

## CODE-MIXING IN UZBEK-ENGLISH BILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of code-mixing in Uzbek-English bilingual communication among young speakers in Uzbekistan. The research focuses on identifying the structural patterns and communicative functions of English lexical insertions in Uzbek discourse, particularly in digital and informal communication contexts. A qualitative sociolinguistic approach was employed, and data were collected from social media interactions, online messaging, and everyday conversations of 40 bilingual participants. The findings reveal that insertional code-mixing is the most common pattern, especially in the use of technological, academic, and internet-related vocabulary. The study also demonstrates that code-mixing serves important social functions such as identity expression, prestige, communicative convenience, and representation of modernity. Furthermore, the research highlights the significant role of social media in promoting bilingual language practices among young Uzbek speakers. The study contributes to sociolinguistic and bilingualism research by providing insights into the growing influence of English on contemporary Uzbek communication.

**Keywords:** code-mixing, bilingualism, Uzbek-English communication, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, social media, language contact, digital communication

### INTRODUCTION

Code-mixing, the use of two or more languages within a single utterance or conversation, is a common phenomenon in multilingual societies and bilingual communities. In the era of globalization and digital communication, bilingual speakers frequently combine elements from different languages to express identity, social belonging, educational background, and communicative efficiency. English, as a global language, has become one of the most influential languages involved in code-mixing practices worldwide, particularly among young people and social media users (Dewaele, 2015).

In recent years, Uzbekistan has experienced significant sociolinguistic changes due to educational reforms, internationalization, technological development, and the growing importance of English in academic and professional domains. The increasing popularity of English-language media, online platforms, and international education programs has encouraged many Uzbek speakers to integrate English lexical items and expressions into everyday Uzbek communication. As a result, Uzbek-English code-mixing has become increasingly visible in spoken interaction, online messaging, and social networking discourse.

Contemporary sociolinguistic studies suggest that code-mixing is not a random linguistic behavior but rather a systematic and meaningful communicative strategy. According to Gardner-Chloros (2010), bilingual speakers often switch or mix languages depending on context, topic, audience, and social identity. Similarly, Bullock and Toribio (2012) argue that code-mixing reflects both linguistic competence and social motivation, particularly in multilingual environments where speakers navigate multiple cultural identities simultaneously.



Digital communication has further accelerated the spread of bilingual language practices. Social media platforms allow users to communicate informally and creatively, encouraging the flexible use of multiple languages within the same interaction. Research by Androutsopoulos (2015) demonstrates that online communication environments facilitate innovative multilingual practices, including lexical borrowing, translanguaging, and code-mixing. In many contexts, English expressions are associated with modernity, prestige, and global connectivity, which motivates bilingual users to incorporate English into local-language discourse.

Although code-mixing has been extensively studied in contexts such as Spanish-English, Arabic-English, and Hindi-English bilingualism, relatively little research has focused on Uzbek-English bilingual communication. Existing studies in Central Asian sociolinguistics mainly examine language policy, multilingual education, or Uzbek-Russian interaction, leaving Uzbek-English code-mixing insufficiently explored. Considering the increasing influence of English in Uzbekistan, investigating this phenomenon is important for understanding current linguistic changes and bilingual communication patterns among Uzbek speakers.

Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the patterns and communicative functions of code-mixing in Uzbek-English bilingual communication. The study specifically investigates the types of English lexical insertions used in Uzbek discourse and examines the social motivations behind bilingual language choices in informal and digital communication settings. The findings of this research may contribute to broader discussions in sociolinguistics, bilingualism, and language contact studies by providing empirical evidence from the Uzbek linguistic context.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative sociolinguistic research design to examine the use of code-mixing in Uzbek-English bilingual communication. The research focused on identifying linguistic patterns, structural characteristics, and communicative functions of code-mixing among bilingual Uzbek speakers in both spoken and online interaction.

### Participants

The participants consisted of 40 Uzbek-English bilingual speakers aged between 18 and 30 years. Most participants were university students, graduate students, and young professionals from urban areas of Uzbekistan, particularly Tashkent, where exposure to English is relatively high due to education, media, and international communication. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they actively used both Uzbek and English in everyday communication and digital interaction.

### Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from naturally occurring bilingual communication in both spoken and written forms. The primary sources of data included: informal face-to-face conversations; Telegram chat messages; Instagram captions and comments; Twitter/X posts and online discussions. Approximately 200 instances of Uzbek-English code-mixed utterances were collected over a two-month period. The dataset included examples containing English lexical insertions, phrases, abbreviations, and hybrid expressions embedded within Uzbek discourse. Personal names and private information were anonymized to maintain participant confidentiality and comply with ethical research standards.

### Analytical Framework



The analysis was based on contemporary theories of bilingualism and code-mixing proposed in recent sociolinguistic literature. The collected data were classified according to structural patterns of code-mixing, including: insertion; alternation; hybridization of lexical items. The study also examined the grammatical categories of inserted English elements such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, technological terminology, and internet-related expressions. To interpret the communicative functions of code-mixing, the study applied sociolinguistic approaches related to identity construction, prestige, social positioning, and communicative convenience in bilingual discourse (Bullock & Toribio, 2012). Special attention was given to the role of social media in promoting bilingual language practices among young Uzbek speakers.

## Data Analysis

The collected data were manually coded and analyzed qualitatively. Repeated patterns and frequently occurring English insertions were identified and grouped into thematic and structural categories. The analysis focused on: the frequency of English lexical items in Uzbek discourse; the communicative contexts of code-mixing; social and pragmatic motivations behind bilingual language use. The findings were interpreted within the broader sociolinguistic context of globalization, digital communication, and increasing English influence in Uzbekistan.

## RESULTS

The analysis of the collected data revealed that code-mixing is a frequent and systematic feature of Uzbek-English bilingual communication, particularly among young speakers and active social media users. English lexical items were commonly embedded within Uzbek grammatical structures, especially in informal conversations and digital communication.

### Types of Code-Mixing

The findings demonstrated that insertion was the most frequently occurring type of code-mixing in the dataset. Participants often inserted single English words or short phrases into Uzbek sentences without changing the overall grammatical structure of the utterance. The most commonly inserted elements included technological terms, academic vocabulary, and expressions associated with modern lifestyle and social media. Examples included: "*Bugun meeting juda interesting bo'ldi.*" "*Men assignmentni hali tugatmadim.*" "*Bu idea menga yoqdi.*" In these examples, English nouns and adjectives such as *meeting*, *assignment*, *idea*, and *interesting* were integrated into Uzbek sentence structures. This finding indicates that English lexical insertions are becoming normalized in everyday bilingual discourse.

Alternation was observed less frequently but still appeared in longer bilingual utterances where speakers shifted from Uzbek to English clauses. For example: "*Men keyinroq kelaman because I have an online class.*" "*Bu project yaxshi chiqdi, actually everyone liked it.*" Such alternations typically occurred when speakers discussed academic, professional, or technological topics. The analysis also identified hybrid forms in which English lexical stems were combined with Uzbek grammatical suffixes. Examples included: "*Like bosdim.*" "*Postni share qildim.*" "*Deadlinega ulgurish kerak.*" These hybrid structures demonstrate the adaptability of English lexical items within Uzbek morphology and reflect the dynamic interaction between the two languages.

### Functional Categories of English Insertions



The data showed that nouns constituted the largest category of English insertions. Frequently occurring nouns included: project, deadline, manager, story, blog, comment, trend. In addition, English verbs adapted into Uzbek grammatical patterns were frequently observed, particularly in online communication. Technological terminology and internet-related vocabulary appeared significantly more often than other semantic categories. The findings also indicated that code-mixing occurred more frequently in digital communication than in face-to-face interaction. Social media platforms encouraged more flexible and creative language use, allowing bilingual speakers to combine Uzbek and English expressions more naturally and spontaneously.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Uzbek-English code-mixing is an emerging sociolinguistic phenomenon influenced by globalization, digital communication, and the increasing social importance of English in Uzbekistan. The dominance of insertional code-mixing in the collected data aligns with previous bilingualism studies, which suggest that speakers commonly insert lexical items from a socially prestigious or globally dominant language into their native-language discourse (Gardner-Chloros, 2010).

One significant observation from the study is the strong connection between English lexical insertions and modern technological or academic concepts. Many English terms used by participants lacked commonly preferred Uzbek equivalents in everyday informal communication. This tendency reflects the role of English as a language associated with innovation, education, and global culture. Similar findings have been reported in studies of multilingual online communication, where English lexical items frequently symbolize modernity and international identity (Androutsopoulos, 2015).

The prevalence of code-mixing among young speakers also suggests that bilingual language practices function as markers of social identity and group membership. Participants appeared to use English expressions not only for communicative convenience but also to project educational background, digital literacy, and global cultural affiliation. This supports Dewaele's (2015) argument that bilingual speakers often experience shifts in self-expression and identity when alternating between languages.

Another important finding is the emergence of hybrid linguistic forms combining English lexical roots with Uzbek grammatical suffixes. These structures illustrate the linguistic integration of English into Uzbek bilingual discourse and may indicate gradual lexical borrowing processes. Such hybridization demonstrates that code-mixing is not random interference but rather a systematic and creative linguistic strategy shaped by bilingual competence.

The study further confirms the important role of social media in accelerating multilingual communication practices. Online platforms provide informal communicative environments where users freely experiment with language choice, translanguaging, and identity performance. In the Uzbek context, social media appears to facilitate the spread of English vocabulary among younger generations, especially in discussions related to education, entertainment, and technology.

Despite these findings, the study has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small and primarily focused on urban young adults, particularly university students and active internet users. Therefore, the results may not fully represent bilingual communication patterns across all social groups in Uzbekistan. Future research could investigate code-mixing practices



among different age groups, professional communities, and regional populations. Quantitative approaches and larger corpora may also provide more detailed statistical insights into Uzbek-English bilingual discourse.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the phenomenon of code-mixing in Uzbek-English bilingual communication and analyzed its structural patterns and communicative functions among young bilingual speakers in Uzbekistan. The findings revealed that code-mixing is a common and systematic feature of informal communication, particularly in digital environments and social media interaction.

The analysis demonstrated that insertion was the most dominant type of code-mixing, with English lexical items frequently embedded within Uzbek grammatical structures. English nouns, technological terminology, and internet-related vocabulary appeared most often in bilingual discourse. The study also identified hybrid linguistic forms in which English lexical roots combined with Uzbek grammatical suffixes, illustrating the growing integration of English elements into contemporary Uzbek communication.

The results suggest that Uzbek-English code-mixing is influenced by several sociolinguistic factors, including globalization, educational background, digital communication, and the prestige associated with English as an international language. For many bilingual speakers, especially young adults, the use of English expressions functions not only as a communicative strategy but also as a marker of identity, modernity, and social belonging.

Furthermore, the study highlights the important role of social media in promoting multilingual language practices. Online communication platforms encourage flexible and creative language use, enabling bilingual speakers to switch between Uzbek and English more naturally and frequently.

Despite its contributions, the study was limited by its relatively small sample size and its focus on urban young adults. Future research may expand the scope by including participants from different regions, age groups, and professional backgrounds. Quantitative analyses and larger linguistic corpora could also provide deeper insights into the frequency and evolution of Uzbek-English code-mixing patterns. Overall, the study contributes to the growing field of sociolinguistics and bilingualism research by providing empirical evidence on emerging bilingual communication practices in Uzbekistan. The findings demonstrate that Uzbek-English code-mixing reflects broader processes of linguistic change and cultural globalization in contemporary Uzbek society.

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