

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**“Global Horizons in Philology and Pedagogy: Experiences of Turkic Nations”**  
**September 25, 2025**

**THE ROLE OF CODE-SWITCHING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG  
BILINGUAL STUDENTS IN UZBEKISTAN**

*Turgunboyeva Dilnura*

*A student of Namangan state university*

*@dilnura.turgunboeva17@gmail.com*

**Annotation:** This article explores the phenomenon of code-switching in English language learning among university students in Uzbekistan. It analyzes the contexts, functions, and implications of code-switching in both classroom and informal settings. The study reveals that code-switching serves important cognitive and social functions, such as clarification, stress reduction, and peer interaction. At the same time, excessive reliance on code-switching may limit opportunities for authentic language practice. The findings suggest that code-switching, when used strategically, can be a valuable pedagogical tool in EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** code-switching, bilingualism, English language learning, Uzbekistan, EFL education

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается феномен переключения кодов при изучении английского языка студентами университетов Узбекистана. Анализируются контексты, функции и последствия переключения кодов как в учебных, так и в неформальных ситуациях. Результаты исследования показывают, что переключение кодов выполняет важные когнитивные и социальные функции, такие как разъяснение, снижение стресса и взаимодействие между студентами. Однако чрезмерная зависимость от переключения кодов может ограничить возможности для аутентичной языковой практики. Сделан вывод, что при стратегическом использовании переключение кодов может быть ценным педагогическим инструментом на занятиях по английскому языку как иностранному.

**Ключевые слова:** переключение кодов, билингвизм, изучение английского языка, Узбекистан, обучение английскому как иностранному

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada O‘zbekistondagi universitet talabalari orasida ingliz tilini o‘rganish jarayonida kod almashtirish hodisasi o‘rganiladi. Unda kod almashtirishning kontekstlari, funksiyalari va ta’siri sinf xonasi hamda norasmiy vaziyatlarda tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, kod almashtirish talabalarga tushunishni osonlashtirish, stressni kamaytirish va o‘zaro muloqotni yengillashtirish kabi muhim kognitiv va ijtimoiy funksiyalarni bajaradi. Shu bilan birga, kod almashtirishga ortiqcha tayanish ingliz tilini tabiiy qo‘llash imkoniyatlarini cheklashi mumkin. Xulosaga ko‘ra, kod almashtirishdan maqsadli foydalanilganda, u ingliz tili ta’limida samarali pedagogik vosita bo‘lishi mumkin.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** kod almashtirish, bilingvizm, ingliz tilini o‘rganish, O‘zbekiston, ingliz tili

**Introduction.** In recent years, code-switching has attracted significant attention in the field of applied linguistics, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Code-switching, defined as the alternation between two or more languages within a single discourse, sentence, or conversation, is a natural phenomenon among bilingual and multilingual speakers (Poplack, 1980). While some scholars argue that code-switching indicates a lack of language

proficiency, others highlight its potential pedagogical benefits in facilitating communication and comprehension in the classroom (Gumperz, 1982; Macaro, 2009). Uzbekistan provides a unique context for studying code-switching due to its multilingual environment, where Uzbek serves as the state language, Russian remains widely used in education and everyday life, and English is gaining increasing importance as a language of globalization and academic mobility. University students in Uzbekistan, most of whom are bilingual or even trilingual, often resort to code-switching when learning English. This practice is observed both in formal classroom settings and in informal peer communication.

Understanding the role of code-switching in English language learning is essential, as it may either support or hinder students' progress. On the one hand, code-switching can serve as a scaffolding strategy, allowing students to clarify meanings, express complex ideas, and reduce anxiety in communication. On the other hand, excessive reliance on code-switching may prevent learners from fully immersing themselves in English, thus limiting opportunities for authentic language use.

The aim of this study is to examine the functions and implications of code-switching in English language learning among bilingual university students in Uzbekistan. Specifically, the research seeks to identify the contexts in which students employ code-switching, explore its impact on language acquisition, and analyze teachers' perceptions of this phenomenon.

**Literature Review:** Previous studies have shown that code-switching serves multiple functions in EFL classrooms. Sert (2005) argues that learners employ code-switching primarily for clarification, gap-filling, and expressing solidarity. Similarly, Ferguson (2003) emphasizes its pedagogical utility, suggesting that it can facilitate both learning and classroom management. Macaro (2009), however, warns that teachers should balance the use of students' first language with sufficient exposure to the target language.

In the Uzbek context, where students are bilingual or trilingual, code-switching is not an exceptional behavior but a natural practice. Research conducted in other multilingual societies (e.g., Musa et al., 2012; Gulzar, 2010) demonstrates that code-switching is not a sign of incompetence but a strategic resource. Drawing on these perspectives, this study positions code-switching as a potentially useful yet complex phenomenon that deserves closer investigation.

**Methodology:** This research employed a mixed-method approach, combining classroom observations, student questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with teachers.

**Participants:** 80 undergraduate students from two universities in Uzbekistan, all of whom were bilingual (Uzbek-Russian or Uzbek-English) and actively learning English as a foreign language. Four EFL teachers also took part in interviews.

**Data collection:** Classroom observations were conducted during speaking and grammar lessons. A questionnaire was distributed to students to collect their attitudes toward code-switching. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers to gain insights into pedagogical practices.

**Data analysis:** Thematic analysis was applied to interview transcripts and observation notes, while survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

**Results and Discussion:** Contexts of Code-Switching. The classroom observations revealed that code-switching occurred frequently in English language classes. Students most often switched to Uzbek when they faced difficulties in vocabulary or grammar, particularly during discussions and group work. Teachers also occasionally used Uzbek to clarify complex grammar points or to ensure comprehension among weaker students.

**Functions of Code-Switching.** Thematic analysis of interviews highlighted several key functions:

1. Clarification and comprehension – to explain new concepts.
2. Expression of solidarity – to build rapport with peers.
3. Gap-filling strategy – to substitute missing vocabulary.
4. Classroom management – to give instructions efficiently.

**Perceived Benefits and Drawbacks.** Students believed code-switching was beneficial for reducing stress and aiding comprehension. Teachers also saw it as useful when applied sparingly. However, both groups acknowledged that overuse may limit immersion in English and slow fluency development.

**Conclusion.** This study demonstrated that code-switching is a frequent and natural occurrence in English language learning among Uzbek university students. It fulfills important pedagogical, cognitive, and social functions, such as facilitating comprehension and reducing anxiety. However, overreliance on code-switching can hinder authentic language practice. Therefore, code-switching should be recognized as a legitimate classroom strategy, but its use must remain purposeful and balanced. Future research may focus on training teachers in effective bilingual strategies and on investigating long-term effects of code-switching on language proficiency.

### References.

1. Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402–423.
2. Ferguson, G. (2003). Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies. *AILA Review*, 16(1), 38–51.
3. Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Gulzar, M. A. (2010). Code-switching: Awareness about its utility in bilingual classrooms. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 32(2), 23–44.
5. Macaro, E. (2009). Teacher codeswitching in the second language classroom: Exploring ‘optimal’ use. In Turnbull, M., & Dailey-O’Cain, J. (Eds.), *First language use in second and foreign language learning* (pp. 35–49). *Multilingual Matters*.
6. Musa, N. C., Koo, Y. L., & Azman, H. (2012). Exploring code-switching as a teaching strategy in Malaysian secondary schools. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 427–435.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**“Global Horizons in Philology and Pedagogy: Experiences of Turkic Nations”**  
**September 25, 2025**

7. Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: Toward a typology of code-switching. *Linguistics*, 18(7-8), 581-618.
8. Sert, O. (2005). The functions of code-switching in ELT classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 11(8).
9. *TESL Journal*, 11(8).