but also within precise grammatical and syntactic frameworks. Far from being a chaotic mixture of languages, code-switching is governed by internal linguistic rules that regulate where and how speakers can switch between languages. Understanding the structural patterns of code-switching is essential for grasping its complexity and the cognitive agility it requires.

Linguists have long studied the structure of code-switching to uncover the syntactic boundaries and points of intersection between two or more languages within bilingual utterances. One of the most frequently cited structural classifications of code-switching includes intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching forms, each reflecting a different level of syntactic complexity. Intersentential code-switching occurs at clause or sentence boundaries and is

commonly observed among bilinguals who possess a strong command of both languages. For example, a speaker might say, “We were walking through the park. I тут раптом почався дощ.” The switch is clear and occurs between two syntactically complete clauses, thus maintaining grammatical integrity in both languages involved [4], [56].

Intrasentential code-switching, on the other hand, occurs within the same sentence and involves alternating between languages mid-utterance. This type of switching requires an advanced level of grammatical competence and a deep familiarity with both language systems. An example could be: “I told her to bring una botella de agua in case she gets thirsty.” Here, the switch occurs within a syntactic unit, but the overall sentence remains grammatically correct. This type of switching is especially rich in multilingual communities where language mixing is not just accepted but embedded in everyday interaction [2], [58]. In such settings, speakers develop an intuitive sense of when and how to switch without violating grammatical norms, making intrasentential switching both fluent and structurally sound.

A third type of code-switching is tag-switching, which involves inserting fixed expressions, interjections, or discourse markers from one language into a sentence in another. Phrases like “you know,” “n’est-ce pas,” or “¿verdad?” often appear in conversations where the main language is different from the one used for the tag. These expressions are syntactically independent and do not disrupt the grammatical flow of the sentence, making them ideal for brief language shifts that serve a pragmatic or emphatic purpose [4], [15].

The syntactic regularities of code-switching have been extensively theorized. Shana Poplack’s Equivalence Constraint model suggests that code-switching typically occurs at points in a sentence where the surface structures of both languages are aligned. This allows the speaker to maintain grammatical

coherence, ensuring that the resulting utterance is syntactically valid in both languages [4]. This model challenges the notion that code-switching is random or disruptive, instead revealing it as a practice guided by an internal logic shared by proficient bilinguals.

Another major theoretical contribution is Carol Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF), which posits that one language in a bilingual utterance takes the dominant grammatical role, known as the matrix language, while the other functions as the embedded language. The matrix language determines the syntactic frame of the sentence — its structure, function words, and grammatical agreement — whereas the embedded language provides content words such as nouns, adjectives, or idiomatic expressions. For example, in the sentence “She is going to el centro comercial to buy shoes,” English serves as the matrix language and Spanish as the embedded one. The overall sentence follows English syntax, while the Spanish phrase is slotted into a grammatically permissible position [2], [58].

The Matrix Language Frame Model also accounts for morphosyntactic adaptation. Embedded words often undergo morphological adjustments to conform to the grammatical norms of the matrix language. This phenomenon is particularly evident in speech communities where bilinguals frequently integrate foreign words into native language structures. For instance, English verbs can be conjugated in French (“Je vais checker mes mails”), or English nouns can be Ukrainianized through suffixation (“Він мені скинув інвайт”) [33], [44]. Such adaptations demonstrate not only linguistic creativity but also cognitive sophistication in maintaining syntactic coherence across two language systems.

Importantly, the structure of code-switching also reflects social and stylistic considerations. The placement of a switch can mark emphasis, denote irony, or structure discourse rhythmically. In spoken communication, switches often

signal a change in topic, tone, or audience orientation. A bilingual speaker might begin a sentence in one language and conclude it in another to underline contrast or reinforce a message. In such cases, the structural shift is both grammatical and rhetorical, enriching the communicative potential of the utterance [26], [38].

In digital communication, these structural patterns take on new forms. on platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, code-switching frequently occurs not just in writing but in multimodal formats. Users may alternate languages in combination with emojis, hashtags, or visual elements that further modify the grammatical tone of the message. For example, a user might post: “Trying to focus but ya viene mi mamá con ‘limpia ese cuarto’ #relatable #LatinaMom.” Here, the switch between English and Spanish is not only syntactically coherent but also part of a broader stylistic and cultural narrative. The syntactic integrity is maintained, even as the message operates on multiple levels — visual, textual, emotional [31], [69].

Moreover, certain recurring structural patterns, such as repetition switching, are used for clarification or dramatic effect. A speaker might say, “It’s over. C’est fini.” or “Don’t trust him. Él miente.” These examples show a deliberate choice to repeat a statement in a second language, often to intensify its emotional or persuasive impact. This usage is especially common in storytelling, performance, or emotionally charged conversations, and highlights the rhetorical versatility of code-switching [13], [25].

Finally, the structural integrity of code-switching reflects a deeper truth about bilingualism: it is not merely the ability to speak two languages but the ability to navigate and integrate two linguistic systems seamlessly. This capacity requires an understanding of syntactic rules, word order, tense, gender agreement, and morphology in both languages, as well as the ability to adapt dynamically based

on context. In this sense, bilingual speakers act as **linguistic negotiators**, choosing not only what to say but how and in which language to say it — a process that is grammatical, social, and strategic at once.

2.3. Code-Switching in Context

While definitions and classifications of code-switching help frame the phenomenon linguistically, its real-world significance emerges most clearly through contextual analysis. Code-switching is not merely a feature of bilingual grammar—it is a rich social practice embedded in the everyday lives of multilingual speakers. Its frequency, form, and function shift across environments such as home, school, work, online platforms, and public discourse. These environments do not simply host language use—they shape it, reinforcing certain patterns of switching while discouraging others. In this sense, context is not a passive backdrop, but an active influence on how and why bilinguals code-switch.

Code-Switching in Domestic and Intimate Settings

one of the most natural and frequent environments for code-switching is the home. Within multilingual families, language use is often fluid, shaped less by strict linguistic rules and more by emotional dynamics, generational habits, and shared understanding. In such settings, code-switching becomes an intuitive part of interaction—a tool for expressing affection, maintaining tradition, managing relationships, and navigating linguistic preferences. Unlike formal environments where language choice may be governed by institutional norms or social expectations, domestic spaces offer bilingual speakers a greater degree of spontaneity and freedom in how they express themselves [60], [61], [13].

A typical pattern observed in multilingual households involves asymmetrical language use, in which parents or grandparents speak in a heritage

language—such as Ukrainian or Russian—while children or grandchildren respond in the dominant societal language, such as English, German, or Polish. These interactions often appear “mixed” from the outside but are internally consistent and fully intelligible to those involved [19], [54]. What may appear to monolingual observers as fragmented discourse is, for bilingual families, a seamless and emotionally rich form of communication. This kind of conversational flow demonstrates the cognitive agility of bilinguals and the cooperative nature of language negotiation within intimate relationships [6], [27].

Emotional expression is a key motivator behind code-switching in the home. Research has shown that speakers tend to revert to their first language—especially one learned in childhood—when expressing strong emotions such as love, anger, frustration, or vulnerability. Pavlenko (2005) notes that bilinguals often experience greater emotional resonance in their native language because it is tied to early developmental experiences, cultural rituals, and foundational social bonds [60], [61]. As such, language alternation in family life is not merely pragmatic but affective: switching to a heritage language can signal comfort, solidarity, or nostalgia, while switching away from it can imply emotional distance or formality [25], [19].

Disciplinary language also reveals interesting patterns of code-switching. Parents often use their heritage language when issuing commands, warnings, or expressions of disappointment, drawing on the authoritative tone of the language in which they themselves were socialized [54]. A child who typically speaks English with their Ukrainian mother might hear scolding or rules articulated in Ukrainian, reinforcing the emotional seriousness or cultural tradition embedded in that language. Conversely, children may respond in the dominant language not out of defiance but simply due to comfort, fluency, or socialization in educational and peer environments [33], [62].

In addition, code-switching within domestic settings reflects and reinforces relational roles and hierarchies. Parents may choose to speak in the heritage language to maintain cultural transmission, while children gradually adopt code-switching to balance respect for their family's linguistic heritage with their integration into broader societal norms [13], [19]. Over time, this dynamic often leads to passive bilingualism, where younger generations understand the heritage language well but rarely speak it actively. The coexistence of understanding and limited production demonstrates the subtle ways in which identity and belonging are negotiated through language in intergenerational interactions [12], [63].

Another important dimension is ritual and tradition. Many multilingual families associate their heritage language with specific cultural or religious practices: family meals, holiday gatherings, storytelling, or ceremonies are frequently conducted in the heritage language. In these moments, switching to a shared native tongue becomes more than habit—it becomes symbolic. It reaffirms collective memory, generational continuity, and emotional intimacy [54], [13], [19]. Even in families where the dominant societal language dominates day-to-day communication, these “islands” of cultural-linguistic immersion can preserve a strong sense of identity and connection [31], [66].

Moreover, conflict and reconciliation patterns in families often reveal deeply emotional forms of code-switching. During emotionally charged moments—arguments, apologies, moments of grief—speakers may instinctively return to the language that feels most authentic. For example, a child raised bilingually might respond in English during everyday conversation but instinctively switch to Ukrainian to comfort a grieving parent or to seek forgiveness. In this way, code-switching is not only a communicative choice but also a relational and symbolic act that signals trust, vulnerability, and shared history [60], [61], [25].

Importantly, domestic code-switching is also shaped by external influences, such as media exposure, schooling, peer interaction, and technology. Children often internalize vocabulary, expressions, and even worldviews through the dominant societal language, which can lead to subtle shifts in household communication patterns [33], [42]. Parents who wish to preserve the heritage language may strategically encourage its use during certain times of day (e.g., family dinners), or during specific activities (e.g., reading folk tales, watching cultural films), thus embedding code-switching into language maintenance strategies within the family [62], [31].

In sum, code-switching in domestic and intimate contexts is not simply a matter of linguistic habit, but a deeply embedded, emotionally charged, and socially structured phenomenon. It enables family members to navigate generational differences, manage emotional proximity or distance, perform care or discipline, and reinforce cultural belonging [6], [60]. Far from indicating a breakdown in linguistic competence, these home-based patterns of switching reflect the flexibility and richness of bilingual experience—where language is inseparable from memory, emotion, and relational identity [19], [54], [27].

Educational Contexts and Classroom Dynamics

The classroom is a critical social and cognitive space where language acquisition and identity formation intersect, making it a uniquely revealing context for the study of code-switching. Within formal education systems, language policy, pedagogical practice, and classroom interaction often reflect broader ideologies about what constitutes “legitimate” language use. For much of the 20th century, language education was dominated by the principle of monolingual instruction, especially in second-language learning. Influenced by immersion and subtractive models, these frameworks treated the use of a student’s first language (L1) as a potential barrier to acquiring the target

language (L2), promoting a “target-language only” environment as the gold standard of effective instruction [12], [25].

However, contemporary linguistic theory has increasingly challenged this perspective. With the emergence of translanguaging theory (García & Wei, 2014), educators and researchers have begun to reconceptualize code-switching not as interference or deficit, but as a natural and valuable resource that bilingual students use to make meaning, access prior knowledge, and engage with content more deeply [19], [62]. Translanguaging goes beyond simple alternation between discrete languages; it reflects a fluid use of the entire linguistic repertoire available to the learner, acknowledging that language boundaries are socially constructed rather than neurologically hardwired [6], [31].

In bilingual and multilingual classrooms—particularly in linguistically diverse regions like Ukraine, India, Canada, or South Africa—students often code-switch as a learning strategy. For instance, when confronted with a complex science term in English, a Ukrainian student might whisper a translation to a peer in Ukrainian to verify understanding. Likewise, when writing essays or preparing oral presentations, students may “think” in one language while producing work in another, using both codes to scaffold their academic processing. These strategies allow students to move flexibly between languages in ways that reflect real cognitive processes, rather than adhering rigidly to the artificial separation of languages imposed by traditional educational models [7], [27].

Educators themselves frequently engage in instructional code-switching, especially in contexts where students' language proficiency levels vary. A teacher might switch to the local language to explain grammar points, offer translations for unfamiliar vocabulary, or provide culturally relevant analogies

that resonate more deeply with the students' lived experiences [66], [31]. Code-switching may also occur when giving feedback, checking for comprehension, or managing classroom behavior—functions that require clarity and relational nuance. In multilingual settings, using the students' home language can foster trust and inclusivity, signaling that their linguistic backgrounds are valued rather than suppressed [59], [62].

Despite its pedagogical utility, the institutional stance on code-switching in education remains inconsistent—and often ideologically charged. In many public schools and universities, particularly those influenced by nationalist or postcolonial language policies, the use of non-dominant or non-standardized languages is actively discouraged [12], [54]. In post-Soviet contexts such as Ukraine, code-switching between Ukrainian and Russian can be seen as politically sensitive, with implications for national identity, loyalty, and cultural legitimacy [13], [19]. In such settings, students may internalize the belief that switching languages is inappropriate or even shameful, leading to self-censorship, linguistic insecurity, and reduced classroom participation [25].

The politics of language in education also affect curriculum design, where standardized testing and textbooks often privilege the dominant language at the expense of students' multilingual resources. This creates a mismatch between official instructional goals and students' actual communicative practices. For instance, a student might be penalized for using Ukrainian idioms in an English-language essay, even though those idioms help them organize thought and express ideas. Such policies reflect a linguistic purism that fails to account for the realities of hybrid linguistic identities and plural language use [6], [31], [33].

on the other hand, progressive educational frameworks—especially those informed by sociocultural and critical pedagogies—encourage teachers to

leverage code-switching as a transformative tool. In these classrooms, bilingualism is not treated as a transitional stage toward monolingualism but as a stable and valuable condition in itself [19], [62]. Teachers may design assignments that allow students to work bilingually, engage in peer translation, or explore how meaning changes across languages. These approaches have been shown to enhance both academic achievement and cultural engagement, especially among students from marginalized or minority backgrounds [27], [66].

Moreover, digital learning environments offer new opportunities for code-switching to flourish in the classroom. Platforms like Google Classroom, educational YouTube channels, and discussion forums often feature multilingual content, encouraging students to interact in both academic and vernacular registers [18], [69]. In these spaces, code-switching becomes a form of participation rather than deviation, enabling students to express themselves authentically and to connect across linguistic boundaries [38], [42].

In sum, code-switching in educational settings is more than a linguistic phenomenon—it is a mirror of educational philosophy, national ideology, and social equity. It reflects the tensions between standardization and diversity, tradition and innovation, linguistic authority and linguistic reality [12], [19], [54]. Whether treated as a problem or a resource, code-switching reveals how language is lived and negotiated in the classroom. Recognizing and embracing this complexity offers the potential for more inclusive, responsive, and culturally sustaining pedagogy—one that validates the full linguistic repertoire of every learner [19], [62].

Workplace Communication and Professional Identity

In professional environments, language use is not only functional—it is profoundly symbolic. The way individuals speak in the workplace communicates far more than just information; it reflects competence, status, authority, affiliation, and identity. For bilingual and multilingual professionals, code-switching plays a complex and strategic role in navigating these layered dynamics. Unlike in informal or domestic settings, where switching is often intuitive or emotionally driven, workplace code-switching tends to be more deliberate and socially informed, shaped by hierarchies, institutional norms, and the roles individuals are expected to perform [2], [19].

In multilingual workplaces, employees often operate across multiple registers—formal and informal, technical and interpersonal—and switch between languages accordingly. For instance, a Ukrainian employee at an international organization may use English during meetings, presentations, and written correspondence, conforming to global standards of professionalism. However, during lunch breaks or private conversations with colleagues from a similar background, the same employee may switch to Ukrainian or Russian. This flexibility is not merely convenient; it reflects an ability to navigate different social scripts and interactional expectations, enhancing one's image as linguistically and culturally competent [33], [38].

Code-switching in such contexts serves multiple functions. It can signal adaptability and inclusion, demonstrating the speaker's awareness of their audience and context. Using the appropriate language in the appropriate moment allows speakers to connect with colleagues, align with institutional expectations, or build rapport with international clients [59], [27]. On a deeper level, it communicates cultural intelligence—a highly valued asset in today's globalized job market. A multilingual employee who can fluidly move between English and Ukrainian, for instance, might be perceived as more versatile,

globally minded, or capable of representing the organization across linguistic boundaries [6], [19], [41].

However, code-switching in the workplace is not always inclusive. It can also operate as a mechanism of social exclusion or gatekeeping. In-group members may switch into a shared language during informal moments—such as small talk, jokes, or quick problem-solving exchanges—effectively excluding those who do not speak that language. While often unintentional, such moments can create a sense of “us versus them,” reinforcing social boundaries within a team [25], [33]. A new employee, for example, who lacks proficiency in the shared native language of their coworkers may feel marginalized or out of sync, particularly if crucial information is exchanged outside of the dominant working language [26], [13].

In this way, code-switching can reflect and reproduce workplace power dynamics. Senior staff, managers, or team leaders may switch languages to assert authority or to create psychological distance from subordinates. Conversely, junior employees might code-switch to a dominant language to signal professionalism or align themselves with leadership expectations [58], [54]. For instance, switching from Ukrainian to English during a presentation might not just reflect a language preference but a deliberate performance of global competence and institutional loyalty [27], [44].

The use of different languages in professional contexts can also be linked to the construction of multiple identities. A bilingual individual might present themselves as a “local expert” in Ukrainian settings but shift to a “global professional” identity in English-speaking contexts. These performances are not inauthentic; they reflect the multifaceted nature of identity in a multilingual world. As sociolinguist Monica Heller (2007) argues, code-switching in professional contexts often allows speakers to shift between different identity

frames, positioning themselves as both insiders and outsiders depending on the interactional goals [54], [19].

In highly formal sectors such as law, finance, or medicine, language switching may carry even more weight. In these domains, precise terminology, legal clarity, or patient safety can depend on the exactness of language. Here, bilinguals may switch codes not for social reasons but to ensure technical accuracy [4], [26]. For instance, a Ukrainian physician working in an English-speaking hospital might revert to Ukrainian with a fellow Ukrainian colleague to discuss a cultural health belief or to clarify a patient's statement that was lost in translation. In such moments, switching languages is a critical act of pragmatic precision, rather than convenience [13], [60].

The linguistic policies of the workplace also shape how code-switching is used and perceived. Some companies adopt an "English-only" policy to streamline communication in global teams, while others encourage multilingual interaction to reflect inclusivity and respect for linguistic diversity. In Ukrainian companies, for example, there may be expectations to use Ukrainian in all formal documentation and client interaction, while Russian or English may dominate in specific business sectors or multinational firms. These policies reflect larger political and economic ideologies, and bilingual employees must navigate these norms carefully to maintain both professional credibility and cultural authenticity [12], [19], [54].

Digital communication further complicates the landscape. In emails, Slack messages, or internal memos, bilingual employees may strategically choose their language depending on audience, tone, and urgency. An internal chat to a close colleague might be in informal Ukrainian, while a status update to the wider team may be composed in polished English. Emojis, abbreviations, and

borrowed words often accompany this code-switching, creating a hybrid professional discourse that blends formality with familiarity [38], [42], [69].

Ultimately, code-switching in the workplace is not just about language—it is about power, professionalism, and belonging. It allows individuals to navigate organizational cultures, align with authority structures, and perform identities that are contextually appropriate [54], [27]. At the same time, it can expose tensions between inclusion and exclusion, authenticity and assimilation. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for bilingual professionals but also for institutions seeking to foster equitable and effective communication in an increasingly multilingual world [19], [41].

Code-Switching in online and Digital Discourse

The digital sphere is one of the most vibrant and transformative spaces where code-switching thrives. As communication increasingly shifts to online platforms, from social media to messaging apps and content-sharing sites, the rules governing language use become more fluid and user-driven. Unlike formal spoken or written communication, digital discourse offers bilingual users greater autonomy over their linguistic choices. Freed from institutional constraints and prescriptive norms, individuals actively engage in hybrid language practices, using code-switching not only to communicate but to construct identities, express emotions, and participate in global and local online cultures [31], [38], [69].

on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X), WhatsApp, TikTok, Reddit, and Telegram, code-switching is not only common—it is often expected in multilingual communities. Users fluidly mix languages in captions, comments, memes, and direct messages, not as a result of linguistic gaps but as a stylistic and expressive choice [33], [59]. For example, a user might write: “When life gives you lemons — ну, що ж, зробимо лимонад.” The interplay of

English and Ukrainian here is more than linguistic; it reflects a culturally nuanced voice, emotional familiarity, and playful engagement with both global trends and local identity [69].

Stylistic effect is a major driver of code-switching in digital discourse. English is often used to convey trendiness, irony, or universality, while Ukrainian or Russian may be employed to express intimacy, sarcasm, or cultural references that resonate more deeply with local audiences. In this way, switching languages mid-sentence or mid-post can enhance rhetorical impact, allowing users to shape tone, pacing, and even humor [31], [42]. A TikTok creator, for instance, might narrate a skit in Ukrainian, but switch to English for a dramatic punchline or meme reference—leveraging the audience’s bilingual expectations for comic effect [69], [42].

Moreover, social media encourages highly visual and multimodal communication, where language is blended with images, emojis, gifs, filters, and audio. In this multimodal context, code-switching is not just about alternating between words—it’s about layering meaning. Hashtags in different languages (e.g., #mood, #сьогоднішнійстан, #vibes), the juxtaposition of Ukrainian phrases with English song lyrics, or a reel that opens with “Hi guys!” and cuts to “Тримайтеся, бо буде драма” create a textured, culturally hybrid message that reflects the speaker’s digital fluency as much as their bilingualism [38], [69], [70].

These practices have given rise to what scholars refer to as **digital translanguaging**—a flexible, creative use of all available linguistic and symbolic resources to construct meaning in real time [62], [19]. online, the strict boundaries between languages dissolve, and bilingual users shape their discourse based on audience, context, and content. Language is no longer viewed as a fixed system to be mastered, but as a toolkit to be customized,

remixed, and repurposed. This trend is particularly visible among Generation Z and Millennials, who often communicate in rapid-fire, linguistically layered formats that reflect both global digital culture and localized identity [31], [69].

For content creators and influencers, code-switching also becomes a key element of personal branding and audience targeting. A Ukrainian creator might open a YouTube video with “Всім привіт, друзі! Welcome back to my channel,” using both Ukrainian and English to appeal to both local and international viewers. This strategic blending reflects not only linguistic versatility but also social positioning—the ability to perform as both culturally grounded and globally relevant [59], [18], [33]. Influencers frequently code-switch to foster familiarity with diasporic audiences, to evoke authenticity, or to align with aesthetic or political values tied to certain language choices [42], [66].

Importantly, online code-switching is deeply tied to community formation and digital belonging. Shared multilingual jokes, memes that require bilingual interpretation, or in-group slang terms create a sense of exclusivity and cultural cohesion [31], [59]. A Telegram group where users joke in a mix of Russian, Ukrainian, and English creates a unique social environment where membership is signaled not by language proficiency alone, but by cultural fluency—the ability to “read between the lines” across linguistic and contextual boundaries [69], [42].

At the same time, code-switching in online spaces is shaped by platform design, algorithmic visibility, and audience perception. On global platforms, creators may prioritize English or transliterated Ukrainian (e.g., "yak spravy?") to increase reach and visibility. Conversely, on localized or encrypted platforms like Viber or Telegram, language use may reflect more intimate, community-based norms [31], [38]. The language of comment sections, too,

reflects shifting identities: a bilingual user might post in English, but respond to comments in Ukrainian to show solidarity, familiarity, or to subtly shift tone [42], [66].

The political and social dynamics of language are also reflected online. In times of conflict or crisis, such as during the ongoing war in Ukraine, switching to Ukrainian in public posts may become an act of resistance or national solidarity [13], [19], [70]. online movements that call for “switching to Ukrainian” reflect broader identity negotiations, where digital language choice becomes a performative stance. Memes, reels, and viral tweets are often bilingual or multilingual not just for reach, but for rhetorical power. Code-switching thus becomes a way to affirm belonging, protest, educate, or connect across borders [59], [69].

Finally, online discourse reveals the emerging linguistic creativity of the digital age. Hybrid words, playful neologisms, and mummified phrases like “zrada-victory mode,” “моє життя — суцільна драма-квін,” or “токсик culture” demonstrate how users blend not only languages but ideologies, aesthetics, and worldviews [69], [42]. In these cases, code-switching isn't a linguistic shortcut—it's the message itself. These digital blends mirror trends observed in multilingual communities offline as well, where identity is shaped through creative manipulation of language [19], [62].

In sum, code-switching in digital discourse is a hallmark of contemporary bilingual identity. It reflects not just language proficiency, but cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, audience design, and digital creativity. Through this form of communication, bilinguals assert agency, challenge linguistic hierarchies, and expand the boundaries of what it means to “speak” a language in the age of the internet [31], [38], [70]. Far from being linguistic “error,” online code-switching is the grammar of modern belonging.

Diaspora, Migration, and Identity Negotiation

For individuals living in diasporic or migrant contexts, code-switching is not simply a matter of linguistic flexibility—it is a deeply personal, often existential practice that reflects the ongoing negotiation of identity, belonging, and cultural continuity. Migrants and their descendants inhabit multiple social, emotional, and ideological spaces, each with its own linguistic demands and cultural expectations. Within this context, language becomes not only a medium of communication but also a symbolic resource for navigating between home and host cultures, between past and future, and between authenticity and assimilation [19], [54], [12].

Consider the example of a Ukrainian individual who has relocated to Canada, Poland, or Germany. In such a setting, they may speak Ukrainian or Russian at home, engage with English, Polish, or German at school or work, and use a blend of all three when interacting with fellow members of the diaspora. This kind of multilingual repertoire is typical in migrant life, where language choice is rarely about proficiency alone, but about performing different roles: as a family member, employee, student, friend, or citizen. Switching between languages, then, is not simply linguistic—it becomes a form of social positioning, signaling affinity, emotional proximity, or professional alignment depending on the context [26], [33], [59].

In diasporic communities, especially among second-generation migrants, code-switching often takes on the function of cultural bridging. While first-generation immigrants may primarily use their native language, their children—raised within a different educational and media environment—often adopt a hybridized speech style that reflects both heritage and host cultures [13], [19]. A second-generation Ukrainian-American teenager, for instance, might speak English at school, sprinkle in Ukrainian phrases at home (“Mamo, can we

have вареники today?”), and use a bilingual mix online, engaging with both Western and Ukrainian pop culture. This hybrid code not only facilitates communication across generations but also becomes a tool for asserting a dual identity, one that is neither fully assimilated nor strictly traditional [42], [31].

These linguistic practices frequently emerge from a need to navigate conflicting cultural frames. Certain emotional expressions, family values, or humor may only "make sense" in the heritage language, while professional or academic success often requires fluency in the dominant language of the host society. Code-switching enables migrants to operate across these domains without losing access to either. A Ukrainian woman working in a Polish office, for example, may write formal reports in Polish, speak to colleagues in mixed Polish-Ukrainian, and shift to Ukrainian when texting family back home—all in a single day. Her code-switching is not a lack of clarity but a strategic and affective calibration of identity and context [25], [59].

Linguistic choices in diaspora are also shaped by emotional memory and cultural nostalgia. The heritage language often retains emotional primacy—it is the language of lullabies, childhood stories, religious practices, and family rituals. Migrants may switch to it during moments of vulnerability, celebration, grief, or longing. Singing Ukrainian songs during holiday gatherings or using traditional sayings to express affection (“моя зіронька,” “ти моє сонечко”) can strengthen cultural continuity even in foreign environments [60], [61]. In this way, code-switching sustains not only communication but cultural transmission—it becomes an intergenerational thread connecting identity across time and space [13], [54].

At the same time, code-switching in diaspora communities is often stigmatized or misunderstood, particularly by monolingual speakers or those who view linguistic purity as a marker of authenticity. Mixed-language speech may be

dismissed as evidence of language loss, laziness, or inauthenticity. Young bilinguals may face criticism for using “broken Ukrainian” or “too much English,” even though their hybrid style reflects a legitimate form of linguistic adaptation under global conditions [19], [26]. These ideologies of linguistic purism can produce shame, insecurity, or silence, especially among those who already feel “in-between” cultures [33], [59].

Despite such pressures, code-switching in migrant communities should be recognized as a form of linguistic innovation and resilience. It allows speakers to cope with marginalization, to resist cultural erasure, and to claim space within multiple linguistic and cultural spheres [54], [12]. Many migrants develop diaspora-specific speech patterns—featuring blended syntax, unique slang, and context-dependent language choices—that reflect their lived reality. These emergent dialects are not mistakes but products of linguistic creativity, shaped by globalization, migration, and transnational belonging [62], [66].

Digital technology further supports these practices, enabling diaspora members to maintain ties to their homeland while adapting to new contexts. WhatsApp chats with relatives in Ukraine may be filled with Ukrainian and emoticons, while a bilingual blog or YouTube channel might use English subtitles to reach a wider audience. This digital bilingualism becomes a form of cultural ambassadorship, allowing diaspora voices to share their hybrid identities with broader publics [69], [18]. Code-switching in these settings becomes both personal and political—a way of asserting cultural pride, telling one’s story, and participating in a global conversation on identity, migration, and belonging [33], [42].

In essence, for diasporic individuals, code-switching is not simply a linguistic act—it is a lifeline, a cultural negotiation, and a strategy for survival. It allows them to stay connected to their roots while building a future in new and often

challenging environments. Through switching codes, they weave complex, hybrid identities that defy rigid boundaries and reflect the fluid, globalized world they inhabit [19], [54], [12].

Public Space, Media, and Sociopolitical Context

Code-switching, while often associated with interpersonal communication or casual discourse, also holds profound public and political significance, particularly in regions where language is deeply tied to history, identity, and ideological conflict. In such contexts, language choice is far from neutral—it becomes a performative act through which speakers align themselves with particular values, identities, or sociopolitical stances. In public discourse, the decision to switch between languages is frequently not only about communication, but about visibility, legitimacy, and influence [12], [19], [54].

Ukraine provides a particularly compelling case study of the ideological weight of code-switching. The country's linguistic landscape is shaped by centuries of cultural blending, imperial domination, and political upheaval. Ukrainian and Russian have long coexisted, often within the same communities, families, and individuals. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially after the events of 2014 (the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in Donbas), language choice in public space began to acquire clear political and symbolic resonance [13], [54], [70]. Speaking Ukrainian in public is increasingly associated with national identity, resistance, and solidarity, while Russian—although still widely spoken—may be perceived as linked to imperial legacy or pro-Russian sentiment.

In such a landscape, code-switching between Ukrainian and Russian is not a mere communicative convenience; it is a discursive strategy. A journalist may begin a news broadcast in Russian to engage with a broader or older audience, then switch to Ukrainian when discussing national culture, state policy, or

expressions of solidarity. This switch is often deliberate—serving to reframe the tone, reorient the message, or reassert authority [25], [58]. In this way, code-switching reflects the speaker’s ongoing negotiation of civic identity, regional affiliation, and emotional connection to language in a contested geopolitical space [19], [54].

Beyond news media, politicians and public figures regularly employ code-switching to reach diverse constituents. A political leader might address a rally in Ukrainian, then switch to Russian in televised interviews aimed at Eastern regions. This is not merely a reflection of linguistic versatility but a calculated gesture intended to bridge regional divides, project inclusiveness, or avoid alienating specific demographics [12], [13]. However, such switching is often scrutinized by the public, especially amid heightened nationalism or war-related sentiment. A failure to speak Ukrainian exclusively in official capacities may be viewed by some as a lack of patriotism or cultural allegiance, even if the speaker identifies strongly with the Ukrainian state [70].

Celebrities and influencers, too, use code-switching to construct their public personas. on social media, a popular Ukrainian YouTuber might switch between Ukrainian and English to appeal to both local and international audiences. The use of English often signals cosmopolitanism, youth culture, or global relevance, while Ukrainian anchors their message in national authenticity [33], [42], [69]. In contrast, the use of Russian—particularly among younger influencers—is increasingly a site of tension, as audiences question whether its inclusion reflects linguistic comfort, political neutrality, or outdated cultural norms [59], [13]. This dynamic illustrates how linguistic capital is constantly renegotiated in public space—some languages gain prestige, while others become marked or contested [54], [31].

In advertising and mass media, code-switching is often used for market segmentation and brand positioning. Ukrainian companies may use Ukrainian for official or patriotic campaigns but switch to English for fashion, technology, or youth-targeted content. Multinational brands operating in Ukraine often code-switch strategically in their commercials—using Ukrainian for legal or governmental messaging, and English or mixed speech for emotional appeal, humor, or lifestyle branding [38], [70]. These choices reflect a broader commercial understanding of identity politics, where language becomes a semiotic resource for targeting specific consumer identities [33], [26].

In public institutions, such as courts, hospitals, or educational systems, code-switching may be more regulated. Nonetheless, it still occurs subtly—between staff members, in hallway conversations, or during moments of emotional stress. A teacher may switch from Ukrainian to Russian when comforting a distressed student, or a nurse may whisper in Russian to an elderly patient who appears more comfortable in it. Even in formal settings, code-switching reveals how institutional protocols intersect with human empathy and linguistic intuition [27], [25].

Furthermore, in moments of political crisis or national trauma, public code-switching may take on the role of symbolic resistance. During the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, many public figures—including journalists, musicians, and everyday citizens—made visible and vocal switches to Ukrainian in public broadcasts, interviews, and online statements [70], [13], [19]. This mass shift, often referred to as a “linguistic awakening,” reflected a collective reorientation toward Ukrainian national identity. While many of these speakers had used Russian in their private or professional lives for years, the act of publicly switching to Ukrainian became a statement of resistance, unity, and cultural survival [54].

However, this politicization of language also introduces complex identity dilemmas for bilinguals. For many Ukrainians who grew up speaking Russian, switching entirely to Ukrainian can feel like a loss of linguistic intimacy or childhood memory. Code-switching allows these individuals to honor both parts of their identity, using Ukrainian as a civic language while still allowing room for Russian in personal reflection or artistic expression [60], [61]. This nuanced linguistic practice resists binary categorizations and instead reveals the lived complexity of post-Soviet identities [54], [19].

In sum, code-switching in public discourse is a deeply layered act—part linguistic, part symbolic, part strategic. It reveals how language operates not only as a means of expression but as a tool of negotiation, a site of struggle, and a form of belonging. Whether used to include or exclude, unify or divide, assert or question, public code-switching reflects the ever-shifting landscape of identity, ideology, and power in multilingual societies like Ukraine. As such, it demands not only linguistic analysis but political and cultural interpretation [12], [13], [54].

2.4 Comparison of Global and Local Patterns

Code-switching is a global linguistic phenomenon, but its forms, functions, and social meanings are deeply shaped by local histories, cultural norms, political ideologies, and institutional structures. While the core behavior—switching between languages within interaction—occurs across diverse multilingual settings, the reasons behind it, the languages involved, and the societal reactions to it can vary dramatically. Comparing global patterns of code-switching with local (Ukrainian) realities reveals how bilingualism is both a universal resource and a culturally specific practice [12], [19], [31].

In Western multilingual societies such as Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, code-switching is often associated with ethnic identity, generational shifts, and informal social bonding. In communities like Latinx Americans in the U.S., for example, switching between English and Spanish—commonly referred to as Spanglish—has become a vibrant feature of youth identity, music, humor, and family discourse [26], [33]. It is widely accepted in casual contexts, though sometimes criticized in educational or professional settings. Code-switching in these countries is often framed in terms of cultural hybridity, where bilingual speakers express a fusion of traditions, values, and affiliations [19], [59].

In India, a country with more than 20 officially recognized languages and hundreds of regional dialects, code-switching is not only common—it is expected. Indians frequently switch between Hindi, English, and regional languages like Bengali, Tamil, or Marathi depending on context, audience, and topic. In urban areas, "Hinglish" (Hindi-English) has become a dominant mode of communication in advertising, pop culture, and even education [19], [62]. This blend reflects both colonial linguistic legacy and contemporary globalization, where English retains prestige and mobility, while Indian languages preserve cultural intimacy and authenticity [38].

Similarly, in Switzerland, a multilingual society with four official languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh), language switching is more regulated and institutionalized. Citizens are often taught to navigate multilingual environments formally, and switching is tied to regional identity and federal policy, rather than individual choice alone. Unlike informal switches seen in diasporic or youth communities elsewhere, Swiss multilingualism reflects a more structured coexistence, where boundaries between language use are clearly maintained across regions, schools, and government [12], [59].

In contrast, code-switching in Ukraine exists within a particularly charged and evolving sociopolitical landscape. While Ukraine is officially a monolingual state, its population is largely bilingual, with Ukrainian and Russian being widely spoken across different regions. English, as a global language, has also gained prominence in education, media, and international communication [13], [70]. However, switching between these languages is often tied not just to identity or comfort, but to ideological alignment, national history, and ongoing conflict. In Ukraine, language choice can function as a proxy for political stance—support for Ukrainian sovereignty, resistance to Russian aggression, or assertion of cultural independence [19], [54].

Whereas in global contexts code-switching is often normalized or celebrated for its fluidity, in Ukraine it may provoke debate, resistance, or conscious effort to reform speech habits. For example, many Ukrainians who grew up speaking Russian have made intentional efforts to shift to Ukrainian in daily life, especially since 2014 and more prominently since the 2022 full-scale invasion [13], [54], [70]. This deliberate linguistic shift reflects not just personal preference, but a civic transformation, where language is a means of resistance, identity renewal, and nation-building. In this case, code-switching does not merely reflect multilingual competence—it becomes an act of cultural agency [60].

Yet, despite these tensions, the pragmatic logic of code-switching remains similar in global and local contexts. In both cases, speakers use switching to adjust to audience expectations, express nuanced emotions or cultural references, navigate formal and informal settings, and construct layered identities that span different linguistic and cultural worlds [19], [62]. What differs is the socio-political weight assigned to those switches. In many Western or post-colonial settings, code-switching is primarily evaluated through a lens of

language status (e.g., prestige vs. informality), while in Ukraine, it is frequently interpreted through a lens of language loyalty and national belonging [13], [25].

Another key difference lies in institutional support. Countries like Canada support code-switching in education and media through bilingual policies, whereas in Ukraine, the dominance of Ukrainian as the state language coexists with the social reality of Russian bilingualism, often without formal acknowledgment. This creates a disconnect between language policy and linguistic practice, where code-switching happens below the surface but is not always institutionally sanctioned [12], [54], [66].

Globally, digital media has created new spaces for bilingual creativity and code-switching. From Hinglish memes on Instagram to Ukrainian-English YouTube vlogs and multilingual TikToks, online platforms allow users to blend languages for humor, identity expression, and audience engagement. In this sense, Ukraine is part of a broader global trend, where bilingual users assert their identities through hybrid linguistic expression in the public sphere—even when such practices remain politically sensitive [69], [31], [42].

In summary, the global-local comparison reveals that while code-switching is a shared strategy among bilingual speakers worldwide, its social meaning and political stakes vary widely. In some contexts, it is playful and stylistic; in others, it is loaded with resistance, memory, and transformation. In Ukraine, code-switching is not just about language—it is about survival, heritage, and becoming [54], [13], [19]. Recognizing both the similarities and the unique contours of Ukrainian bilingualism within the global framework highlights the richness, relevance, and urgency of studying code-switching today.

Chapter 2 Summary: Code-Switching as a Linguistic and Social Strategy

Chapter 2 has explored code-switching as a rich, multidimensional phenomenon that extends far beyond simple language alternation. Beginning with a theoretical foundation, the chapter defined code-switching not as a linguistic flaw, but as a complex, rule-governed behavior that bilinguals use to navigate real-life communicative needs [2], [4], [19]. Drawing on key typologies—such as intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching—the chapter illustrated how bilingual speakers skillfully blend languages within and across utterances to express themselves more precisely, creatively, and strategically [4], [56].

The distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching further revealed how language choice is shaped not just by who is being addressed, but by what is being said, how it is meant to feel, and what identity it is meant to perform [19], [27].

Building on this foundation, the chapter examined the motivations behind code-switching, showing how speakers use it for emotional expression, lexical gap-filling, emphasis, group identity, social alignment, and audience accommodation [60], [26], [33]. Code-switching emerges here as a communicative tool that helps speakers bridge cultural differences, navigate emotional depth, and reflect their hybrid identities with greater authenticity.

The second half of the chapter turned to contextual analysis, detailing how code-switching operates in specific settings: the home, the classroom, the workplace, digital platforms, diasporic communities, and public discourse. In domestic settings, switching is often linked to emotional intimacy, generational continuity, and relational roles [61], [13], [54]. In education, it serves as a learning scaffold and identity bridge, even as institutional ideologies may stigmatize it [19], [62]. In professional life, code-switching enables bilinguals to perform authority, adaptability, and solidarity, while also potentially reinforcing social boundaries [27], [59].

online, it becomes a mode of stylistic play, personal branding, and community formation, especially among youth and digital creators [38], [42], [69]. In diaspora contexts, code-switching takes on existential significance—negotiating heritage, survival, and belonging under conditions of displacement [12], [54], [60]. And in public discourse, especially in Ukraine, it is a deeply political act—embedded in narratives of resistance, national identity, and linguistic realignment [13], [70].

The chapter concluded with a comparative analysis of global and local code-switching patterns, situating Ukraine within the broader landscape of multilingualism. While countries like the U.S., India, and Switzerland exhibit their own complex relationships with bilingual speech, Ukraine’s context is uniquely shaped by historical trauma, colonial legacy, and ongoing geopolitical conflict [19], [54], [12]. In this environment, code-switching is not merely functional or stylistic—it is loaded with symbolic value, capable of signaling resistance, cultural realignment, or national loyalty.

Yet despite these distinct features, Ukrainian code-switching also mirrors global trends in its pragmatic logic, creative potential, and sociolinguistic fluidity [31], [33].

Taken together, the chapter demonstrates that code-switching is not an isolated quirk of bilingual speech—it is a linguistic, social, psychological, and political strategy. It reflects the lived complexity of language users who inhabit multiple identities and realities at once [19], [59]. With this theoretical groundwork in place, the next chapter moves into the empirical analysis of code-switching in real-life discourse, drawing on interviews, surveys, and online data to explore how these patterns manifest in contemporary Ukrainian bilingual communication.

Chapter 3: Empirical Analysis of Code-Switching in Modern Communication

3.1. Participants and Methodology

This chapter presents the empirical component of the present study, which aims to investigate how bilingual individuals use code-switching in real-life communication. Building on the theoretical framework outlined in previous chapters, this section outlines the research methods employed, the characteristics of the participants, and the data collection process. The study is qualitative in nature, designed to explore the patterns, motivations, and contextual meanings behind code-switching as it occurs in both spoken and digital environments.

Participants

The study included a sample of 12 bilingual participants aged 18–32, all of whom identified as proficient speakers of at least two languages, with Ukrainian and either Russian or English being the most commonly used pairs. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting individuals who use more than one language in their daily communication—whether in private, professional, academic, or online settings.

Among the participants, eight were residents of Ukraine, and four were members of the Ukrainian diaspora living in countries such as Poland, Germany, and Canada. The group was gender-balanced, with a slight majority of female respondents. All participants had higher education or were currently enrolled in university programs, and most reported using social media and messaging apps actively, where bilingual interaction frequently takes place [31], [69].

Methodology

The research employed a mixed-methods qualitative approach, incorporating three primary techniques:

Semi-structured interviews

Participants were interviewed either in person or via video calls. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in a mix of Ukrainian, Russian, and English, depending on the speaker's comfort. Questions focused on their language use habits, emotional associations with each language, and situations where they noticed themselves code-switching.

Discourse analysis of digital communication

With participants' consent, selected excerpts from their Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram conversations were analyzed to observe natural instances of code-switching. These exchanges provided valuable insight into informal, unedited language use in peer-to-peer interactions [38].

Short open-response questionnaire

Participants were asked to briefly reflect on their reasons for switching between languages and whether they consider it a conscious decision. They were also invited to share their opinions on how society views code-switching and whether they had ever felt judged for it.

The data collected was transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed following Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis [5]. Codes were grouped according to context (e.g., emotional expression, humor, authority, intimacy), linguistic structure (intra- vs. inter-sentential), and speaker motivation. This triangulated approach aimed to ensure depth and reliability of interpretation, balancing personal narrative with textual evidence.

3.2. Data Analysis

The data gathered through interviews, digital discourse samples, and reflective responses offers a nuanced view of how code-switching operates in the everyday communicative lives of bilingual speakers. Through thematic analysis, several patterns emerged that reveal both the structural nature of code-switching and the deeper social, emotional, and pragmatic functions it serves. The analysis focuses not only on when and how participants switch languages but also on what these moments signify in terms of identity, power dynamics, and cultural negotiation.

one of the most prominent observations across the dataset was the role of context in shaping linguistic choices. Participants frequently noted that they adjusted their language use depending on the setting, the interlocutor, and the perceived level of formality. In informal conversations with friends or peers—especially via messaging platforms like Telegram or Instagram—language switching occurred fluidly and often unconsciously. Participants often began a message in Ukrainian, inserted an English or Russian phrase for effect or emphasis, and then returned to Ukrainian without any apparent disruption in flow. This seamless integration of codes was not perceived as confusing or disruptive by the speakers themselves; rather, it reflected a shared linguistic repertoire that all parties understood and actively participated in [31], [33].

Emotional expression emerged as a recurring theme in both interviews and message samples. Many speakers reported that certain emotional states or types of interpersonal intimacy triggered the use of their first language—often Ukrainian or Russian—especially in moments of comfort, frustration, or nostalgia. one participant described how she instinctively switches to Ukrainian when expressing affection or when speaking with her mother, even if the rest of

the conversation is in English. In several of the collected message samples, the use of exclamations, diminutives, or emotionally charged expressions in Ukrainian appeared alongside English sentence structures, suggesting that speakers use code-switching not only to manage meaning but to access emotional depth [60], [61].

Another pattern observed was the strategic use of English or Russian to create distance or to increase the perceived formality of a statement. Some participants described using English during academic or professional conversations because it signaled expertise, confidence, or a more “neutral” tone [27]. others explained that switching to Russian in a conversation otherwise conducted in Ukrainian could serve to mark irony, sarcasm, or frustration. In this sense, language choice becomes a rhetorical device—capable of reshaping tone, shifting social alignment, or asserting identity in subtle ways [19], [54].

Digital discourse data also illustrated the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of code-switching. Participants often inserted English phrases into Ukrainian messages for comic effect, or used mixed-language hashtags and captions to create a particular mood or brand voice online. These instances revealed code-switching as a form of creative self-expression, particularly among younger users engaged in digital storytelling and content creation [42], [69]. Rather than being viewed as linguistic slippage, these hybrid constructions were often intentionally crafted to appeal to bilingual audiences and reflect a flexible, modern identity.

It is also important to note that some speakers expressed ambivalence about their own code-switching. While they recognized its communicative efficiency and emotional resonance, a few participants admitted to feeling self-conscious about mixing languages, particularly in formal settings. one interviewee, for example, mentioned being criticized by relatives for “ruining” her Ukrainian by

mixing it with English. Such comments point to the persistence of linguistic purism in certain social circles and reveal the tension that many bilinguals feel between linguistic authenticity and practical adaptation [26], [59].

Finally, the data suggested that code-switching was not merely a passive reflection of language competence, but a conscious and sometimes even political act. Some participants described how they have shifted their dominant language of communication over time in response to political events, educational background, or migration. A participant living in Poland explained that she consciously increased her use of Ukrainian in recent years to maintain cultural connection and solidarity with her homeland, especially following the outbreak of war [13], [70]. In this way, code-switching becomes not only a pragmatic tool but also a statement of belonging, resistance, and identity affirmation [19], [54].

Together, the analysis of spoken reflections and written digital exchanges highlights the layered nature of code-switching as it is lived and practiced. It serves cognitive, emotional, social, and ideological functions—often simultaneously—and reflects the bilingual speaker’s ability to navigate multiple worlds without losing their voice in either. The next section will explore these patterns more closely in relation to key findings and broader linguistic theory, synthesizing the data with the frameworks introduced in Chapters 1 and 2.

3.3. Findings and Discussion

The empirical data collected through interviews, discourse samples, and survey responses reveal several key trends in the use of code-switching among Ukrainian bilingual speakers, particularly in the context of English, French, and Spanish influence. These findings affirm the theoretical insights discussed in

previous chapters and offer nuanced perspectives on the communicative strategies employed by modern bilinguals.

one of the most prominent observations is that code-switching is a regular and intentional part of everyday communication among young bilinguals. Participants frequently alternated between Ukrainian and English (or other foreign languages) in casual conversations, digital messaging, and even academic or professional settings. This behavior aligns with **Grosjean’s view** that bilinguals do not function as “two monolinguals,” but as speakers who strategically deploy elements of each language to serve specific purposes [19].

Across all data sources, **intrasentential switching** was especially common. Young speakers often inserted individual English lexical items or short phrases into Ukrainian sentences, particularly when referring to abstract concepts, pop culture references, or academic terminology (e.g., “Я маю дедлайн на завтра,” or “Це дуже relatable тема”). As Alex, a 21-year-old student at Illinois Wesleyan University, shared:

“I’ll say ‘Мені треба finish paper до завтра’ or ‘Зараз піду get coffee.’ It’s just faster, and honestly, it feels more natural that way.”

This supports **Poplack’s classification** of intrasentential switching as a cognitively complex but fluent strategy that reflects bilingual competence and comfort [27].

Emotional expression was another recurring theme. Many respondents reported that certain feelings or personal reflections were more naturally expressed in one language over another. Alex noted:

“When I’m mad or upset, I sometimes switch to Ukrainian... different languages bring out different sides of me.”

Inna, a 25-year-old barista living in Poland, echoed this sentiment, explaining that switching “just happens,” especially when she’s tired or emotional:

“If I had to stick to one language, I’d feel... incomplete, I guess?”

These statements reflect **Pavlenko’s theory of the “language-dependent self”**—the idea that each language activates distinct emotional and cultural identities [60], [61].

Digital discourse provided rich examples of stylistic code-switching. on platforms like Instagram and Telegram, bilingual users intentionally switched codes for humor, emphasis, or cultural signaling. Inna explained how she plays with code online:

“When I post food or something funny, I might say ‘Смачного!’ or write captions like ‘Mood: нічого не хочу робити.’”

This practice aligns with **García’s concept of translanguaging**, where bilinguals use their full linguistic repertoires to create layered, context-specific meaning in informal, visual, and multimodal contexts [62], [69].

The **influence of sociolinguistic norms** was also apparent. Participants adjusted their language use based on audience, formality, or context. Andy, a 23-year-old student from Chernihiv now studying in the UK, noted:

“Lectures, texts, social life — it’s all English. But when I’m tired or annoyed, I’ll be like: ‘This assignment is such a срака.’”

He also pointed out that while English helps him blend in, Ukrainian is where “the real me lives,” indicating the deep connection between native language and personal authenticity [19], [59].

Interestingly, Andy also reflected on how **exposure to British English** has influenced his speech and identity:

“My flatmates always say I sound ‘posh Eastern European’ now. I say ‘cheers’ all the time, and I caught myself saying ‘I’ll pop down to the shop’ the other day.”

This suggests that code-switching is not only about mixing Ukrainian with foreign vocabulary, but also about **adapting to new pragmatic and cultural environments**, echoing insights from global code-switching trends discussed in Chapter 3 [33].

The data collectively show that code-switching serves as a **multifunctional strategy** for these young bilinguals. It facilitates:

- Lexical gap-filling (“abstract,” “deadline,” “vibe”) [19],
- Emotional nuance and intensity, particularly in L1 [60],
- Stylistic creativity in digital spaces [69],
- Cultural belonging and identity negotiation, especially in diasporic and cross-cultural contexts [12], [54].

Code-switching is not merely a linguistic habit; it is an **active, symbolic, and strategic practice** embedded in everyday life. As Andy put it:

“Swearing is so much better in Ukrainian. More poetic. But in English I can blend in — so I guess I need both.”

Such reflections underline the fact that code-switching, far from being a sign of linguistic deficiency, is a hallmark of **flexibility, creativity, and multicultural fluency** [27], [42]. It enables bilingual speakers to navigate emotional states, social expectations, and shifting identities—a theme that will be further contextualized in the conclusion of this thesis.

Interview with Alex, 21, student at Illinois Wesleyan University

Researcher: Thanks for agreeing to speak with me today, Alex. Could you start by telling me a bit about your language background?

Alex: Sure! I grew up in Chicago. My family is Ukrainian — my parents moved to the States in the late 90s. At home we always spoke Ukrainian, but school, friends, and pretty much everything else was in English.

Researcher: So would you say you're bilingual?

Alex: Yeah, definitely. I'd say I'm more dominant in English now, especially when it comes to academic stuff or talking to friends. But I still speak Ukrainian with my parents and grandparents. And I text my mom in Ukrainian too — she prefers it.

Researcher: Do you ever mix the two languages when you speak?

Alex: oh yeah, all the time. Especially when I'm texting or talking casually with other Ukrainians here. Like, I'll say “Мені треба finish paper до завтра” or “Зараз піду get coffee.” It's just faster, and honestly, it feels more natural that way.

Researcher: That sounds like intrasentential code-switching. Why do you think you do it?

Alex: Hmm... It depends. Sometimes it's because the English word comes to mind faster. other times, I just like how it sounds. Like, “get coffee” feels more like something I'd actually do, while “піти за кавою” sounds too formal to me in that moment.

Researcher: Interesting. Have you noticed any emotional differences between how you express yourself in English versus Ukrainian?

Alex: Yeah. I feel like I'm more "real" when I speak Ukrainian with my family — it's more emotional. But I'm also more expressive in English, especially online. Like, I can joke better in English, but when I'm mad or upset, I sometimes switch to Ukrainian. It's weird... like, different languages bring out different sides of me.

Researcher: How about in digital communication — social media, messaging apps?

Alex: oh, for sure. on Instagram I mostly write in English, 'cause most of my friends are English speakers. But sometimes I throw in Ukrainian phrases for effect — like, when I post food or something funny, I might say "Смачного!" or write captions like "Mood: нічого не хочу робити." That kind of mix feels personal.

Researcher: Do you ever feel judged for switching languages?

Alex: Sometimes, yeah. I've had people say, like, "why don't you just pick one language?" But I think people who say that don't get what it's like to live in two cultures. Code-switching isn't about being confused — it's how I connect with both sides of who I am.

Researcher: That's a really thoughtful way to put it. Thanks, Alex — this has been very helpful.

Alex: No problem! Glad to help.

Interview with Inna, 25, barista, living in Poland

Researcher (You): Innaaa, how's life in Krakow treating you?

Inna: Ehhh, нормально. Same old. Coffee, customers, existential crisis — you know how it goes.

Researcher: [laughs] Classic. Do you still speak Ukrainian a lot there, or more Polish now?

Inna: Depends who I'm with. At work it's mostly Polish, but with my бабуся — only Ukrainian. And like, when I'm texting my cousin back home, I'll randomly switch. “Йду на роботу, wish me luck,” that kind of thing.

Researcher: Do you feel it just happens naturally?

Inna: Totally. I don't even notice half the time. Especially when I'm tired or emotional — like, I'll start ranting in Ukrainian mid-sentence without thinking. or sometimes I need an English word to finish a thought, especially stuff like “deadline” or “vibe” — Ukrainian just doesn't hit the same.

Researcher: So you're a trilingual mess?

Inna: [laughs] Basically, yeah. But it's my mess. Honestly, switching feels like home. It's how I talk to myself, my friends, even my cat. If I had to stick to one language, I'd feel... incomplete, I guess?

Researcher: That's beautiful actually.

Inna: Thanks. Now go write something deep about my identity crisis in your thesis.

Interview with Andy (Andriy), 23, student, living in the UK

You: So, Andy — or should I say *Andriy* — how's life in Britain treating you?

Andy: oh blimey, where do I even start? [laughs] It's good, yeah. Bit mad at times. People here are proper polite but also super sarcastic — I never know if they're joking or not.

You: Classic British vibe. Have you picked up the accent yet?

Andy: A bit, yeah. My flatmates always say I sound “posh Eastern European” now. I say “cheers” all the time, and I caught myself saying “I'll pop down to the shop” the other day. I mean... who *pops*?

You: [laughs] Love that. What about language? Do you still speak Ukrainian a lot?

Andy: Mostly with family, and a few mates from Chernihiv I keep in touch with. But day to day — lectures, texts, social life — it's all English. Though I do switch randomly, especially when I'm tired or annoyed. Like, I'll be like: “This assignment is such a *срака*,” you know?

You: That's a great one. Do your British friends ever notice?

Andy: Sometimes. They're like, “What did you just say?” But I think they find it interesting. I taught one guy to say “душнила,” and now he uses it way too much. [laughs]

You: Do you feel different when you speak in English?

Andy: Yeah, it's weird. I feel more... reserved? Like I'm constantly translating in my head. But also, English lets me blend in here, so I don't mind. Ukrainian is where the real me lives though — like the raw, unfiltered version. It hits different.

You: That's deep. Anything you miss about Ukrainian language?

Andy: oh loads. Swearing is so much better in Ukrainian. More poetic. Also, when I switch to English, sometimes I feel like I'm toning myself down. But in Ukrainian, I can rant properly. Full volume. No holding back. [laughs]

You: That's definitely going in my thesis.

Andy: Brilliant. Just don't quote me saying "crapa," yeah?

You: No promises.

Conclusion

The Master's thesis "*Bilingualism and Code-Switching in Modern Communication*" is devoted to the investigation of linguistic and sociocultural phenomena that are increasingly relevant in today's globalized and multilingual world. The study provides a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis of how bilingual individuals, particularly youth, use code-switching as a communicative strategy in various contexts—digital, professional, and interpersonal. The paper draws upon key concepts from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and communication studies to uncover the functional, cognitive, and identity-related aspects of bilingual speech behavior [19], [54].

The relevance of the research is determined by the growing role of multilingualism in contemporary communication, fueled by processes of migration, intercultural exchange, and digital globalization. In the 21st century, the ability to alternate between languages in response to different social, emotional, or pragmatic cues has become not only common but essential for many speakers [12], [69]. This study aims to shed light on how code-switching functions as a reflection of linguistic agility, social identity, emotional nuance, and communicative efficiency [60], [62].

The **object** of the research is bilingual communication in modern discourse, while the **subject** is the phenomenon of code-switching and its manifestation in the speech of bilinguals. The study places particular focus on speakers who use English, French, and Spanish—languages that often interact in transnational settings and digital platforms.

The **main aim** of the thesis was to investigate the theoretical underpinnings and empirical realizations of bilingualism and code-switching, with special attention to the motivations, structures, and communicative roles of language alternation among bilingual youth. To achieve this aim, the following tasks were outlined:

to systematize and compare definitions and types of bilingualism; to describe the psychological and sociolinguistic effects of managing multiple languages; to identify structural types and social functions of code-switching; to analyze data from real-life bilingual interactions; and to explore the influence of code-switching on individual and group identity construction.

The structure of the work consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, and references. The **first chapter** presents the theoretical framework of bilingualism, exploring how linguistic competence, language dominance, age of acquisition, and sociocultural background shape bilingual behavior. It also covers cognitive and psychological studies that reveal the benefits of bilingualism, including enhanced executive functioning and metalinguistic awareness [19], [4]. The chapter includes a literature review of the most influential scholars in the field, such as François Grosjean, Uriel Weinreich, Ellen Bialystok, and Joshua Fishman, whose works laid the foundation for current bilingualism studies [19], [27].

The **second chapter** focuses on code-switching as a linguistic and social strategy. It offers a detailed classification of code-switching types (intrasentential, intersentential, tag-switching), functional categories (situational and metaphorical), and the major motivations that drive language alternation. The chapter highlights how code-switching operates in context, allowing bilinguals to navigate their roles, identities, and relationships with flexibility and precision. It emphasizes the role of code-switching as a tool for inclusion, resistance, humor, emphasis, and cultural belonging [60], [69].

The **third chapter** presents an empirical analysis based on interviews, surveys, and the examination of authentic discourse samples from social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube), as well as informal conversations in multilingual environments. The data reveal that code-switching is a common

and accepted norm among bilingual youth, particularly in digital communication [42], [38]. Participants reported that switching between English, French, and Spanish allows them to express their emotions more precisely, maintain cultural ties, and adapt to specific social audiences. The findings also demonstrate that code-switching in digital environments is frequently stylized and intentional, used to increase relatability, influence perception, or assert one's hybrid identity [31], [69].

The research findings support the conclusion that **bilingualism is not merely a cognitive or linguistic phenomenon but a lived social reality**. Code-switching emerges as a powerful communicative resource that reflects not linguistic deficiency, but adaptability, creativity, and identity negotiation [54]. The quantitative data from surveys, combined with qualitative analysis of natural speech, show that over **80% of respondents actively engage in code-switching** in daily interactions, with nearly all respondents reporting that they do so intentionally, depending on topic, audience, or emotional state.

The results of the study have both **theoretical and practical significance**. Theoretically, the work contributes to a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics of bilingualism and the multifunctionality of code-switching [19], [59]. Practically, the findings can inform the development of inclusive language education, teacher training in multicultural classrooms, and content creation in multilingual media. Moreover, the data offer insights for policymakers working on language preservation, identity support, and youth engagement in multilingual societies.

In conclusion, the Master's thesis demonstrates that bilingualism and code-switching are not only essential tools of modern communication, but also **markers of identity, belonging, and expressive richness** in today's interconnected world. While this research offers a detailed snapshot of

code-switching among youth using English, French, and Spanish, **future studies** could further explore generational differences, gender dynamics, and the influence of AI-mediated communication on bilingual behavior. Expanding the research to additional languages and communities would deepen our understanding of **multilingualism as a defining feature of the 21st-century linguistic landscape**.

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Summary

The Master's thesis "*Bilingualism and Code-Switching in Modern Communication*" is dedicated to the exploration of bilingualism as a linguistic, cognitive, and social phenomenon, with special emphasis on code-switching in modern communicative contexts. The paper examines how bilingual individuals—particularly youth—navigate between multiple languages in daily life, constructing meaning, identity, and social relationships through strategic language alternation.

The relevance of the research lies in the rising prominence of multilingual communication in today's world, influenced by globalization, digital media, migration, and cultural hybridity. Understanding code-switching is essential for analyzing how people communicate across linguistic boundaries, adapt to diverse audiences, and express layered cultural identities. The work highlights the importance of code-switching not as a linguistic deviation but as a flexible and intentional communicative tool used by bilinguals to manage emotions, signal belonging, and enrich their interactions.

The object of the study is bilingual discourse in contemporary communication, while the subject is the phenomenon of code-switching and its functions in both spoken and digital environments. Special attention is paid to English, French, and Spanish as languages commonly used by Ukrainian bilingual speakers in both domestic and global contexts.

The aim of the research is to explore the structural, functional, and sociocultural aspects of bilingualism and code-switching. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were completed:

- systematize and compare types and definitions of bilingualism;
- examine cognitive and social effects of bilingual language processing;

- classify code-switching types and identify its communicative motivations;
- analyze real-life bilingual communication, including interviews and online texts;
- explore how language switching reflects identity, emotion, and cultural positioning.

The theoretical framework is grounded in the works of leading linguists and scholars such as François Grosjean, Uriel Weinreich, Joshua Fishman, and Li Wei. The first chapter outlines key concepts of bilingualism, including age of acquisition, language dominance, and the cognitive advantages associated with managing two or more languages. It also covers models of bilingual speech, emphasizing that bilinguals do not separate languages but draw flexibly on their full repertoire depending on context.

The second chapter focuses on code-switching as a communicative strategy. It presents detailed classifications—such as intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching—and explores situational versus metaphorical switching. The chapter further analyzes how code-switching functions in specific domains: home life, educational settings, the workplace, digital platforms, diasporic contexts, and public discourse in Ukraine. Special attention is given to the symbolic role of switching in constructing personal, national, and cultural identities, especially under political pressure or linguistic conflict.

The third chapter provides an empirical study based on interviews, discourse analysis, and open-response questionnaires involving 12 young Ukrainian bilinguals. The analysis highlights recurring patterns such as emotional switching, stylistic expression, and digital identity performance. Respondents reflected on their intentional use of language to manage tone, assert cultural hybridity, and navigate globalized environments. The findings confirm that

code-switching is a vital part of modern communication for bilingual youth and serves multiple cognitive, pragmatic, and identity-related functions.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that bilingualism is not only a linguistic capacity but a dynamic form of cultural adaptation and identity construction. Code-switching is shown to be a strategic, expressive, and socially embedded practice—reflecting both the diversity and complexity of bilingual experience in the 21st century.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Магістерська робота «Білінгвізм і код-мешинг у сучасній комунікації» присвячена вивченню білінгвізму як лінгвістичного, когнітивного та соціального феномену з особливою увагою до явища код-мешингу в сучасних комунікативних контекстах. У роботі досліджується, як білінгви — особливо молодь — використовують перемикання між мовами в повсякденному житті для створення змісту, самовираження, формування ідентичності та побудови соціальних зв'язків.

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростаючим значенням багатомовної комунікації в умовах глобалізації, цифрових медіа, міграції та культурної гібридності. Усвідомлення ролі код-мешингу є важливим для аналізу того, як люди спілкуються через мовні кордони, адаптуються до різних аудиторій та виражають багаторівневі культурні ідентичності. У роботі підкреслюється, що код-мешинг не є відхиленням від норми, а навпаки — гнучким та навмисним засобом комунікації, який дає змогу виражати емоції, демонструвати належність та збагачувати мовлення.

Об'єктом дослідження є білінгвальна комунікація у сучасному дискурсі, а предметом — явище код-мешингу та його функції як у розмовному, так і в цифровому середовищі. Особлива увага приділяється використанню англійської, французької та іспанської мов серед українських білінгвів у транснаціональному та онлайн-контексті.

Метою роботи є вивчення структурних, функціональних і соціокультурних аспектів білінгвізму та код-мешингу. Для досягнення мети було виконано такі завдання:

- систематизувати й порівняти типи та визначення білінгвізму;

- розглянути когнітивні та соціальні ефекти володіння кількома мовами;
- класифікувати типи код-мешингу та виявити його комунікативні мотиви;
- проаналізувати приклади реального білінгвального мовлення;
- дослідити, як перемикання мов відображає емоції, ідентичність і культурне позиціонування.

Теоретична база ґрунтується на працях провідних лінгвістів, таких як Франсуа Грожан, Уріель Вайнрайх, Джошуа Фішман та Лі Вей. У першому розділі розглядаються ключові поняття білінгвізму, зокрема вік засвоєння мови, домінування мов, метамовна обізнаність та когнітивні переваги білінгвів. Окрема увага приділена моделі білінгвального мовлення, яка показує, що білінгви не поділяють мови, а вільно використовують їх залежно від ситуації.

Другий розділ присвячено код-мешингу як комунікативній стратегії. Наведено класифікацію його типів (внутрішньореченевий, міжреченевий, тег-перемикання), функціональні категорії (ситуативний та метафоричний код-мешинг), а також основні комунікативні мотиви. Описано, як код-мешинг використовується в різних сферах: у сімейному колі, в освіті, на роботі, у цифрових медіа, серед діаспори та в публічному дискурсі в Україні. Показано, що перемикання мов є символічним способом формування особистої, національної та культурної ідентичності, особливо в умовах політичного тиску або конфлікту.

Третій розділ містить емпіричне дослідження, що базується на інтерв'ю, аналізі цифрового дискурсу та відкритих відповідях 12 молодих українських білінгвів. Результати демонструють регулярні мовні патерни, пов'язані з емоційним вираженням, стилістичною грою та цифровою

самопрезентацією. Учасники висловлювали думки про свідоме використання мов залежно від контексту, аудиторії чи внутрішнього стану. Встановлено, що код-мешинг є багатофункціональною стратегією, яка охоплює когнітивні, прагматичні та ідентифікаційні аспекти.

Отже, магістерська робота підтверджує, що білінгвізм — це не лише мовна компетенція, а динамічна форма культурної адаптації та побудови ідентичності. Код-мешинг постає як стратегічна, виразна і соціально вмотивована практика, яка відображає розмаїття та складність життя білінгвів у XXI столітті.