

Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania

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Abstract

This paper examines and compares Danes' and Lithuanians' code-switching on Facebook. Currently Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms, where a lot of human communication occurs. The language on such platforms is similar to spoken language in its informality, yet it is written and is therefore at least somewhat planned. This research was carried out by collecting status updates and their respective comments from Facebook profiles of six well-known people (three people from each country) and their followers. Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses, it seems that the way Lithuanians and Danes switch codes is mostly universal and used to achieve similar purposes. The most common foreign language for code-switching in each dataset was English. Both Danes and Lithuanians switched between their respective native and foreign languages in order to mark discourse, emphasize a point, attract reader's attention, show identity and refer to a different context. However, while code-switching between the native language and English was used for all these purposes, other languages were chiefly used to refer to different cultural contexts. In the future, more research on how Lithuanians code-switch on Facebook could be carried out, possibly focusing on smaller groups of people, and thus being able to make ethnographic observations.

Keywords: code-switching; sociolinguistics; social media; entextualisation; memes; identity.

1. Introduction

In the last decade there has been an increase in the use of social media platforms for public peer to peer communication. With Facebook being one of the most popular of such websites, it provides a rich source of sociolinguistic data ripe for analysis. The language on these platforms is in between the written and the spoken language, being both informal and, to some degree, planned. This creates new possibilities to construct one's identity, because one can be naturally informal and plan this informality at the same time. Indeed, the construction of self-image is a huge part of social media and language plays a major part in this process.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

In recent years, Facebook communication and computer-mediated communication in general received much attention from scholars. Most of this research was conducted ethnographically, focusing on small groups of people (Leppänen, Peuronen 2012; Stæhr 2014; Androutsopoulos 2015). It established that mixed language is used on social media as one of the tools (in addition to photos, videos, “liked” posts etc.) to create one’s identity.

In this paper, I analyse and compare how Danes and Lithuanians mix languages when communicating on Facebook. The purpose of this research is to examine how people use mixed language style on Facebook. In order to answer these questions, I performed quantitative and qualitative analysis of Facebook posts and comments made by Danes and Lithuanians from 31 August 2015 to 6 September 2015 on Facebook walls of three well-known Lithuanians and three well-known Danes.

Since research on Lithuanians’ use of language on Facebook has been scarce, I wanted to see how they create their identities on Facebook and why they code-switch. In addition, I wanted to see, whether code-switching in the Lithuanian Facebook sphere would be different from code-switching in a Western European country. Therefore, I chose to compare Lithuanians’ code-switching on Facebook with Danes.

The two communities are rather different. In addition to their very different historical pasts, the societies also have very different foreign language skills. According to Eurobarometer (2012), even though around 94% of the Danish population and 97% of the Lithuanian population speak at least one foreign language, only 38% Lithuanians speak English, whereas it is 86% in Denmark. In both countries English is prestigious and connected with higher education, social status and career success (Preisler 1999; Vaicekauskienė 2010). Therefore, my hypothesis is that English will be the most popular language when code-switching in both datasets.

I also hypothesize that more casual discussion topics in the comments will be prone to more code-switching, because people will tend to be more playful, whereas more “serious” topics will not include as many cases of code-switching.

2. Theoretical background

The theory used in this research is the *code-switching* theory. In this paper, code-switching is understood as using two or more languages in the same conversation. Poplack (1980) claims that there are three types of code-switching: inter-sentential (when the switch happens at the end of a clause or sentence), intra-sentential (when the switch happens within a clause or sentence) and “tag”-switching (separate words or phrases inserted anywhere in the sentence).

Tag-switching often occurs as a *discourse marker* used in a different language than the rest of the sentence. Discourse markers are short words, such as “like”, “well”, “anyway” and others, mainly used to connect two discourse segments (Fraser 1999). However, code-switching with discourse markers also serves the purposes of attracting the listener’s (or the reader’s) attention or adding pragmatic force to an utterance in the speaker’s native language (Sharp 2007).

Blom and Gumperz (1972) established two types of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. According to them, situational switching is language switching that occurs upon a change in social situation, whereas metaphorical switching is code-switching that occurs upon a change of conversation topic (that is, when a conversation participant wants to refer to a specific topic). Since I did not encounter any changes in social situations which would make code-switching necessary in my data, all the examples discussed in this paper are cases of metaphorical switching.

In addition, Malik claims that there are ten possible reasons for code-switching (Malik 1994, quoted in Eldin 2014: 82-83). These are:

1. Lack of facility—when speakers switch to another language, because it offers words or expressions that do not exist in their native language (or the speaker is not aware of or does not remember the word or expression in their native language), usually because the concepts these words describe also originate from the other culture.
2. Lack of register—when speakers switch to another language, because they cannot find an appropriate word to express themselves as well.
3. Mood of the speaker—code-switching can occur because the speaker is emotionally affected.
4. To emphasize a point—code-switching can occur in order to emphasize the point the speaker is making.
5. Habitual experience—spontaneous code-switching that occurs out of habit.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

6. Semantic significance—code-switching at a particular moment conveys semantically significant information.
7. To show identity within a group.
8. To address a different audience.
9. Pragmatic reasons—speakers may use code-switching to refer to the context of the conversation.
10. To attract attention.

In addition to code-switching, I also use the term *entextualisation*. Entextualisation is a “process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a text—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting” (Bauman, Briggs 1990, p. 73). It means that one can take a text out of its context and place this text in a different context. Entextualisation is an important part of social media, where people not only quote each other, but also use various media to achieve their communication purposes.

The most recognizable examples of entextualisation online are internet *memes*. They are short texts, videos, pictures or audio files that people modify and share with each other online. Memes are usually humorous and are commonly used to share one’s experiences and thoughts on Facebook. Entextualisation is often done without translation, in the language of the original context. Therefore, when placed in context in a different language, it often results in code-switching.

3. Method

For the purposes of this research, I aimed to look at a wide range of speakers and topics. I chose to analyse Facebook comments under status updates and the status updates of three well-known Danish people and three well-known Lithuanians, from 31 August 2015 to 6 September 2015 (7 days in total). The three people were selected according to the following criteria:

1. They had to be well-known in their country. I therefore selected only those people who were hosting a popular TV show at the time of research or had recently hosted one;
2. They had to write their updates by themselves (not hire someone to do that for them). This was important, because their status updates and comments were included in the analysis and I wanted to ensure their authenticity;

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

3. They had to allow anyone, not just their Facebook friends, to follow them on Facebook and comment under their status updates.

These criteria allowed me to ensure that there are enough comments from a wider variety of people.

The three people selected from Lithuania were:

1. Paulius Ambrazevičius, a stand-up comedian, who had his own video blog about basketball on Facebook at the time.
2. Oleg Šurajev, a stand-up comedian and a TV presenter (“Akcentas”).
3. Andrius Tapinas, a TV presenter (“Pinigų karta”) and journalist.

Their counterparts from Denmark were, respectively:

1. Michael Schøt, a stand-up comedian, who has his own video blog (“Schøtministeriet”) on Facebook.
2. Peter Falktoft, a stand-up comedian and TV presenter (“Monte Carlo på DR3”).
3. Clement Kjersgaard, a TV presenter (“Vi ses hos Clement”) and journalist.

The decision to include not only comedians, but also journalists was made in order to test my second hypothesis—whether the tone of the discussion has any influence on code-switching.

In total, I collected 3973 comments and status updates: 2761 from Denmark and 1194 from Lithuania; of them, 371 included code-switching. The length of the comments and status updates was not considered to have an impact on the likelihood of occurring code-switching. I analysed this data from quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

4. Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis, is an integral part of this research. The analysis explains some differences between Danes’ and Lithuanians’ language use on Facebook.

The distribution of the 3973 comments and status updates is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Data distribution

		No of status updates	Total no of comments under status updates	No of comments with code-switching
Denmark	Clement Kjersgaard	28	113	9
	Michael Schøt	14	925	59
	Peter Falktoft	10	1683	109
	Total DK	52	2721	177
Lithuania	Andrius Tapinas	8	448	61
	Paulius Ambrazevičius	18	651	89
	Oleg Šurajev	2	78	28
	Total LT	28	1177	178
Total LT and DK		80	3898	355

Cases of code-switching made up 15% of all comments in the Lithuanian dataset and 7% in the Danish dataset. The share of code-switching cases out of all status updates of a particular well-known person and comments under them can be seen in Figure 1 (for Lithuanian dataset) and Figure 2 (for Danish dataset).

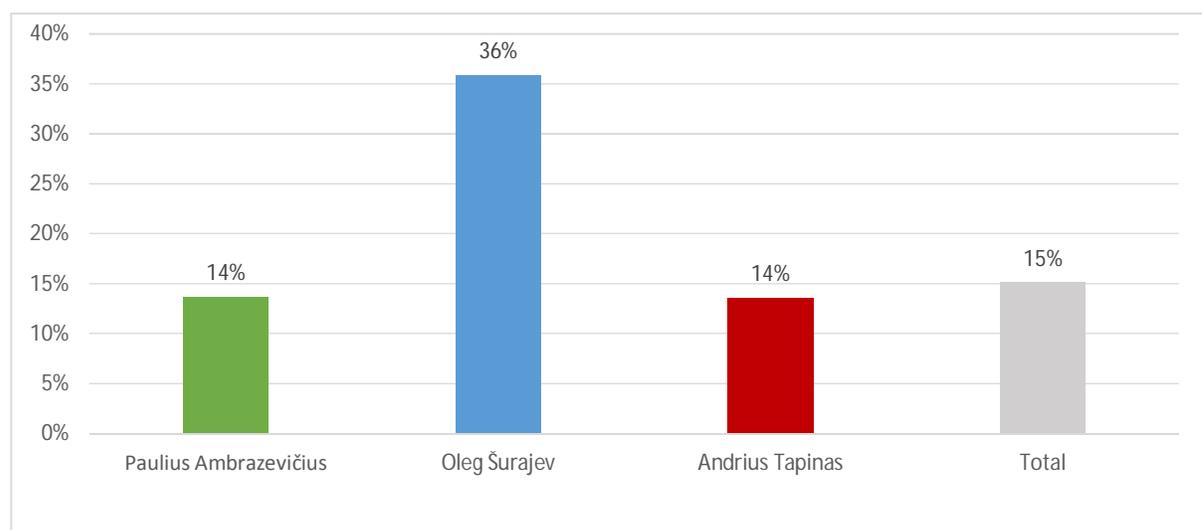


Figure 1. Comments with code-switching under status updates, %. Lithuania

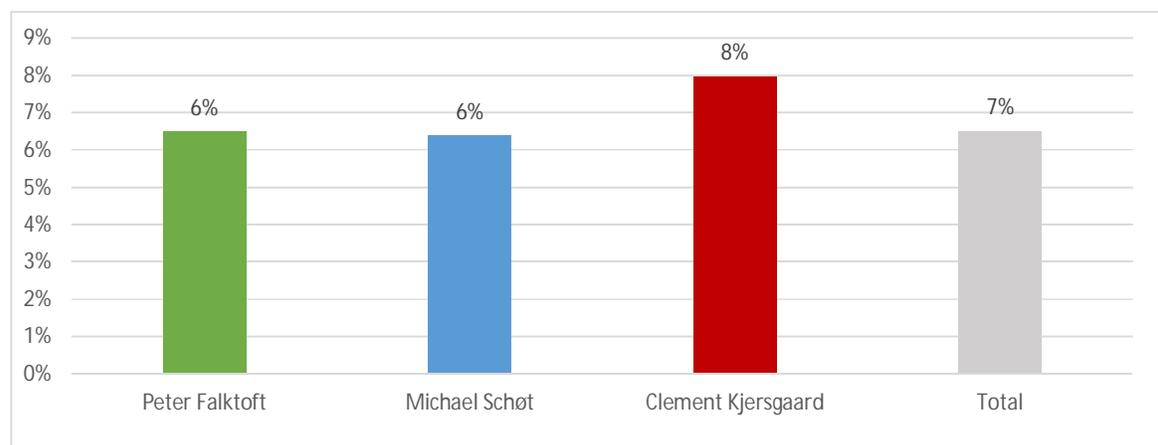


Figure 2. Comments with code-switching under status updates, %. Denmark

In the Lithuanian data, there was observed to be a higher rate of code-switching under the status updates of Oleg Šurajev (36%), compared to those of Andrius Tapinas' and Paulius Ambrazevičius' status updates (14% each). In the Danish data, the cases of code-switching were distributed almost equally; the percentage of comments with code-switching under Clement Kjersgaard's status updates was 8% and 6% each under Peter Falktoft's and Michael Schøt's status updates. This shows that the frequency of the comments containing code-switching was not affected by the seriousness of the discussion or the topics discussed in Lithuania and had a very limited or no effect in Denmark.

From the figures it is also evident that Lithuanians code-switched more than Danes, where 15% of all comments and status updates in the Lithuanian data included code-switching, compared to 7% of such comments and status updates in the Danish data. This confirms my hypothesis, suggesting that Lithuanian Facebook users are likely to code-switch more than Danes are.

Out of all 178 cases of code-switching recorded in the Lithuanian dataset, 169 cases contained English (88%). In the Danish data 172 out of 177 cases of code-switching contained English, corresponding to 95% (shown in Figure 3). Other languages included Russian, French, German and, in one instance, Hebrew in the Lithuanian dataset and German, Latin and French in the Danish dataset.

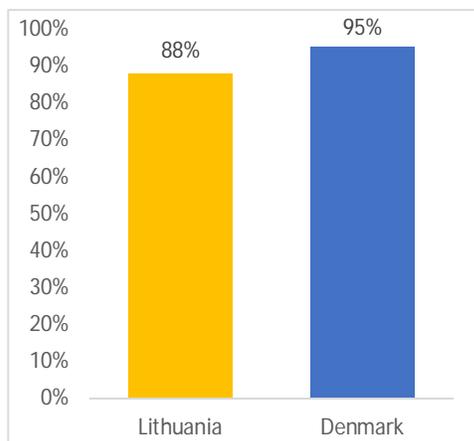


Figure 3. Code-switching with English in comments, %

Thus, use of English in Lithuanian or Danish comments (or conversations) on Facebook dominates in both data sets, which can be explained by English being the most commonly available foreign language in Denmark. However, it is worth to mention that language users in the Lithuanian dataset code-switched more often than Danes and relied heavily on English to do that.

Code-switching in status updates had visible influence on code-switching in the comments in Lithuania, but almost no influence in Denmark, as shown in Figure 4.

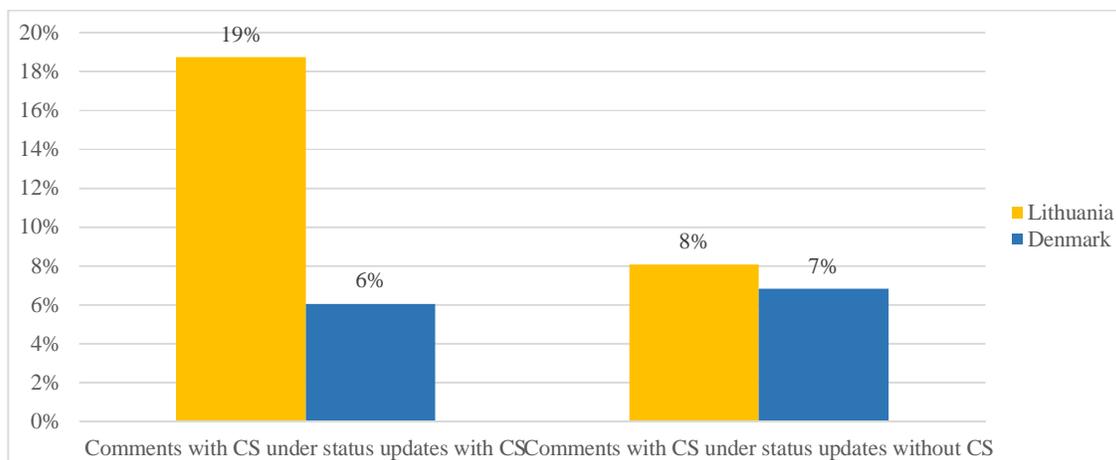


Figure 4. The influence of code-switching in status updates on the frequency of code-switching in the comments

This difference can be explained by differing foreign language competencies in the two countries. It can be hypothesized that in Lithuania code-switching in the status update functioned as an invitation for only those Facebook users, who can understand both Lithuanian and the foreign language used in the comment. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that Lithuanians who can code-switch were more likely to comment under such status updates, whereas Lithuanians who do not speak the

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foreign language used in the status update were less likely to comment. In Denmark, where the majority of the population speaks English, this was not an issue and people were able to fully understand the status update and thus join the discussion. However, further research is needed to fully explain this difference.

In some cases, the reason to code-switch was entextualisation. Of all the instances of code-switching, there were 75 cases of entextualisation in the Lithuanian dataset, corresponding to 30 %, whereas in the Danish dataset 18 such comments made up 10 %. Most instances of entextualisation were also in English (91 % in the Lithuanian dataset and 94 % in the Danish dataset). This, again, can be explained by the increased motivation Lithuanians have to use English when creating their own identities and, in this case, cite or refer to the primarily English pop culture, thus showing that the language user is cool and up-to-date with the newest pop culture developments online. In a way, entextualisation in English also demonstrates English fluency. A language user who is confident enough to cite pop culture in English likely encountered it in English too, with no need for translation.

Even though the “seriousness” of the celebrity and the topics he discussed in his status updates did not have any statistically meaningful influence over the frequency of code-switching, it seems to have influenced the frequency of entextualisation, as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

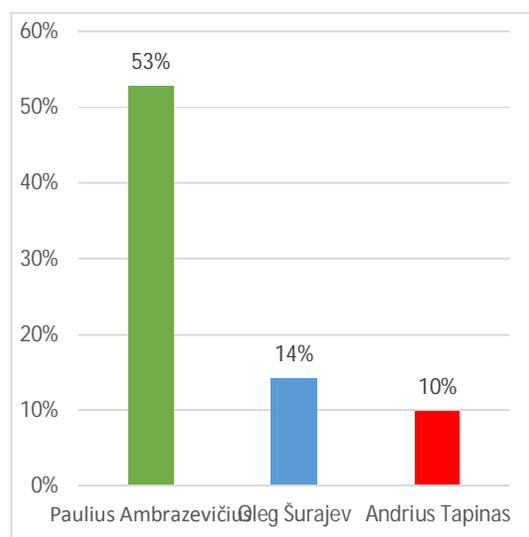


Figure 5. Cases of entextualisation in comments with code-switching, %. Lithuania

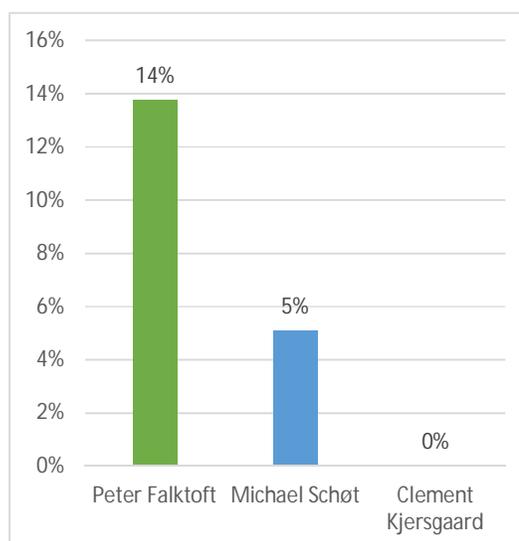


Figure 6. Cases of entextualisation in comments with code-switching, %. Denmark

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

It seems that the more serious the topic, the less entextualisation comments there tends to be, although more research is required to claim that with any certainty. This could be explained by pointing out that entextualisation, especially when combined with code-switching, is a game involving language and contexts, with which a commenter would not want to be associated when discussing politics or society issues, as this could undermine their authority.

To sum up the quantitative analysis, Lithuanians on Facebook generally code-switch more than Danes, which confirms my hypothesis. The presence of code-switching in the status update had some influence on the number of code-switching cases in the comments under it in the Lithuanian dataset, but not in the Danish one. Both can be explained by different language competencies in Lithuania and Denmark. Code-switching cases containing English are by far the most frequent in both countries. Although the tone and topics of the discussions do not influence the frequency of comments with code-switching, this does seem to influence the frequency of entextualisation cases.

5. Qualitative analysis of Danes' and Lithuanians' code-switching on Facebook

5.1. Entextualisation

Mixed language is often used when people refer to a different context. In this section, I am going to show how mixed language strengthens entextualisation and draws the reader's attention to it.

An example of such mixed speech can be found in a comment from Michael Schøt, posted under his own status update from 3 September 2015, where he criticized another comedian. In the comment, he clarified his position (1):

- (1) 

He is possibly the smartest comedian we have. I am impressed by how much he can [do], every time I see him. Think what it could become if he used those abilities to talk about something else than gift cards and coffee burgers? {EN}With great power comes great responsibility!¹

¹ Here and further, translations are provided as close to the original text as possible, under screen captures of the comments. Square brackets are used to identify words that were not in the original text, but had to be added for the translated sentence to be grammatically correct. The text in square brackets and italics is used for explanations. The text in curly brackets is used to signify code-switching (that the following text is in a different language). For example, “{EN}” means that the following text is in English.

Even though all comments were publicly available, the screen captures of comments are provided with their authors' names and profile pictures blurred to ensure their anonymity. The exception is made, however, to the six well-known people, because I needed to be able to identify them in my analysis.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

In the above example, he quotes a phrase, popularized by the movie *Spider-Man* (released in 2002), in English. In the movie, Peter Parker’s uncle tells him that he should not have beaten another boy at school just because he could, even if the boy started the fight. The uncle ends his speech with “With great power comes great responsibility”, which later defines Peter Parker’s actions. Thus Michael Schøt entextualises the quote and humorously compares the said comedian with Spider-Man.

One can find analogous examples in the Lithuanian dataset as well. Comment 2 was located under Andrius Tapinas’ status update about a former professor who published an offensive post about the President of Lithuania on his Facebook account. Commenters under Andrius Tapinas’ post discussed this and one of the comments referenced an American TV show *South Park* to talk about freedom of speech.



He did not write anything directly. Or maybe he should put up a disclaimer before every comment like South Park? People going into politics have to be prepared to [others] making fun of them.

{EN} ALL CHARACTERS AND EVENTS IN THIS SHOW--EVEN THOSE BASED ON REAL PEOPLE--ARE ENTIRELY FICTIONAL. ALL CELEBRITY VOICES ARE IMPERSONATED.....POORLY. THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM CONTAINS COARSE LANGUAGE AND DUE TO ITS CONTENT IT SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED BY ANYONE

South Park creators use this disclaimer sarcastically, they make fun of people who do not find *South Park* jokes funny and get offended by them. However, *South Park*, despite its humour, which angers many people, is not forbidden or cancelled, because the creators have a freedom of speech. Thus, by referencing the show the commenter also references the USA’s freedom of speech culture, the context in which *South Park* exists. By mentioning a single pop culture product, a cartoon series, the commenter manages to reference a whole culture and understanding of freedom of speech.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

In the Lithuanian dataset, a similar reference to culture was also detected in French (3), under the same Andrius Tapinas' status update as example 2.

(3) A 
[B's name]'s concept of democracy is clearly quite perverse.

(4) B 
I am not perverted, I am simply of a different orientation than you. {FR} I am Charlie.

A and B argue about the professor's right to express his opinion publicly; A criticizes B's position by saying that B does not understand what democracy is. B, however, uses a French slogan, which was used extensively in the aftermath of a terror attack against the French newspaper Charlie Hebdo in January 2015. The slogan was used around the world to express solidarity with the newspaper and France. The reasoning for the terror attack was given as the publication of a caricature of Muhammad, whose depiction is forbidden in some interpretations of Islam, and the attack was seen as the terrorists' attempt to instil fear to journalists and limit the freedom of speech. The slogan thus was used in solidarity with the newspaper to express support for the freedom of speech. Therefore, by using this phrase, commenter B refers to the context of the terror attack, comparing it with the debate regarding professor's words.

Russian was also used to refer to a different context under the same status update by Tapinas.

(5) 
This really reminds me of an old Soviet joke:
{RU} – Hello, is this the station?
– [Russian swearing], this is the Ministry of Culture!

{LT} It seems to me we personally can think of the leader of our country as we wish, but when a person is a representative of a particular, culture-related, role, one should at least somewhat control the way one expresses oneself in public.

In the above example, the commenter tells an old joke in Russian, whose humorous effect is achieved by contrasting the swearing with the concept of “culture”. The joke makes fun of the hypocrisy in the Soviet Union and the level of Soviet culture. The commenter uses this joke to

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

illustrate his point, namely, that in order to surpass the Soviet culture, people, especially those associated with culture, should control their language.

Examples (1)–(5) show how entextualisation can work as rhetoric device, where a single phrase can refer to much broader contexts and other discourses. The original language is used to strengthen this connection.

However, in other cases entextualisation was not used to refer to a specific discourse, especially when pictures with text on them were used instead of writing a comment of one's own. An example of such entextualisation could be found under Peter Falktoft's status update (6).



Me every day.

Text in the picture: There is nothing to discuss. I am right and you are wrong.

In the status update, Falktoft posted a screen capture from an interview with the Swedish academic Hans Rosling, which included Danish subtitles. The commenters under this status update mostly tagged their friends in order to either say that their friends are unwilling to reach a compromise or to tell their friends that they themselves are right and their friends are wrong. The latter was the case with the conversation below. A tagged his friend B (7) and B then responded by saying that the professor's words apply to her instead of A (8). A conversation made up of memes then ensued.

- (7) A
-
- B's name and surname*
- (8) B
-

Totally correct. I am right and you are wrong.

(9) A



{EN}Me vs you

(10) B



{EN}I'm 100% awesome and you know it.

(11) A



{EN}Don't hate me because I'm awesome, hate me because you're not.

(12) B



{EN}Woah, I almost gave a fuck. Try again.

[...]

(13) A



{EN}And there goes the last fuck I gave

After the initial two exchanges in memes (9–10), the rest of the conversation (11–13) is mostly made of memes that belong to a larger group of memes, created by Someecards Inc., on whose internet page one can make e-cards like that by selecting the background picture and adding a text to it. Characteristically, these e-cards are usually a humorous contrast between a very old-fashioned picture (usually of a person) and a narcissistic text, often including swearwords and written in first person.

Here, however, A and B used memes they found, not memes they made, as evidenced by the lack of coherence in their conversation. It seems that the purpose of this dialogue is not to exchange information (in a traditional sense), but to playfully demonstrate one’s superior knowledge of internet rules and habits (which is inseparable from English) and thereby “win” the argument.

To conclude, entextualisation can be used as a rhetoric figure to refer to a larger discourse or cultural product. Doing so in the original language of said discourse or product helps to draw reader’s attention to the reference and strengthens the connection between the new and old contexts. In addition, mixed language was also detected in use of internet memes. Since English is *lingua franca*, it is not surprising that most internet memes are in English. It could be argued that choosing to not translate memes or use ones in one’s native tongue indicates a wish to construe one’s identity as that of an internet-smart and cool person.

5.2. Discourse markers and tags in a different language

As can be seen in the quantitative analysis, mixed language cases with English were the most frequent in both the Danish and the Lithuanian datasets. In the quantitative analysis, I argued that

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

this can be explained by the high status English holds in both linguistic communities. In this chapter I analyse, how people switch codes by using short expressions in foreign language on Facebook. I will begin with mixed language including English features and then move on to other languages.

On 6 September 2015, Clement Kjersgaard shared an article by Danish politician Rasmus Jarlov, who attempted to propose solutions to the Syrian refugee crisis. The comment below (14) was under this status update.



{EN} True That! {DK} Thanks Rasmus for outlining the essence of the existential dilemma.

Here we can see an English expression “True That!”, followed by a sentence in Danish, thus framing the discourse and attracting reader’s attention to the comment (Vaicekauskienė and Vyšniauskienė forthcoming). This is also supported by Sharp’s research of code-switching between English and Swedish. According to Sharp (2007), English adds more pragmatic force to an otherwise Swedish utterance and, as evidenced by the comment above (14), this also applies for some cases of code-switching between Danish and English, when a single or a couple of English words are used to this purpose in front of an utterance in Danish.

In one comment (15) one can see that the added pragmatic force did not go unnoticed by the language users themselves. This comment was detected under a Michael Schøt’s status update, where people discussed the importance for the citizens of Denmark to speak fluent Danish.



I would rather say {EN}cock {DK}instead of pik [Danish slang for “penis”], because {EN}cock {DK}carries more weight. Yes, I easily replace Danish words with English words, because I can.

This speaker points out that English words have more power than Danish ones. In addition, he states his freedom to choose English over Danish.

Similar cases were detected under Michael Schøt’s status update (16).



I do not really know why, but one of the moments when I feel most free is when I am standing sleep-drunk on a street corner in the morning and eat a frøsnapper [a type of Danish pastry] – and then there come poor people, who stood up even earlier, running past me in gaudy running clothes with more sweat in the face than I have crumbs in mine.

Keep a nice figure, you say?

{EN} Fuck {DK} you society, cake for breakfast!

Because of its pragmatic force, the authors of comments 17 and 18 used English discourse markers to achieve their communicative purposes.



Then you should try crossing the finish line (almost regardless of distance) after having focused and dedicated yourself to training for a longer period of time. This feeling of happiness leaves froesnapper freedom far behind. {EN} Just saying....



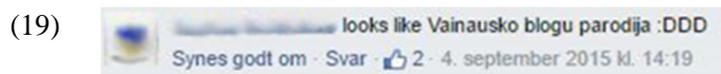
{EN}Well, {DK}I share your passion for froesnappers, but ohhh then one should also exercise, otherwise I will end up with my clothes not fitting ;) SO one does not cancel out the other.....

In comment 17, the commenter ends her comment with an English discourse marker “Just saying”. According to Craig and Sanusi, this discourse marker has a special pragmatic value: “Just saying [...] not only specifies the speaker’s standpoint, but also usually downtones it” (2000). Thus the commenter writes “Just saying” in order to defuse the situation and avoid conflict with the author of the status update, but the choice she makes to do it in English results in also stressing the point she was making.

From these examples, it is evident that Danes’ code-switching between English and Danish results in attracting the reader’s attention and stressing what the point the speakers are making. This effect is likely caused by the status and “power” English has in Denmark (as illustrated by example 15).

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

The Lithuanian dataset shows quite similar tendencies of code-switching with English. In the following comment (19), originally written under an episode of Ambrazevičius' video blog about basketball, we can see the use of discourse marker “looks like”.



{EN}looks like {LT}a parody of Vainauskas' blogs :DDD

As already established in the analysis of example 14, such code-switching with an English phrase in the front, results in attracting the reader's attention.

A similar example of code-switching at the beginning of a comment is shown below (20). The comment was observed under Andrius Tapinas' status update about a former professor, who published an offensive post about the President of Lithuania on his own Facebook wall. The professor had worked at Mykolas Römeris University, which was why Tapinas presented him as a “Mykolas Römeris [University] professor”.



MRU – {EN}well, say no more... {LT}In that money-making factory more than half are such “academics”.

Example (21) was detected under the same Tapinas status update, only now the English phrase is at the end of the comment.



So a public person, a professor, cannot publicly call the president “a bimbo with pig's eyes” without being punished? {EN}Wtf??

Here the English phrase “Wtf” (shortening of “what the fuck”) is used to express outrage and, as already mentioned in the analysis of examples 14 and 15, the use of English is likely subconsciously chosen for its pragmatic force when mixed with Lithuanian.

In his status update, Michael Schøt expressed his opinion about another comedian who complained about receiving a gift card for 250 Danish kroner as a gift. The comments provided below (22-26)

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

were detected under this status update and the conversation included three participants, here marked as A, B and C.

- (22) A

Was his {EN} “beef” {DK}not simply with all the Live Fra Bremen [a Danish comedy sketch show, which ran from 2009 to 2013] {EN}crowd? Or was it a {EN}beef {DK}at all... Was it not at most just... maybe a piece of smoked pork saddle or something?

- (23) B

Just speak Danish, instead of all those ridiculous expressions!

- (24) A

{EN}Beef {DK}means beef in Danish, [B’s name]

- (25) C

Axel Arendtsen has not lived in vain! :)

- (26) B

{DE}Order must be, Michael Schøt :)

Commenter A starts with a pun (22), by using the English word “beef”, with reference to the English expression “to have a beef with”. The use of English provokes commenter B to comment on A’s language use (23). The conversation continues with commenter A translating the word “beef” (24) and commenter C (who happens to be Michael Schøt) ironically mentions Axel Arendtsen, a Danish politician who tried to implement a very prescriptive language policy in Denmark. Out of the three commenters, Michael Schøt has the most power, because it is his status update and therefore everyone reading the comment section are more likely to think positively of Schøt. In addition, Schøt has the power to block anyone from seeing his posts. Since Schøt apparently sides with commenter A, commenter B can either go into a discussion with Schøt (and potentially a number of his Facebook followers) or decrease the tension. He chooses the latter option and auto-ironically cites a German proverb.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

The use of German here is likely based on an old and well-known stereotype about “orderly and punctual” Germans. Proverbs are also examples of entextualization and this particular proverb refers directly to the stereotypes about German people, while German language strengthens the connection.

We can see a similar thing done with French in the example provided below (28). These comments were located under Peter Falktoft’s post, which has already been provided above (6). This post attracted a number of comments, where a commenter would tag their friends to indicate either that they themselves are like that “every day” or that their friends are. One of such exchanges is shown below (27-28). Again, different people are indicated with letters A and B.

(27) A  Synes godt om · Svar · 1 · 21. oktober 2015 kl. 12:08

[B’s name and surname]

(28) B  Se oversættelse
Synes godt om · Svar · 21. oktober 2015 kl. 12:08

[A’s name], {FR}ME

Commenter A used Facebook function to tag his friend B in a comment (27), which resulted in B seeing Falktoft’s post. She then replied by writing “Moi” (fr. Me) in capital letters. By doing so, she employs the stereotype about arrogance of French people in order to make a joke about her own arrogance (although that does not necessarily mean that this commenter holds such a stereotype herself). The use of capital letters works to strengthen the impression of an arrogant person and the whole comment is auto-ironic. The use of French language in order to remind the reader of a stereotype about French people is an example metaphorical switching.

In conclusion, code-switching does not only serve to mark discourse, attract reader’s attention or emphasize a point the speaker is making, but it also refers to another context. In the case of English, these contexts are typically quite abstract and related to modernity, prosperity and coolness. However, when code-switching occurs between other languages, the contexts can be more specific, playfully referring to stereotypes about the native speakers of that language.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to compare how Lithuanians and Danes use code-switching on Facebook. Based on the quantitative analysis, one can see that code-switching between the official language of each country and English is most common in both communities, thus confirming my hypothesis. However, use of English seems to have more social meaning in Lithuania than in Denmark. The most likely reason for this difference is different foreign language competencies in the two speech communities, since fewer Lithuanians speak English and English is associated with such qualities as higher income, better jobs and higher education.

There was no correlation between the topics discussed under status updates and the frequency of comments with code-switching, which denies my hypothesis. However, there was a correlation between entextualisation and topics discussed. Cases of code-switching with entextualisation were more common under status updates of comedians, not journalists.

Based on the qualitative analysis, code-switching on Facebook is used for various purposes: as discourse marking, to emphasize a point, to attract reader's attention, to show identity and to refer to a different context. Code-switching with English was typically used for all of these, however, code-switching with other languages was only used to refer to a different context. In Lithuania, code-switching between Lithuanian and Russian was used to express political views. Because of Lithuania's history, Russian is connected to the Soviet Union and Russia, whereas English is connected with the West. In the Danish dataset, other languages than English (German and French) were never used as discourse markers, but instead to emphasize a point by jokingly referring to stereotypes about German and French people.

Thus in both countries code-switching between native language and a foreign language that is not English was based on the connotations related to that foreign language. The only difference is that only Lithuanians, because of historic and, possibly, geographic circumstances, used Russian when expressing their views towards the Soviet Union. Much like Danes, who used French and German to refer to contexts related to these countries, Lithuanians also used Russian to refer to the Soviet context and French to refer to the terror attacks in France. Therefore, the way Lithuanians and Danes code-switch is similar.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

Furthermore, it is evident from my analysis that not only is code-switching used when entextualizing, but actually any code-switching on Facebook is a reference to another context—the culture where the used foreign language is used. These connotations help Facebook users create their identity.

Future research on language on social media in Lithuania should be focused on smaller groups of people, so that it would be possible to apply ethnographic method and investigate, whether the way people code-switch on Facebook depends on age, social status, gender or other factors.

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Lietuvių ir danų kodų kaita socialiniame tinkle „Facebook“

Eglė Jakelienė

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip danai ir lietuviai kaito kodus socialiniame tinkle „Facebook“, ir tiriamos galimos tokios vartosenos priežastys. Tyrimui surinkti šešių įžymių žmonių – trijų danų ir trijų lietuvių – „Facebook“ įrašai ir kitų „Facebook“ vartotojų komentarai po šiais įrašais nuo 2015-08-31 iki 2015-09-06. Atrinktieji yra žinomi žmonės iš Lietuvos – Andrius Tapinas (žurnalistas ir televizijos laidų vedėjas), Paulius Ambrazevičius ir Oleg Šurajev (humoristai) – bei iš Danijos – Clement Kjersgaard (žurnalistas ir televizijos laidų vedėjas), Peter Falktof ir Michael Schøt (humoristai). Specialiai buvo atrinktos panašaus profilio žmonių poros, nes norėta geriau palyginti komentarus po šių žmonių įrašais iš skirtingų kalbinių bendruomenių.

Tyrime taikoma kodų kaitos (*code-switching*) teorija, teigianti, kad kalbos vartotojai kaito kodus dėl įvairių priežasčių: pritrūkę reikiamos ar tinkamai skambančios frazės, paveikti tam tikros nuotaikos, norėdami pabrėžti tai, ką sako, iš įpročio, norėdami suteikti savo pasakymui tam tikrą, su kažkuria kalba asocijuojamą prasmę, kurdami savo identitetą, kreipdamiesi į kitus klausytojus, referuodami į pokalbio kontekstą ar tiesiog norėdami atkreipti dėmesį (Malik 1994, cituojama Eldin 2014).

Tyrimas susideda iš kiekybinės ir kokybinės analizės. Iš kiekybinės analizės matyti, kad socialiniame tinkle „Facebook“ lietuviai buvo labiau linkę maišyti kalbas panašiai kaip ir danai, ir kad anglų kalba pasitaikė dažniausiai visuose maišytos kalbos atvejuose.

Iš kokybinės analizės matyti, kad maišytos kalbos priežastys yra gana panašios: tiek lietuviai, tiek danai vartoja angliškas diskurso žymes, kad pabrėžtų tai, ką sako. Angliškai bruožai taip pat vartojami siekiant atkreipti skaitytojo dėmesį, o entekstualizuodami kita nei gimtąją kalbą tiek danai, tiek lietuviai dažniausiai pasitelkia angliškai kalbančių šalių popkultūrą, kas atspindi kalbos

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

virtotojų sociokultūrinę realybę. Vis dėlto, skirtingai nuo danų, lietuviai kartais vartoja rusiškus lingvistinius bruožus, kad referuotų į Sovietų Sąjungą.

Ateityje kalbos vartoseną socialinėje svetainėje „Facebook“ tarp lietuvių kalbos vartotojų galėtų būti tiriama taikant etnografinį metodą, kad būtų galima geriau atsižvelgti į kalbėtojų motyvus pasirenkant vienokią ar kitokią vartoseną, jų socialinį statusą, išsilavinimą bei lytį, o taip pat – socialinius ryšius tarp dialogo dalyvių.

Raktažodžiai: kodų kaita; sociolingvistika; socialinės medijos; entekstualizacija; memai; identitetas.

Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania

Eglė Jakelienė

Summary

In this paper, I analyse Danes' and Lithuanians' code-switching on Facebook and possible reasons behind it. For the purposes of the research I collected Facebook posts of three well-known Danish and Lithuanian people and comments by their followers under these posts, from 31 August 2015 to 6 September 2015. The selected well-known people from Lithuania were Andrius Tapinas (journalist and TV host), Paulius Ambrazevičius and Oleg Šurajev (stand-up comedians). The well-known people from Denmark were Clement Kjersgaard (journalist and TV host), Peter Falktoft and Michael Schøt (stand-up comedians). I selected people with similar profiles on purpose, in order to be able to compare comments under their posts better.

The theoretical background of this research is the code-switching theory, which claims that language users code-switch for various reasons: lack of facility, lack of register, language user's mood, to emphasize a point, out of habit, to convey semantically significant information, to show identity within a group, to address a different audience, for pragmatic reasons or simply to attract attention (Malik 1994, cited in Eldin 2014).

The research is based on quantitative and qualitative methods. The results of the quantitative analysis shows that that Lithuanians tend to code-switch on Facebook as often or more often than Danes and that English was the most common language used for code-switching in both datasets.

Jakelienė, E. 2018. Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 10: 1–25, www.taikomojikalbotyra.lt

The results of the qualitative analysis suggest that the reasons for code-switching were similar in both datasets. Both Lithuanians and Danes used English discourse markers to stress the point they were making. English features were also used to attract the reader's attention. When entextualizing in non-native language, both Danes and Lithuanians referred to pop culture from English-speaking countries, which is a reflection of the language users' sociocultural reality. However, differently from Danes, Lithuanians sometimes used Russian linguistic features to refer to the Soviet Union.

Future research on language use on Facebook by Lithuanians could focus on language users' motivation behind their linguistic choices, their social status, education and gender, as well as social relationships between the language users.

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