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LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF CODE-SWITCHING

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Abstract. Code-switching is a common linguistic phenomenon in multilingual communities where speakers alternate between two or more languages within a single conversation, sentence, or utterance. It reflects not only language competence but also social identity, communicative strategies, and cultural interaction. This article examines the lexical and semantic features of code-switching, focusing on how vocabulary borrowing, meaning shifts, pragmatic intentions, and contextual adaptation shape bilingual speech. The study highlights that code-switching is not random; rather, it follows structural and semantic patterns influenced by speakers' goals, social environment, and linguistic resources. Understanding lexical and semantic dimensions of code-switching contributes to broader research in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and discourse analysis.

Keywords: code-switching, bilingualism, lexical features, semantic features, multilingualism, sociolinguistics

ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ И СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ КОД-СВИТЧИНГА

Аннотация. Код-свитчинг является распространённым лингвистическим явлением в многоязычных сообществах, при котором говорящие чередуют два или более языков в рамках одного разговора, предложения или высказывания. Он отражает не только языковую компетенцию, но и социальную идентичность, коммуникативные стратегии и культурное взаимодействие. В данной статье рассматриваются лексические и семантические особенности код-свитчинга с акцентом на то, как заимствование лексики, сдвиги значений, прагматические намерения и контекстуальная адаптация формируют билингвальную речь. Исследование показывает, что код-свитчинг не

является случайным явлением, а подчиняется определённым структурным и семантическим закономерностям, обусловленным целями говорящего, социальной средой и языковыми ресурсами. Понимание лексических и семантических аспектов код-свитчинга способствует развитию исследований в области социолингвистики, психолингвистики и анализа дискурса.

Ключевые слова: код-свитчинг, билингвизм, лексические особенности, семантические особенности, многоязычие, социолингвистика.

KOD-ALMASHINUVNING LEKSIK VA SEMANTIK XUSUSIYATLARI

Annotatsiya. Kod-almashinuv ko‘p tilli jamiyatlarda keng tarqalgan lingvistik hodisa bo‘lib, unda so‘zlovchilar bir suhbat, gap yoki nutq doirasida ikki yoki undan ortiq tillar o‘rtasida almashadilar. Bu hodisa nafaqat til kompetensiyasini, balki ijtimoiy identifikatsiya, kommunikativ strategiyalar va madaniy o‘zaro ta’sirni ham aks ettiradi. Mazkur maqolada kod-almashinuvning leksik va semantik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi, xususan, lug‘aviy o‘zlashmalar, ma’no siljishlari, pragmatik maqsadlar va kontekstual moslashuv bilingval nutqni qanday shakllantirishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot shuni ko‘rsatadiki, kod-almashinuv tasodifiy emas, balki so‘zlovchining maqsadi, ijtimoiy muhit va lingvistik resurslar ta’sirida yuzaga keladigan muayyan strukturaviy va semantik qonuniyatlarga bo‘ysunadi. Kod-almashinuvning leksik va semantik jihatlarini anglash sotsiolingvistika, psixolingvistika va diskurs tahlili sohalaridagi tadqiqotlarni rivojlantirishga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: kod-almashinuv, bilingvizm, leksik xususiyatlar, semantik xususiyatlar, ko‘p tillilik, sotsiolingvistika.

Introduction. In today’s globalized world, multilingual communication has become increasingly common. People who know more than one language often move between languages during interaction. This process is known as code-switching. It can be observed in classrooms, workplaces, families, online communication, and public discourse. Far from being a sign of linguistic deficiency, code-switching demonstrates communicative flexibility and cognitive skill.

Researchers have studied code-switching from grammatical, psychological, and sociological perspectives. However, lexical and semantic aspects remain especially important because vocabulary choice and meaning construction are central to communication. Lexical features concern how words from different languages are selected, inserted, or adapted. Semantic features involve how meanings change, expand, or become context-dependent when languages interact.

This paper explores the lexical and semantic characteristics of code-switching and explains their role in multilingual discourse.

Understanding Code-Switching

Code-switching refers to the alternation between languages within a speech event. It usually occurs among bilingual or multilingual speakers who share knowledge of the languages involved. Linguists commonly identify three major types:

1. **Inter-sentential code-switching** – switching between sentences.
Example: *I finished my homework. Endi dam olaman.*
2. **Intra-sentential code-switching** – switching within one sentence.
Example: *Today men juda busy edim.*
3. **Tag-switching** – insertion of tags or short expressions.
Example: *You understand, to ‘g‘rimi?*

These forms show that switching can happen at different structural levels depending on speaker intention and language proficiency.

Lexical Features of Code-Switching

Lexical features relate to vocabulary use when speakers alternate languages. One of the most visible aspects is the insertion of single lexical items from one language into another. Speakers often borrow nouns, verbs, adjectives, or discourse markers when such items are easier to recall or more suitable in context.

Borrowing and Loanwords

Repeated code-switching may eventually create borrowed words that become part of everyday vocabulary. For example, English technological terms such as *internet*, *phone*, *download*, and *online* are widely used in many languages. In Uzbek speech, phrases like *telefon qilmoq* or *online dars* demonstrate lexical integration.

Lexical Gaps

Speakers may switch codes when one language lacks an exact equivalent. Some scientific, technical, or cultural concepts are easier to express in another language. For instance, students may use English academic terms such as *deadline*, *presentation*, or *research* during Uzbek conversation because these terms are common in educational settings.

Economy and Efficiency

Sometimes code-switching happens because one word in another language is shorter or more practical than a longer native expression. Saying *ok*, *super*, or *problem* may feel faster and more natural than formal alternatives.

Identity Through Vocabulary

Lexical choices can express group identity, modernity, education level, or professional belonging. Young people often mix global English vocabulary into local languages to signal membership in contemporary digital culture.

Semantic Features of Code-Switching

Semantic features concern meaning, interpretation, and conceptual nuance when speakers switch languages.

Meaning Shift

A borrowed or switched word may not preserve its original meaning completely. It can develop new local meanings. For example, the English word *service* in some contexts may refer specifically to customer support or maintenance rather than all meanings associated with the original term.

Contextual Meaning

The meaning of switched expressions often depends on social context. A speaker may use one language for emotional closeness and another for formal information. For instance, family affection may be expressed in the mother tongue, while professional topics are discussed in English.

Emphasis and Pragmatic Meaning

Code-switching is frequently used to emphasize an idea. A speaker may shift into another language to make a statement stronger, clearer, or more memorable. Example: *Bu ish juda muhim, seriously important.*

Here the English phrase adds pragmatic force rather than new factual meaning.

Cultural Meaning

Certain words carry cultural associations that cannot be fully translated. Expressions related to traditions, food, humor, or values may remain in the original language because translation would reduce their semantic richness.

Social and Psychological Functions

Lexical and semantic patterns of code-switching are closely linked with social behavior.

Group Solidarity

Using mixed language may create closeness among bilingual speakers. Shared vocabulary becomes a marker of belonging.

Topic Specification

Speakers may use one language for certain subjects. For example, technology discussions may include more English words, while family matters remain in the native language.

Emotional Expression

People often return to their first language when expressing strong emotions such as anger, love, or sadness. Emotional vocabulary is deeply connected to early language experience.

Cognitive Accessibility

Sometimes a word from one language comes to mind faster than its equivalent in another language. In such cases, switching is a natural cognitive process rather than a deliberate choice.

Code-Switching in Digital Communication

Modern social media has increased the frequency of code-switching. Users combine languages in messages, captions, comments, and memes. Online environments encourage creative language use, abbreviations, and rapid lexical innovation.

For example:

- *Bugun meeting bor, don't forget.*
- *Sen update qildingmi?*
- *That was zor!*

Such examples show how semantic flexibility and lexical blending shape new communication styles among younger generations.

Challenges and Misconceptions

Some people incorrectly assume that code-switching indicates weak language ability. In reality, research shows that fluent bilinguals often switch most effectively because they control multiple linguistic systems.

Another challenge is misunderstanding meaning. If listeners do not know both languages, semantic interpretation may fail. Therefore, successful code-switching depends on shared knowledge between speakers.

Conclusion. Code-switching is a dynamic and meaningful feature of multilingual communication. Its lexical characteristics include borrowing, insertion, adaptation, and efficient vocabulary selection. Its semantic features involve contextual meaning, emphasis, cultural nuance, and meaning change. Rather than being random speech behavior, code-switching follows clear linguistic and social patterns.

As multilingualism continues to grow worldwide, code-switching will remain an important area of study. Investigating its lexical and semantic dimensions helps scholars understand how speakers use language creatively to express identity, manage relationships, and communicate effectively across cultures.

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