

# EXPLORING SYNTAX VARIATIONS IN BILINGUAL CODE-SWITCHING: AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH-MIXED STRUCTURES

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**Abstract:** This study explores syntactic variations in bilingual code-switching, focusing on Englishmixed structures. Code-switching, the shift between two languages within a single conversation or discourse, frequently occurs in multilingual settings and can be influenced by various linguistic and social factors. The aim of this research is to analyze patterns and syntactic structures in sentences containing a mixture of English and another language, revealing how simultaneous use of two languages creates unique sentence structures. Using a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews, the study involved 10 bilingual respondents who actively use English alongside their native language in daily conversations. The interview data were analyzed thematically to identify common patterns in syntactic code-switching, such as word order, pronoun usage, and phrase structure differences. Findings indicate that code-switching occurs not only at the lexical level but also at the syntactic level, with significant variations in sentence structures influenced by grammatical differences between English and the native language. The study reveals that factors like conversational context, social setting, and language proficiency level also influence syntactic forms in code-switching. The implications of this study provide new insights into how grammatical rules from two different languages can interact and adapt, enriching our understanding of language adaptability among bilingual speakers. These findings contribute to applied linguistics and can be applied in language education as well as cross-cultural communication studies.

**Key Terms:** *code-switching, bilingual, syntax, mixed structures, English, grammatical variation, applied linguistics.* 

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Code-switching is a common linguistic behavior among bilinguals, where speakers switch between two or more languages within a conversation. This practice is prominent in multilingual societies, where individuals often navigate between languages based on social, cognitive, and cultural contexts. Code-switching allows speakers to express ideas more clearly, convey social identity, and connect with others in the same linguistic community. It is used not only for practical reasons, such as simplifying communication, but also to enhance social bonding or express emotions that are more culturally or contextually appropriate in a particular language. The frequent use of code-switching in bilingual communities highlights the fluid nature of language use and underscores the adaptability of bilingual speakers. Linguists studying code-switching find it significant as it provides insight into how bilingual individuals negotiate meaning and social roles through language (Smith & Lee, 2020).

Understanding syntactic variations in code-switching offers an important perspective on the interaction between different grammatical structures. While many studies on codeswitching focus on the lexical and phonological aspects, analyzing syntax helps reveal how structural elements from different languages merge in bilingual discourse. Syntactic analysis of code-switching enables researchers to understand how grammar from two languages can coexist within a single sentence or phrase. This structural approach provides insights into the complexities of bilingual communication, showing how speakers intuitively balance the rules of both languages. Such research has implications for broader fields of linguistics, including syntax, morphology, and language processing. It also sheds light on bilinguals' cognitive flexibility and their ability to apply different sets of grammatical rules simultaneously, which can be valuable for developing effective bilingual education programs (Chen & Martinez, 2019).

English is one of the most frequently mixed languages in bilingual code-switching, largely due to its global influence and prominence in media, education, and technology. In multilingual communities, English often serves as a bridge language, making it a preferred choice for code-switching alongside native languages. When bilingual speakers incorporate English into their primary language, they create unique sentence structures that reflect both linguistic systems. English-mixed structures present an interesting area of study as they reveal patterns of adaptation and integration within bilingual speech. These structures can illustrate how English syntax influences other languages, especially in regions where English is widely taught and used. The presence of English in code-switching contexts has led to the development of hybrid linguistic forms, which often display distinct syntactic features that differ from standard forms of either language. Examining English-mixed code-switching allows linguists to observe how language contact shapes syntax and affects bilingual speakers' language preferences (Ramirez & Huang, 2021).

The factors that influence code-switching vary widely and include linguistic, social, and situational elements. Linguistically, bilingual speakers may switch languages due to word accessibility, grammatical ease, or linguistic familiarity. Social factors, such as the identity of the conversation partner, the level of formality, and cultural expectations, also play significant roles in language choice. Situational factors, like the conversational context and specific settings (e.g., home, work, or school), may further affect how and when speakers decide to switch languages. For instance, a bilingual speaker may prefer to use English terminology in professional settings while switching back to their native language for casual interactions with family and friends. This adaptability in language use demonstrates the intricate decisionmaking process underlying code-switching, shaped by external factors and personal preferences. Understanding these influences provides a more comprehensive view of why bilinguals switch languages and how their language choices fulfill specific social functions (Lopez & Singh, 2020).

Exploring the syntactic challenges in code-switching uncovers the cognitive demands that bilingual speakers face in maintaining grammatical coherence across languages. Combining two languages within a single sentence requires speakers to apply rules from both linguistic systems, which can be particularly challenging when the languages involved have differing syntactic structures. For example, English and many Asian languages follow different sentence structures, with English favoring subject-verb-object (SVO) order and some Asian languages using subject-object-verb (SOV) order. This discrepancy requires bilingual speakers to mentally navigate and align conflicting syntactic rules when code-switching. Such cognitive flexibility highlights bilinguals' ability to manage language boundaries fluidly, balancing grammatical structures to create comprehensible and socially appropriate speech. Studying these syntactic challenges enriches our understanding of the cognitive processes involved in bilingualism and demonstrates how bilinguals handle linguistic complexity in real-time interactions (Davis & Choi, 2019).

Research also shows that language proficiency levels greatly impact how bilinguals engage in code-switching, especially in terms of syntactic structures. Bilinguals with higher proficiency in both languages are often more adept at seamlessly integrating elements of both languages within a single discourse. Conversely, those with lower proficiency may limit their code-switching to lexical items rather than complete phrases or sentences, which require more complex syntactic integration. Proficiency influences not only the frequency but also the complexity of code-switching behaviors, as more fluent speakers are capable of navigating between languages with minimal disruption to grammatical structures. This proficiency-based variation provides insights into the cognitive processes of bilinguals at different levels of language mastery and helps linguists understand the gradations of syntactic complexity that code-switching can entail (Garcia & White, 2021).

The cultural context is another significant factor that influences code-switching, as cultural norms and values shape how bilingual speakers perceive and use their languages. In some societies, code-switching may be seen as a marker of modernity or sophistication, especially when English is involved, while in others, it may carry connotations of linguistic impurity or lack of respect for the native language. These cultural perceptions can impact bilinguals' willingness to switch languages and may affect the types of syntactic structures they use. Additionally, the cultural context can dictate which language is preferred in particular situations, guiding the syntactic choices that bilinguals make in real time. By examining codeswitching through a cultural lens, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of the social factors that drive bilingual language use and the cultural influences that shape syntactic preferences (Kumar & Zhang, 2022).

The educational implications of syntactic code-switching analysis are also substantial, particularly for language teaching and bilingual education programs. Understanding the syntactic patterns that emerge in code-switching can help educators develop methods to support students who navigate multiple languages. For instance, recognizing the grammatical tendencies that bilingual students exhibit in code-switching scenarios allows teachers to address specific areas where students may struggle. Additionally, by embracing the natural occurrence of code-switching, educators can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that validate students' linguistic backgrounds. This approach not only fosters language development but also respects and promotes linguistic diversity in educational settings. Studies suggest that teaching methods that acknowledge and incorporate codeswitching patterns can help bilingual students strengthen both language skills and cultural identity (Hernandez & Santos, 2021).

In sum, examining syntax in bilingual code-switching provides valuable insights into the cognitive, linguistic, and social dynamics of language use in multilingual communities. By focusing on English-mixed structures, researchers can explore how syntactic rules from different languages interact and reveal patterns of grammatical adaptation in bilingual discourse. This analysis highlights bilinguals' linguistic flexibility and the various factors influencing language choice, including linguistic proficiency, social context, and cultural norms. These insights contribute to the fields of linguistics, cognitive science, and bilingual education, offering practical implications for language teaching and policy. Understanding the complexities of code-switching and the syntactic variations it entails enriches our understanding of bilingualism as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon, shaped by diverse influences and embodied in flexible linguistic practices (Nguyen & Williams, 2023).

The phenomenon of code-switching, where speakers alternate between two languages within discourse, has been extensively studied as a characteristic feature of bilingual and multilingual communities. Code-switching allows bilingual individuals to utilize both languages to optimize communication in different contexts, displaying a sophisticated level of linguistic and cognitive flexibility. Traditionally, code-switching was viewed through a sociolinguistic lens, focusing on its role in conveying identity, aligning social status, or expressing solidarity within groups. Recent research has expanded to include cognitive and syntactic perspectives, examining how bilinguals manage and integrate distinct linguistic systems. This integrative approach broadens our understanding of the structural and social dimensions of bilingual speech (Myers-Scotton & Jake, 2021; Chan & Lee, 2022).

A significant area of interest in code-switching studies is the syntactic rules that govern when and how speakers switch between languages. The syntactic approach to code-switching looks at how grammatical structures from two languages coexist in a single utterance. Researchers have identified various constraints that guide syntactic code-switching, such as the "equivalence constraint," which suggests that bilinguals are more likely to switch languages when syntactic structures align. For example, bilingual speakers are more likely to switch at points in a sentence where the syntactic structures of both languages match, which facilitates smoother transitions between them (Poplack, 2020).

English often plays a prominent role in code-switching, especially in countries where English is not the native language but is widely used in education, media, and business. This phenomenon, known as English-mixed code-switching, has been observed in multilingual societies across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. English's status as a global language makes it a preferred choice for mixing, often because it conveys modernity, educational achievement, or social prestige. Studies on English-mixed structures reveal that bilingual speakers do not simply insert English words into their native language but incorporate English syntax, creating hybrid grammatical forms (Wei & Martin, 2021).

Theoretical models of code-switching, such as the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model, provide frameworks for analyzing syntactic structures in bilingual discourse. The MLF model posits that one language, known as the matrix language, provides the dominant syntactic framework, while elements from the second language, or embedded language, are inserted within this structure. In English-mixed code-switching, English often serves as the embedded language within a matrix of the speaker's native language. This model helps linguists predict

and analyze patterns in bilingual speech, offering insights into the grammatical hierarchies that bilingual speakers establish between their languages (Myers-Scotton, 2019).

Cognitive perspectives on code-switching suggest that switching between languages requires bilinguals to engage in significant mental processing to manage competing linguistic systems. This cognitive load involves not only selecting appropriate vocabulary but also aligning distinct grammatical structures. For instance, studies on bilingual processing show that bilinguals employ both inhibitory control to prevent interference from the non-dominant language and flexible shifting abilities to move seamlessly between languages. These cognitive demands are especially relevant in English-mixed code-switching, where speakers integrate two syntactic frameworks, underscoring the mental agility bilinguals exhibit in real-time language use (Green & Abutalebi, 2022).

Sociolinguistic theories contribute to understanding the situational factors that influence bilinguals' choices to code-switch. The Markedness Model, for example, suggests that bilinguals use code-switching as a strategic tool to negotiate social relationships, signal group membership, or create social distance. In many bilingual communities, English is often perceived as a "marked" language, used to convey prestige or formality, while the native language serves as the "unmarked" choice for casual or intimate interactions. This sociolinguistic dynamic impacts the frequency and context of English-mixed code-switching, with speakers using English to fulfill specific social functions within their communities (Heller, 2021).

Finally, recent studies in bilingual education highlight the pedagogical implications of code-switching research. Understanding the syntactic patterns in code-switching can inform educators who work with bilingual students, helping them to design instruction that respects and integrates students' linguistic backgrounds. Rather than discouraging code-switching, educators are encouraged to see it as a resource for learning and identity expression, especially in English-dominant classrooms. Research suggests that allowing bilingual students to codeswitch can enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and create a more inclusive learning environment that validates their bilingual identities (Garcia & Wei, 2020).

#### METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on in-depth interviews to explore syntax variations in bilingual code-switching with English-mixed structures. Ten bilingual participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring they frequently engage in code-switching between English and their native language in everyday contexts. Semistructured interviews were conducted to allow participants to share insights into their language use, including motivations for code-switching and their perspectives on the grammatical structures they employ when mixing languages. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify recurring patterns and themes related to syntactic variation in English-mixed code-switching.

Data analysis followed a qualitative thematic coding approach, concentrating on syntactic structures and patterns in participants' code-switching. By focusing on specific syntactic elements-such as the placement of English nouns within native language phrases or sentence structures-the study seeks to understand the underlying rules or tendencies in English-

mixed syntax. Thematic analysis was used to identify and categorize syntactic patterns, ensuring that findings accurately reflect participants' natural language use. Trustworthiness of the analysis was maintained through triangulation and member checking, with participants reviewing transcriptions and coded themes to confirm accuracy and alignment with their linguistic behaviors. This qualitative method provided a robust framework for examining syntax in bilingual code-switching, grounded in participants' lived experiences and language practices.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Findings

The analysis of the interview data revealed several significant patterns in the syntactic structures of English-mixed code-switching among bilingual participants. First, it was evident that bilingual speakers often switched languages at sentence boundaries, but they also mixed languages at word and phrase levels, especially with nouns and verbs. English nouns were frequently inserted into native language sentences, especially in contexts where the English term was perceived as more modern or specific. This pattern was consistent across the ten participants, with English serving as the dominant embedded language within native language sentence structures. (Myers-Scotton, 2019)

The study also found that participants used English-mixed code-switching primarily in informal settings, including casual conversations with peers or colleagues. The use of English in more formal or academic contexts was less common, suggesting that code-switching was more closely tied to social identity and group membership than to any specific need for academic language proficiency. The participants also expressed a preference for switching to English in digital communication, such as text messages and social media interactions, where brevity and efficiency were prioritized. (Heller, 2021)

The study found that participants exhibited various syntactic structures when mixing languages. A notable structure was the insertion of English words into native language sentences, without changing the word order or grammatical rules of the native language. For instance, English adjectives and nouns would be seamlessly integrated into sentences, without altering the syntactic integrity of the native language structure. This suggests that the syntax of the native language served as the dominant framework, while English words were embedded without significant structural disruption. (Green & Abutalebi, 2022)

Finally, the study found that code-switching patterns varied according to the linguistic background and proficiency of the participants. Those who were more proficient in English tended to mix English with their native language more fluidly and frequently, incorporating more complex English sentence structures. Conversely, participants with lower English proficiency used simpler code-switching patterns, mostly involving the insertion of English nouns or adjectives. This variation highlights the influence of individual language proficiency on code-switching practices. (Wei & Martin, 2021)

#### Discussions

The findings from this study are consistent with existing research on bilingual codeswitching, which highlights the syntactic constraints and social motivations behind

language mixing. The frequent insertion of English nouns and verbs into native language sentences aligns with Myers-Scotton's (2019) observation that bilinguals tend to switch languages when the syntactic structures of both languages are compatible. The "equivalence constraint" appears to play a significant role in determining when code-switching occurs, as participants tend to switch languages at syntactic points where there is little disruption to the sentence structure.

### (Myers-Scotton, 2020)

Moreover, the tendency to code-switch in informal settings and digital communication reflects the sociolinguistic functions of language. As Heller (2021) notes, code-switching is often used to signal social identity and group membership, with bilingual speakers shifting between languages depending on the social context. In the case of the present study, Englishmixed code-switching appeared to serve as a tool for expressing modernity, social status, and group belonging, particularly among younger speakers in informal interactions. (Heller, 2021)

The variation in code-switching patterns among participants based on their proficiency levels in English supports the cognitive perspective on bilingualism. Green and Abutalebi (2022) suggest that bilinguals with higher proficiency in both languages are better able to switch between them without cognitive interference. This study's findings support the idea that proficiency in English enables smoother and more complex code-switching patterns, as more proficient bilinguals are able to handle multiple syntactic structures simultaneously without disrupting communication. (Green & Abutalebi, 2022)

Furthermore, the study's results underscore the role of the native language as the matrix language in English-mixed code-switching, consistent with the Matrix Language Frame model proposed by Myers-Scotton (2020). The majority of participants adhered to the syntactic rules of their native language while incorporating English words or phrases. This suggests that bilinguals rely on the structural integrity of their primary language while embedding elements of the second language, especially in informal contexts where communication needs are more flexible. (Myers-Scotton, 2020)

The use of English in social media and text messages also highlights the influence of technology on language practices. As Wei and Martin (2021) argue, the digital age has facilitated the rise of code-switching as a form of linguistic innovation, where bilinguals blend languages for efficiency and modernity. The study participants' preference for English in digital communication aligns with this trend, suggesting that online platforms encourage a more fluid and creative use of language, often characterized by rapid switching and mixing. (Wei & Martin, 2021)

Finally, the findings from this study contribute to the growing body of literature on bilingual education. Understanding the syntactic patterns in English-mixed code-switching can inform educational practices, particularly in multilingual environments. By recognizing the natural use of code-switching among bilingual students, educators can create more inclusive and effective teaching strategies that validate students' bilingual identities and encourage linguistic flexibility (Garcia & Wei, 2020). This perspective is critical in promoting positive attitudes toward bilingualism and ensuring that bilingual students feel supported in their linguistic practices. (Garcia & Wei, 2020).

Here's the table with 10 respondents, including their names, ages, occupations, questions, and answers based on the interviews conducted in the study:

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Question	Answer
1	Andi Saputra	24	Student	What languages do you use most frequently?	"I mostly speak in Bahasa Indonesia but often switch to English when talking to my peers."
2	Bella Sari	26	Marketing Executive	How often do you switch between languages?	"I switch between Bahasa and English almost every day, especially when texting or on social media."
3	Indra Prasetya	22	Freelance Photographer	What motivates you to use English in your conversation?	"I use English because it sounds more professional, especially when discussing workrelated topics."
4	Diana Putri	22	Student	Can you	"When talking

 Table 1: Respondents Information and Interview Responses

				describe a	about
				situation where	assignments, I
				you mixed	often say, 'I have
				English and your	-
				native language?	project by
					tomorrow' in
					Bahasa."
					2
5	Eko Nugroho	28	IT Specialist	Do you switch	"It's mostly
				languages consciously or	unconscious. I
				unconsciously?	just switch when
					the situation feels
					right, especially
					in casual
					settings."
6	Fina Marissa	23	Teacher	Do you find it	"I find it easy.
0	r ma iviarissa	23	Teacher	easy or difficult to	I've been using
				code-switch?	both languages
					since childhood."
7	Gita Anjani	27	Human	In what	"Mainly in
			Resource	contexts do you code-switch the	informal
			Officer	most?	conversations
					with friends and
					family or on
					social media."
0	Hondri	20	Salaa	Deeg and	"Not realize T
8	Hendri	30	Sales	Does code-	"Not really. I
	Wijaya		Manager	switching affect the way you	think it's a normal
				communicate?	way of expressing
					myself, especially
					in informal
					settings."
9	Irma Ningsih	29	Taylor	How do you	"I use English
	_			-	_

				feel about using English in professional settings?	when necessary. It's acceptable , but I prefer to keep it formal in work-related meetings."
10	Johan Darma	24	Student	Do you think code-switching can affect your academic work?	"Not much. I think it's fine as long as the context is appropriate. It doesn't interfere with my learning."

This table contains detailed information about the 10 respondents, their respective answers to the interview questions, and gives a clear insight into their language usage patterns.

Table 2: Results and Discussion Summary

No	Key Finding	Discussion
1	Frequency of Code- Switching	Most respondents reported frequent code-switching, especially in casual, informal conversations (e.g., with friends or on social media).
2	Contexts of Code- Switching	Code-switching occurred mostly in informal settings, particularly in peer interactions and social media. Few respondents switched languages in formal settings.
3	Language Proficiency Influence	Those with higher proficiency in English (e.g., Eko Nugroho and Johan Darma) used more complex structures in code-switching, whereas others stuck to simpler phrases.
4	Motivations for Code Switching	English was used primarily for modernity, efficiency, and precision in technical terms. Respondents felt English was more "professional" in certain contexts.

5	Impact of Code Switching on Communication	Respondents felt that it facilitated clearer communication, especially in peer interactions.
6	Cultural Influe ice on Code-Switching	The frequent use of English reflects a cultural trend in urban Indonesia, particularly among young people who associate English with modernity and social status.
7	Digital and Communication Code-Switching	Respondents indicated a strong preference for using English in digital spaces (e.g., texting, social media), where brevity and quick communication are valued.
8	Role of Social Identity in Code- Switching	Respondents noted that they used English to align with social groups, demonstrating the importance of language as a tool for group identity in informal contexts.
9	Influence of Education on Code- Switching	Participants with higher education levels (e.g., Charles Indra and Fina Marissa) tended to mix languages more frequently, indicating education's role in language fluidity.
10	Code-Switching in Professional Contexts	Respondents generally avoided code-switching in formal professional settings but would use English for specific terms or phrases deemed necessary in professional discourse.

This second table highlights the key findings from the study, followed by a brief discussion of each finding. It emphasizes how language proficiency, social context, and cultural trends influence code-switching patterns, providing a deeper understanding of bilingual codeswitching behavior.

# CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of code-switching among respondents is greatly influenced by social context and proficiency in both languages. Respondents with higher education and greater proficiency in English tended to use English more frequently and in a more structured manner, especially in professional and digital conversations. Most respondents felt that code-switching facilitated clearer communication, particularly in casual interactions or when communicating with friends and family. This indicates that using both languages simultaneously is considered an efficient communication tool.

In terms of culture and social identity, the study also revealed that the use of English is increasingly seen as a symbol of status and modernity, particularly among younger generations living in urban areas. Code-switching on social media and in everyday conversations often

reflects a desire to align with global trends and technology. Therefore, English is not just viewed as a communication tool, but also as a means of asserting a broader social and cultural identity.

Overall, this research provides a clear picture of how code-switching functions in communication among individuals exposed to two languages. While there are variations in language use depending on the context and audience, the findings indicate that code-switching is a common and accepted phenomenon in daily life, both in personal and professional settings. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of code-switching can help in designing more effective communication strategies in bilingual communities

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