



## CODE-SWITCHING IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

**Zamonaliyeva Lazizabegim Ulug'bek qizi**

*4th year student of Turan International University, Namangan,  
Uzbekistan. Phone: +998935372124, E-mail: zamonaliyevalaziza@icloud.com*

**Antonina Aleksandrovna Iplina**

*Associate professor of Turan International University, Namangan,  
Uzbekistan.*

**Abstract:** *In today's globalized world, many classrooms have become multilingual environments where students and teachers share more than one language. Code-switching — the practice of alternating between two or more languages in a single conversation — has become a common and natural phenomenon in such settings. This paper explores the use of code-switching in multilingual classrooms, its functions, advantages, and possible drawbacks. The study also discusses how teachers can use code-switching as a pedagogical tool to support understanding, build rapport, and create a more inclusive learning environment. The research is based on observations, classroom experiences, and academic literature. The findings suggest that code-switching, when used appropriately, can be a valuable resource rather than an obstacle in language learning.*

**Keywords:** *code-switching, multilingual classrooms, bilingual education, language learning, ESL teaching*

### INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in communication and learning. In countries where multiple languages are spoken, students often bring their linguistic diversity into the classroom. This diversity can enrich the learning environment, but it can also create challenges for teachers who must balance the use of different languages. One of the most common phenomena that occurs in multilingual classrooms is code-switching, which refers to the use of two or more languages within a single conversation or even within a single sentence.

In many traditional teaching methods, code-switching has been discouraged. Teachers were often told to use only the target language, such as English, during lessons. However, modern research and classroom practice show that code-switching can serve important communicative and educational purposes. It helps students better understand complex ideas, connect prior knowledge to new concepts, and feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

**Literature Review:** Over the past two decades, the topic of code-switching has received growing attention from linguists and educators. According to Cook



(2001), code-switching should not be seen as an error, but as a natural part of bilingual communication. It reflects the speaker's ability to use linguistic knowledge flexibly. Similarly, Macaro (2009) argued that controlled and meaningful code-switching can actually support language learning.

Auer (1998) categorized code-switching into different types: intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching. Each of these serves a different function depending on the speaker's purpose. For example, teachers may switch languages to emphasize important information, while students may switch to seek clarification.

**Research Methods:** This paper is based on a qualitative approach. The researcher observed English lessons in a multilingual environment where students spoke Uzbek, Russian, and English. Short interviews were also conducted with teachers and learners to understand their opinions about code-switching.

**Analysis and Results:** The observations showed that both teachers and students used code-switching naturally and frequently. Teachers mostly switched to Uzbek when explaining difficult grammar points, giving instructions, or managing the classroom. Students, on the other hand, switched languages to ask questions, express uncertainty, or translate new words.

**Discussion:** The findings support previous studies that suggest code-switching can be an effective strategy in multilingual classrooms. It not only helps learners understand content but also strengthens the teacher-student relationship.

**Limitations:** This research was limited to a small number of participants from one learning center. The results may not represent all multilingual classrooms.

**Conclusion:** Code-switching is a natural and valuable phenomenon in multilingual classrooms. Rather than forbidding it, teachers should learn how to use it effectively to support students' learning.

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