

# Codeswitching functions in Lithuanian vlogs

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**Abstract.** The aim of the present paper is to examine the phenomenon of codeswitching, namely the linguistic repertoire, the frequency, and the social functions of codeswitching appearing in the spoken language of Lithuanian vlogs – a genre that has not been researched in Lithuania at all. The analyzed vlogs cover a wide range of topics, including fashion and beauty, online entertainment, housekeeping, and agriculture. 253 instances of codeswitching were identified in the corpus of 23,562 words, suggesting a predominantly monolingual speech community in Lithuania. To determine the social motivations behind codeswitching, Appel & Muysken's (2005) six codeswitching functions were followed. The results show that the referential function of codeswitching is used the most in the speech of Lithuanian vloggers, appearing mostly in contexts where direct equivalents of words in Lithuanian were missing. Codeswitching for expressive purposes was also frequent, appearing in contexts where speakers' emotions and sentiments were emphasized through language use. Other functions, i.e. directive, phatic, and metalinguistic, were not numerous in use, with the poetic function of codeswitching entirely absent from the corpus.

**Key words:** *sociolinguistics, oral communication, functions of codeswitching, Lithuanian vlogs, YouTube*

## Kodų kaitos funkcijos lietuviškuose vloguose

**Santrauka.** Kodų kaitos reiškiny s kelia nemažai susidomėjimo kalbotyros, o ypač sociolingvistikos srityje jau nuo septintojo dešimtmečio. Tyrimai rodo, kad kodų kaita aptinkama kiek vienakalbių, tiek ir daugiakalbių diskursuose bei pabrėžia kodų kaitos daugiafunkciškumą – išskiriamos socialinės ir sintaksinės priežastys bei skirtingų kodų vartojimas kaip diskurso valdymo priemonė. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama kodų kaita lietuvių vlogerių šnekamojoje kalboje, o būtent kodų kaitos lingvistinis repertuaras, dažnis bei socialinės funkcijos, remiantis tyrėjų Appel ir Muysken (2005) išskirtomis šešiomis kodų kaitos funkcijomis: referentine, valdomąja, tapatybine (arba ekspresyvine), fatine (arba metaforine), metalingvistine ir poetine. Tyrimui surinkti 12 vlogų, kurie buvo paskelbti „YouTube“ platformoje 2023 metais: trys vlogai iš dviejų moterų ir trys iš dviejų vyrų gyvenančių Lietuvoje. Atrinktų vlogerių amžius svyruoja nuo 21 iki apytiksliai 35 metų, kas rodo vlogų kaip žanro patrauklumą jaunesniems žmonėms bei jų kultūrinių tendencijų supratimą ir sekimą. Vaizdo įrašuose kalbama įvairiomis temomis, įskaitant madą ir grožį, internetines pramogas (pavyzdžiui, gyvas transliacijas ir turinio kūrimą), namų tvarkymą bei žemės ūkį. Tiriamąją medžiagą sudarė 23,562 žodžių tekstynas ir nustatyti 253 kodų kaitos atvejai.

Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad atrinktų lietuvių vlogerių kalboje referentinė kodų kaitos funkcija yra dažniausiai pasitaikanti, ypač kontekstuose, kuriuose trūksta tam tikrų žodžių atitikmenų lietuvių kalboje ir jų

vietoje, norint neprarasti svetimo žodžio reikšmės, yra vartojami terminai anglų arba rusų kalba. Tapatybinė funkcija taip pat yra dažnai naudojama, kuomet norima pabrėžti emocijas ir jausmus naudojant kalbą, o būtent angliškų šauktukų arba rusiškų keiksmažodžių pagalba. Kitos nustatytos kodų kaitos funkcijos – valdomoji, fatinė ir metalingvistinė – nebuvo dažnai pasitaikančios, o poetinės funkcijos nebuvo aptikta apskritai. Nors šio tyrimo tikslas buvo išnagrinėti socialines kodų kaitos funkcijas lietuviškuose vloguose, kalbėtojų amžius ir lytis nebuvo įtraukti kaip pagrindiniai tyrimo aspektai, tačiau ateityje šie aspektai galėtų būti tiriami norint geriau suprasti kodų kaitą Lietuvos sociolingvistiniame kontekste.

**Raktažodžiai:** *sociolingvistika, šnekamoji kalba, kodų kaitos funkcijos, lietuviški vlogai, YouTube*

## 1. Introduction

Linguistic codeswitching, i.e., the use of two or more ‘different grammatical systems or sub-systems’, or languages, ‘within the same exchange’ (Gumperz 1977: 1), has been the scope of interest of researchers from various subdisciplines of linguistics, especially in the field of sociolinguistics, since the 1960s, making it a well-researched phenomenon. Some scholars consider codeswitching, or alternation between two or more languages, primarily in a bilingual context, arguing that ‘[t]he ability to engage in fluent codeswitching is a hallmark of the flexibility and creativity of bilingual language use.’ (Beatty-Martínez, Navarro-Torres & Dussias 2020: 1).

Codeswitching as a phenomenon has mostly been analyzed in bilingual or multilingual settings due to distinct and numerous ‘varieties between which speakers switch’ (Woolard 2004: 74). Such alternation between languages has nonetheless been widely stigmatized by prescriptivists and language purists who regard the act of codeswitching as language decay, degeneration, or corruption, indicative of a bilingual speaker’s linguistic incompetence, while most scholars, especially in the field of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguistic anthropology, consider it a ‘systematic, skilled, and socially meaningful’ phenomenon which ‘is taken to enrich communicative potential’ (Woolard 2004: 74-75). This is due to the fact that codeswitching serves various functional purposes, from social reasons to discourse management to syntax (Myers-Scotton 1992, 1993; Holmes 2001; Bullock & Toribio 2009; Matras 2009), with some scholars (Gumperz 1982; Alfonzetti 1998) pointing out the multifunctionality of codeswitching.

Taking into consideration the social purpose, codeswitching can be categorized as *situational* and *metaphorical* (also called *non-situational* or *conversational*) (Blom & Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1982), or *participant related* and *discourse related*, respectively (Auer 1998), with the former resulting in the alternation between languages due to changes in a social setting, such as the presence of a new participant, changes in social distance, or the formality of an interaction, thus making a ‘particular linguistic code [...] strongly associated with a certain setting’ (Yohena 2003: 138). However, changes in a social setting are not always necessary for codeswitching to take place, as in the case of metaphorical codeswitching, which is used for rhetorical reasons to convey affective and social meaning through the use of two or more codes, where these shifts ‘of language codes sometimes signify the change in psychological distance felt by the speakers, and thus code-switching can be understood as a metaphorical sign of changing interpersonal relationships’ (Yohena 2003: 138; See also Holmes 2001).

Drawing on Jakobson’s (1960) six functions of language, Appel & Muysken (2005) further expanded on the purpose of codeswitching in the course of a single conversation by introducing six classifications, ranging from stylistic and expressive functions to social and pragmatic purposes. The first function is *referential*, in which speakers consciously switch languages to refer to something specific that is better described or expressed in another language due to ‘lack of knowledge of one language or lack of facility

in that language on a certain subject' (ibid. 118). The second function is *directive* and involves the hearer being either directly included in or excluded from the conversation by the speaker using or not using the hearer's language. The directive function of codeswitching can be identified in contexts where parents decide to switch to a different language 'when they don't want their children to understand what is being said' (ibid. 119). Directive switches can also involve using another language to give commands or directives (Holmes 2001: 259). The third function is *expressive*, in which speakers express their feelings, emotions, or attitudes, and emphasize their mixed identities by using two or more languages in a conversation (Holmes 2001: 259; Appel & Muysken 2005: 119). The fourth is switching for *phatic* purposes, or switching languages for social reasons (such as to establish or maintain a connection by expressing solidarity and empathy or to emphasize group identity), thus creating a sense of familiarity. Rather than conveying meaningful referential information, phatic switches 'express information about social relationships' (Holmes 2001: 259). The fifth category of codeswitching is *metalinguistic*, which involves direct or indirect comments on the choice of languages involved in a conversation. Finally, the *poetic* function refers to using another language for artistic and stylistic purposes by incorporating other-language puns or jokes, or switching to add rhythm or aesthetic value to a conversation. Therefore, codeswitching does not only indicate linguistic competence, but also plays a part in the establishment and maintenance of social relationships, finding its way into digitally-mediated communication.

### 1.1. Codeswitching in written and spoken online communication

It is assumed that codeswitching generally appears in spoken rather than written language due to the spontaneous nature of oral communication (Mackey 2005; Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė 2018). In face-to-face interactions, speakers can shift between codes based on the social context, their interlocutors or audience, and their communicative goals. However, codeswitching is not only observed in physical face-to-face interactions, but is present in online communication contexts, appearing in both written and spoken modalities (Androutsopoulos 2013). These online interactions are not limited to real-time communication instances involving two or more participants, but they can be part of one-way forms of online communication, such as written blog posts or pre-recorded videos, podcasts, live streams, or vlogs (i.e., video blogs), thus creating an asynchronous relationship between the writer or the speaker and the potential audience.

In the realm of social media, characterizing features of which are brevity, immediacy, and informality, codeswitching plays an important role. Social media platforms, like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram, witness instances of codeswitching within short posts and comments, which are treated as a type of conversation, despite their textual nature (Markman 2013: 539). Choy (2011), for example, focuses on English-Mandarin Chinese bilingual undergraduates' use of codeswitching on Facebook and identifies several social functions of and reasons for codeswitching, which were identified to be similar to those of verbal communication. Halim & Maros (2014) demonstrate that Facebook users employ codeswitching to enhance their interaction, communicate effectively, and achieve stylistic goals by switching between both English and Malay, therefore showing their competence in both languages. In the Lithuanian context, Jakelienė (2018) discusses how codeswitching on Facebook is used for various purposes in both Denmark and Lithuania, with English having more social meaning in Lithuania and its use being associated with higher income, better jobs, and higher education. Similarly, in her analysis of codeswitching functions identified in Facebook comments made by young men and women from the Šalčininkai district, Miliun (2020) identifies that both men and women tend to switch when there is a change of language on the part of the interlocutor. Investigating Estonian-English code-alternation in fashion blogs, Verschik & Kask (2019) demonstrate that the use of both Estonian and

English in blogging has become the norm rather than a deviation from it: young people tend to present themselves as belonging to an urban and cultured milieu of the online fashion and beauty community. Bloggers' incorporation of English expressions, interjections, and terms into the discourse showcases their familiarity and alignment with global and contemporary trends.

On the other hand, pre-recorded videos in the form of podcasts and vlogs provide another platform where codeswitching is likely to appear due to the spontaneous nature of oral communication. For example, Al-Oraibi & Himood (2022), in their analysis of the linguistic and social reasons for the use of codeswitching found in Iraqi YouTubers' speech, conclude that Iraqi YouTubers intentionally or unintentionally switch between Arabic and English for various reasons: to show their knowledge, express feelings, show solidarity with their audience, or attract their attention. In the context of the use of codeswitching among young Finns in YouTube vlogs, Junell (2020) demonstrates that speakers choose English to express negative or face-threatening attitudes, resulting in emotional distance and detachment, whereas positive attitudes in English may be interpreted as insincere and inauthentic as compared to Finnish. Negative expressions, therefore, are softened through the use of English and tend to be more casual and playful.

Despite the popularity of the genre, it is surprising that there is currently a significant absence of research on codeswitching use and its frequency within vlogs as a form of oral communication in the context of Lithuania. However, research on codeswitching in oral discourse is not entirely lacking. For example, Vaicekauskienė & Šmitaitė (2010), focusing on the relationship between Lithuanian and English in Lithuanian TV commercials, demonstrate that, at the time of their research, Lithuanian was the predominant language of TV advertising, with commercials solely in English being practically non-existent. English was identified to be used mostly for written information, such as brand names, rather than spoken, thus highlighting the symbolic value and prestige of English. Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė (2018), focusing rather on the use and frequency of borrowings in Lithuanian, reveals that other-language elements comprise only 0.33% of all words in the data, with English being used 93% of the time, and other languages, i.e. Russian, Latin, and Italian, only 7%. Codeswitching, however, is identified to be a predominant feature of spoken private speech, whereas the incorporation of new borrowings is more common in formal spoken language, such as that of academia and media. The incorporation of both codeswitched and newly borrowed elements into the language Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė (2018) identifies as linguistic tools that relate to identity expression, representation of subcultures, and a habitual tendency on the part of the speaker. Focusing on the social meanings of codeswitching among adults in the workplace environment in Lithuania, Pinkevičienė (2023) shows that English and Russian resources are frequently incorporated into the Lithuanian language, though both have different meanings and seemingly different uses within different age and gender groups: English, for example, tends to be used to 'index professionalism, competence, and expertise' (p. 239), particularly among younger individuals and women, who use 'specific English vocabulary to express their support for the interlocutor' (p. 240). In contrast, Russian is associated with creating 'personal qualities and stances related to informal relationships' (p. 239) and is used more frequently by older individuals, with men especially using the Russian language and Russian swearwords as a means of solidarity.

It is apparent, therefore, that no research has yet specifically explored the use of codeswitching in the vlogging genre in the context of Lithuania. Consequently, the aim of the present study is to identify and investigate the language repertoire, the frequency, and the functions of codeswitching appearing in the language of Lithuanian vloggers. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the next section outlines the data and methodological framework, detailing the data sampling and analysis approach. This is followed by the results and discussion, where key findings are presented and discussed in relation

to existing research, with a focus on the frequency and functions of codeswitching. Finally, the paper concludes by summarizing the main insights and suggesting potential directions for future research.

## 2. Data & Methods

The aim of the study is to determine the language repertoire, the frequency, and the social and communicative functions of codeswitching, instances of which were analyzed in the language of Lithuanian vloggers. The empirical data for the present study was drawn from four Lithuanian vloggers based on several aspects: (1) gender diversity, i.e. vlogs from both men and women were included to ensure a diverse range of topics, resulting in two male and two female vloggers with three vlogs from each; (2) temporal relevance, i.e. vlogs with an upload date not exceeding one year were chosen to ensure the recency of codeswitching instances, the earliest being uploaded on 22 May 2023 and the latest on 10 December 2023; (3) sociolinguistic context, i.e. at the time of recording, vloggers had to be based in Lithuania, thus narrowing down a diverse sociolinguistic background to that of Lithuania; (4) single-person vlogs, i.e. given the inconsistent nature of such videos, vlogs including only the primary vlogger themselves during most of the video were considered for the analysis, thus eliminating codeswitching practices introduced by the appearances of other speakers; and (5) duration, i.e. each vlog included in the analysis was limited to a duration ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, with the number of words in each vlog presented in Table 1 below. The selected vlogs were then transcribed with the help of a Lithuanian speech-to-text transcription service (Semantika), which provided the main transcriptions of the vlogs, which were then manually reviewed to correct any errors and ensure the accuracy of the spoken content. The manual review process involved listening to the recordings while cross-referencing the transcriptions to identify and correct any errors.

**Table 1.** Vlog content: word count, duration, and topics discussed

	No. of words	Duration	Topics discussed
<b>Vlogger 1, Female</b>			
Vlog 1	3147	24:14	beauty, skincare, fashion
Vlog 2	2354	22:13	leisure time
Vlog 3	2407	19:01	cooking, skincare
<b>Vlogger 2, Female</b>			
Vlog 4	2850	27:47	beauty & fashion, technologies
Vlog 5	1003	15:32	cooking, cleaning, beauty & fashion
Vlog 6	1771	18:20	shopping, beauty & fashion
<b>Vlogger 3, Male</b>			
Vlog 7	1402	11:28	agriculture
Vlog 8	1637	12:09	agriculture
Vlog 9	1940	13:55	home maintenance/repair
<b>Vlogger 4, Male</b>			
Vlog 10	1186	13:40	content creation, animals
Vlog 11	1447	12:46	content creation, photography,
Vlog 12	2418	20:31	motorcycle maintenance and care
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 562</b>	<b>3:31:36</b>	

It is important to note that the age demographic of the selected vloggers ranges from 21 to approximately 35 years, suggesting the appeal of the genre to younger generations, possibly due to technological fluency, digital literacy, and a bigger following of cultural trends prevalent among young adults.



The selected vlogs included discussions on various topics, including but not limited to fashion and beauty, online entertainment (such as streaming and content creation), housekeeping, and agriculture.

In the study, foreign-language elements were closely examined and identified as instances of codeswitching according to several factors. First, if the definitions of foreign-language elements were provided in the Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language (Lietuvių kalbos žodynas, lkz.lt), the words were not considered as instances of codeswitching since it can be assumed that the terms have already been integrated or accepted into the language, thus making them borrowings<sup>1</sup>. However, if the definitions appeared in online slang dictionaries, then the foreign-language elements were treated as switches due to the informal and spontaneous nature of slang words, which often incorporate elements from different languages. After identifying other-language elements in the corpus, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted to analyze the identified instances, with the former method used to identify and explore the types and functions of switches and possible motivations underlying codeswitching use in the vloggers' discourse, and with the latter to identify patterns and frequencies of use within the data. To determine the social reasons behind the uses of codeswitching in the context of Lithuanian vlogs, the six codeswitching functions proposed by Appel & Muysken (2005) were followed: *referential*, *directive*, *expressive*, *phatic*, *metalinguistic*, and *poetic*.

### 3. Results & Discussion

#### 3.1. Frequency of switches and language repertoire

In the corpus of 23,562 words spanning 12 vlogs, there were 253 instances of codeswitching, representing 1.1% of the entire corpus. This infrequent occurrence of switches suggests a largely monolingual speech community in Lithuania, as previously suggested by Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė (2018). Considering both the country's linguistic landscape and the vloggers' linguistic background, the main language used by the vloggers is Lithuanian. However, switches are predominantly observed in English, 195 instances, with Russian being used less frequently, only 56 instances, as provided in the following table:

**Table 2.** Number of codeswitching instances across languages

Language	Number of tokens	Percentage
English	195	77.1%
Russian	56	22.1%
Polish	1	0.4%
Italian	1	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that there is no consensus on the distinction between codeswitching and borrowing. Some scholars argue that the primary difference lies in the frequency of use, with frequent use of foreign elements leading to their integration into the language as borrowings (Backus 2012, 2015). On the other hand, other researchers emphasize morphosyntactic integration as one of the distinguishing factors (Poplack 1980; Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Myers-Scotton 1993), arguing that borrowed elements tend to be fully integrated into the grammatical structure of the host, or Matrix language, whereas codeswitching elements tend to maintain their original form. Acknowledging the varying viewpoints regarding the distinction between codeswitching and borrowing, this study differentiates between the two phenomena based on dictionary entries (i.e. other-language elements present in the dictionary of Lithuanian). In other words, both newly formed switches and well-established loans or borrowings were treated as other-language elements, hence, elements of codeswitching.

Only two instances of switching occur in languages other than English or Russian: one Italian interjection, *ciao*, and one Polish swearword, *kurwa*. Such prevalence of switches in English over Russian and Polish, both of which once played a role in the historical context of Lithuania, could be attributed to various factors, such as globalization and a significant presence of English-language culture and trends, especially among the younger generations. Therefore, most switches in English are specific terms related to the beauty and fashion industry (examples 1-2), online entertainment (example 3), and common or trendy expressions (examples 4-5), which aligns with Halim & Maros (2014) and Verschik & Kask (2019), who noted that English is often used in social media and blogging to align with global and contemporary trends.

- (1) *Tai žodžiu, kol miegi, jinai **eksfolijuoja** odą, nušveičia tą negyvą odą ir suteikia odai to švytėjimo, yra tokios gelinės tekstūros.*  
'So, it **exfoliates** your skin while you sleep, it scrubs away all that dead skin and gives your skin that glow, it's got that gel texture.'
- (2) *Nu vsio, jau baigėsi mūsų **šopinimai**.*  
'That's it, our **shopping** is done.'
- (3) *Tai aš tokia durna buvau, kad aš norėjau **užsisubbint** tą, o kaip dabar jis, **photoshopą**, kad ten kažkaip mačiau, kad labai gražiai gali pasidaryti **thumbnailus** <...>*  
'So I was such a fool that I wanted **to sub** to that, what's it called, Photoshop, because I saw that you can somehow make very beautiful **thumbnails** <...>'
- (4) *Aš negaliu, aš negaliu, aš negaliu. Ir dar įpakuota. **Oh my god, oh my god**, kokia graži. Eina sau, eina sau.*  
'I can't, I can't, I can't. And also packed. **Oh my god, oh my god**, it's so beautiful. I can't believe it, I can't believe it.'
- (5) *Ir kalbant pagaliau apie rudenį, galim prieit prie tos smagiosios dalies, kada aš parodysiu pagaliau, ką nusipirkau rudeniško, tai žiauriai **excited**.*  
'And finally talking about fall, we can get to the fun part when I will show you what I bought for fall, so I'm really **excited**.'

Russian switches, on the other hand, are rather used for expressions related to older cultural references (examples 6-7) and swearwords (example 8), which is in line with Pinkevičienė's (2023) findings, who observes that Russian is associated with informal relationships and solidarity, particularly among older individuals and men.

- (6) *Dar jaučiu mausiuos **kožą** arba kokį nors megztinį, bet jau nebeturiu laiko.*  
'I think I'll wear **leather** [literal translation] or some kind of sweater, but I don't have time anymore.'
- (7) *Turime pirmą **ČP**.*  
'We have our first **emergency**.'
- (8) *O dabar atėjom prie savo mašinos. Varom. Biškį, **blet**, čia irgi reikėtų sutvarkyt gal jį, nu bet **po-chui**. Varom, žodžiu.*  
'And now we've come to our car. Let's go. **Fuck**, maybe it should be fixed a bit too, but **fuck it**. Anyways, let's go.'

### 3.2. Codeswitching functions

In terms of codeswitching functions, five categories were identified: *referential*, *directive*, *expressive*, *phatic*, and *metalinguistic*, as can be seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Total number of codeswitching instances across functions

Function	Number of tokens	Percentage
Referential	191	75.5%
Directive	3	1.2%
Expressive	48	18.9%
Phatic	7	2.8%
Metalinguistic	4	1.6%
Poetic	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 3.2.1. Referential function of codeswitching

Referential codeswitching was identified to be the most frequent type of codeswitching, with 191 instances identified within the entire corpus. This type of codeswitching was used by all four vloggers, with most instances being identified in discussions on topics mostly related to beauty and fashion, online entertainment and content creation, technology and vehicles (e.g., computers, motorcycles, automobiles), and mostly taken from English, with some instances occurring in Russian, as will be seen in the analysis below.

Consequently, several reasons could be suggested for using referential codeswitching. First, vloggers may choose to use other-language terms and expressions when there are no such direct equivalents in Lithuanian, thus allowing them to communicate ideas and concepts more effectively. For example, when talking about a renewed purchase of a makeup setting spray, one vlogger decided to praise it in the following way:

- (9) *Ir šitas yra turbūt OG.*  
‘This one is probably **OG**.’

As slang, the term *OG* is used when referring to ‘someone or something that is an original or originator and especially one that is highly respected or regarded’ (Merriam-Webster 2024) or authentic and old-school, so translating it simply as *originalus* or *originalas* (English *original*) in Lithuanian would lose its nuanced meaning. Thus, referring to the makeup setting spray as *OG* in this context suggests not its originality, but rather the vlogger’s preference for a particular brand.

Another fashion-related word from English is *haul*, or *haul’as*, which does not have a direct equivalent in Lithuanian, and refers to ‘all the things someone buys on an occasion when they go shopping’ (Cambridge Dictionary 2024) and, in online contexts, typically involves showcasing purchases to viewers in a video format. The use of English beauty-related terms is also common, with nouns referring to makeup products, such as *eyeliner’is* or *liner’is*, *concealer’is*, *foundation’as*, and *highlighter’is*, and verbs referring to skincare and makeup processes, such as *išsiblendinti* (English *to blend out*) and *eksfolijuoti* (English *to exfoliate*), all of which predominantly appear in the speech of female vloggers.

Similarly, the term *vlogmas*, which is a combination of the words *vlog* and *Christmas*, referring to ‘a tradition among YouTubers to vlog, or video-blog, everyday in December until Christmas’ (Dictionary.



com 2018), was also identified as an instance of referential codeswitching since the term is non-existent in Lithuanian. Interestingly, the term *vlogas* (English *vlog*) is preferred among the vloggers when introducing or talking about the format of their or other creators' videos, with some, however, still referring to the genre as *video blogas* (English *video blog*) or *video vlogas* (English *video vlog*), and one vlogger using the Lithuanian equivalent, *vaizdo įrašas* (English literally *video recording*), instead.

In fact, many terms and expressions related to online content creation have no direct equivalents or translations in Lithuanian, thus English words are used instead, especially because certain expressions become engrained within online platforms and various media. Such English expressions with no Lithuanian equivalents include *thumbnail'as*, *subscribe'as*, *užsisub'inimas* (a shortened form, *sub*, of the expression *subscribe*), *like'as*, *stream'as* and *stream'inti*, *edit'inti*, *podcast'as*, *influence'inimas*, *lifehack'as*. Expressions *paspauskite 'like'q* or *palike'inkite* (English *press 'like'*) and *pasubscribe'inkite* (English *subscribe*) appear to be more common than the use of Lithuanian equivalents *paspauskite 'patinka'* (English *press 'like'*) and *paprenumeruokite* (English *subscribe*), which are longer or tend to include additional elements.

Another reason why Lithuanian vloggers might use referential codeswitching is due to some English terms and expressions being shorter than their equivalents in Lithuanian. For instance, the single-word *brendas* (English *brand*) is used quite often instead of the Lithuanian two-word *prekės ženklas* (English literally *product sign or mark*); *deal'as* is also commonly used instead of *sandoris* (English *deal or transaction*) or *pasiūlymas* (English *suggestion*); *tattoo* instead of *tatuiruotė*; *pack'as* instead of *pakelis* or *pakuotė*; one instance of describing an ingredient as *hormone-like*, instead of using the Lithuanian translation *į hormonų panašus ingredientas* (English literally *an ingredient similar to hormones*); similarly, describing a motorcycle part, one vlogger referred to it as *custom-made'inis*, making the expression longer, though not uncommon, if translated into Lithuanian, *padarytas pagal užsakymą* (English *custom-made*).

The English language seems to be the primary source from which trendy or specific expressions are drawn, thus accounting for a high number of referential codeswitching instances. Russian, however, is another language source, though with fewer instances. Referential switches in Russian are observed to carry a sense of certain cultural ingraining, which could be linked to the older generations' use of specific terms and expressions, thus making younger generations more inclined to incorporate these Russian elements into their speech to create a sense of shared understanding. Therefore, the analysis suggests that switches in Russian appear mostly in contexts related to clothing and vehicles, but miscellaneous categories with fewer uses are also present. For instance, *maikė* or *maikutė* (Russian *maika*), *koža* (Russian *kozha*; English literally *leather*), and *bliuskelė* (Russian *bluzka*) referring colloquially to a t-shirt, a leather jacket, and a blouse, respectively. Switches also occur in vehicle-related contexts, such as the use of *krokodilai* (Russian *krokodily*) instead of the more standard term *užvedimo laidai* (English *starter cables*). Appearing in the same context, *šlangos* (Russian *shlangi*) is preferred over the Lithuanian word *žarnos* (English *hoses*), and *šaibos* (Russian *shaiby*) instead of *poveržlės* (English *washer*). Therefore, it could be argued that such incorporation of Russian vehicle-related words suggests practical familiarity as these terms might be ingrained in the lexicon, likely due to their common usage and acceptance. Other repeated switches, though not as common, are rather miscellaneous. For instance, referring to money colloquially as *bapkės* or *babkės* (Russian *babki*), to something which is messy as *bardakas* or *bardakėlis* (Russian *bardak*), to an imitation of something as *padielka* (Russian *poddelka*) instead of *padirbinys*, calling a loaf of white bread *bulka* (Russian *bulka*) instead of the more standard *balta duona*, and referring to the action of becoming unbothered or calm as *nesiparinti*, or the opposite, *parintis*, (Russian *parit-sia*) instead of the standard form *nesijaudinti* (English *not to*

*be worried*). Therefore, all the switches mentioned have equivalents in the Lithuanian language, but incorporating words from Russian in such contexts could suggest wider cultural familiarity and shared understanding of the terms within Lithuania's linguistic environment.

### 3.2.2. Expressive function of codeswitching

The second category, which contains a substantial number of switches, involves codeswitching as a means of expressive communication (see Table 3). Codeswitching for expressive purposes was found to be used in contexts where emotional emphasis was particularly important. In other words, vloggers' emotions and evaluations were mediated through the use of emotionally charged expressions, specifically exclamations and swearwords. English exclamations tend to be used the most, such as *oh my god*, *satisfying*, *awkward*, *nice*, *I love it*, or the combination of a Lithuanian adverb, such as *žiauriai* (English *extremely*, *wildly*) or *labai* (English *very*), and an English adjective, as in the following examples:

- (10) <...> *bet aš buvau tokios prastos energijos ir nuotaikos, ir aš tikrai negalėjau išsitraukti kameros ir apsimesti, kad aš esu žiauriai happy* <...>  
'<...> but I was in low energy and mood, and I really couldn't pull out my camera and pretend that I was **extremely happy** <...>'
- (11) *Esu labai excited, bet esu truputėlį... gal jaučiuosi serganti.*  
'I am **very excited**, but I feel a little bit... sick maybe.'

It might be argued that speakers choose to codeswitch to express their emotions or sentiments more accurately or intensely, where Lithuanian equivalents would seem awkward, unsuitable, or even semantically incompatible, e.g. *žiauriai laiminga* (English *extremely happy*) in example (10) or *žiauriai susijaudinusi/laiminga* (English *extremely excited*) in example (11).

On the other hand, emotionally charged swearwords tend to be Russian, rather than English, because of their perceived intensity and cultural context. Only two non-Russian switches related to swearing were identified in the entire corpus, English *what the fuck* and Polish *kurwa*. Russian swearwords include *blet*, *nachui*, *pochui*, and are generally perceived as more intense and emotionally charged and are therefore commonly used to emphasize or clarify a point, and to express anger, frustration, discomfort, and/or disbelief. Swearwords, with the majority of them being Russian and only one English and Polish, were used specifically by male vloggers, which is in line with Pinkevičienė's (2023) aforementioned findings.

### 3.2.3. Phatic, metalinguistic, and directive functions of codeswitching

The remaining functions, i.e., phatic, metalinguistic, and directive, were not as common as referential and expressive, with a total of 14 instances. Nonetheless, the phatic function included switches directed either towards the speaker themselves or the audience in three different languages, with three instances in English, three in Russian, and one in Italian. Rather than conveying information, these switches serve to structure discourse and act as mediators between different parts of a conversation. For example:

- (12) *Karočie, pirmadienis prasideda nuo siuntų* <...>  
'**Anyways**, Monday starts with shipments <...>'
- (13) <...> *man reikia tiesiog replių šiaip gerų, bet aš replių, čiuju, neturiu pas save.*  
'<...> I just need good pliers, but **I guess** I don't have pliers.'

- (14) *Okay, šiek tiek pailsėjus, atsigavus, pašokus, nusileidžiu į garažą <...>*  
'Okay, after a little rest, recovery, jumping, I go down to the garage <...>'
- (15) *Ačiū, kad žiūrėjote ir iki kitų mano video. Ciao.*  
'Thank you for watching and see you in my other videos. Bye'

Initial-position switches in examples (12) and (14) seem to mark the beginning of a new topic and hence can be a way to grab listeners' attention. On the other hand, example (13) includes a switch appearing in the middle of the sentence which seems to function as a hesitation marker. Finally, example (15) includes an end-position switch, where *ciao* functions as a colloquial farewell, effectively ending the discourse. Therefore, the seven instances of phatic switches appear to function as transitional elements in the vloggers' discourse.

Four examples of codeswitching instances were identified to have the metalinguistic function, where the speaker commented on the pronunciation of a word by mentioning the fact that they are not aware of the right pronunciation (the comments in Lithuanian are in bold), thus indicating conscious language use, as in the following examples:

- (16) *Kai aš išmeginau šitą lūpų aliejų, būtent šitą, – čia yra 035 Champagne, Champagne, Champagne... kaip čia išstart, – man žiauriai patiko.*  
'When I tried this lip oil, this particular one – this is 035 **Champagne, Champagne, Champagne...** **how to pronounce it**, – I absolutely loved it.'
- (17) *<...> čia buvo piršta iš Haute Boheme, nežinau irgi kaip tariasi.*  
'<...> it was bought from **Haute Boheme**, **I also don't know how to pronounce it.**'

The other two examples, (18) and (19), include the speakers using English terms but indicating their uncertainty in providing translations or equivalents in Lithuanian (the comments in Lithuanian are in bold), which further indicates their conscious awareness of language, particularly in contexts where Lithuanian lacks direct equivalents for these terms:

- (18) *Aš noriu to vėsiaus oro, aš noriu to, nežinau, kaip lietuviškai išverst, to crispy air, kur tiesiog išeini į lauką, ir toks šaltukas paspaudžia, bet, bet dar gali būti su megztinuku, kažkokių tai jaukių drabužėlių.*  
'I want that cool air, I want that, **I don't know how to translate it in Lithuanian, that crispy air**, where you just go outside and the cold hits you, but, but you can still wear a sweater, some kind of cozy clothes.'
- (19) *Tada pasiėmiau tokių keksiukų, nežinau, kaip čia vadina, cases, nežinau dabar greitai, kaip išversti.*  
'Then I bought these cupcake – **I don't know what these are called – cases, I don't know how to translate them now.**'

Metalinguistic codeswitching, therefore, reflects speakers' conscious awareness and manipulation of language, as they make explicit statements about language choice and its use.

Finally, the directive function of codeswitching was identified three times in the corpus, with only one Russian word *davai* (English literally *give*; used in the sense of *come on, let's*) directed either at speak-

ers talking about themselves (20), speakers addressing the audience (21), or speakers reporting what others said towards them (22), as can be seen in the following examples:

- (20) <...> *aš tikrai negalėjau išsitraukti kameros ir apsimesti, kad aš esu žiauriai happy ir kad, o, **davai**, čia einam ten, ten, ten* <...>  
'I really couldn't pull out my camera and pretend that I was really happy and that, oh, **come on**, let's go there, there, there <...>'
- (21) *Ar čia verta man kažką su tom žuvim užsiimt ar tiesiog net negalvoti nesąmonių jokių? Gal dėsime niurką<sup>2</sup>? Niurką? **Davai**. Tūkstantis like 'ų ir Miglė sakė įšoks į tvenkinį*  
'Is it worth it for me to do something with the fish or just not even think about any of this nonsense? Maybe we should dive [into the water]? Shall we dive? **Let's go**. A thousand likes and Miglė said she would jump into the pond.'
- (22) *Nemėgstu fotkinti daiktų ir tai darau paskutinį kartą, nors ir šį kartą norėjau neimti, bet kolega, draugas sako: **davai**, padaryk dar paskutinį kartą* <...>  
'I don't like taking photos of things and I'm doing it for the last time, even though I wanted not to take it this time, but a colleague, a friend says: **come on**, do it one last time <...>'

Although limited in the number of instances, codeswitching in this context serves to direct, influence, or comment on the actions of others or the speakers themselves.

Not surprisingly, no instances of poetic codeswitching were identified within the entire corpus. Given the artistic and aesthetic purposes of poetic codeswitching, it seems unlikely to be found in the genre of vlogs, where speakers typically engage in informal, spontaneous, unscripted, and one-sided conversations, thus making poetic codeswitching more likely to be found in more formal discourses, where language choices are more deliberate and complex.

Therefore, the vloggers' conversations tend to feature more switches in English and fewer in Russian, the various functions of which seem to be mostly referential, – where codeswitching is used to convey specific and precise information through the use of terms or expressions, equivalents of which are missing or are not as precise in the Lithuanian language, – and expressive, – where switches function as a linguistic choice through which emotions, attitudes, and evaluations are conveyed.

## 4. Conclusions

The present study aimed to identify the language repertoire, the frequency, and the social functions of codeswitching in the discourse of four Lithuanian vloggers. To achieve this aim, a corpus of 23,562 words produced by two female and two male Lithuanian vloggers was compiled, and 253 instances of codeswitching were identified. The findings suggest that codeswitching is not such a common practice among the young vloggers, appearing only in 1.1% of the entire corpus, which seems to be indicative of the predominantly monolingual speech community in Lithuania. Switches in English and Russian were identified to be the most frequent in the speech of the vloggers, with English codeswitching elements appearing in contexts, such as beauty and fashion, online entertainment, and trendy expressions, reflecting the influence of global trends and the prominence of English in these domains, and Russian

<sup>2</sup> I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out the mistake in both the transcription and translation of the Lithuanian phrase *dėti niurką* (English *to dive into the water*).

switches appearing in rather familiar contexts with older cultural references and swearwords, making it a convenient choice for informal and personal contexts.

Regarding the social functions, referential codeswitching was identified to be used the most among the vloggers, with 191 instances in total, and appeared mostly in contexts where direct translations or equivalents of words in Lithuanian were missing. Therefore, so as not to lose the intended meaning of foreign terms and expressions, there seems to be a tendency to use English and Russian instead. Another common function of codeswitching was expressive, with 48 instances identified. Expressive codeswitching appeared in contexts where emotions and sentiments were emphasized and articulated through language use, more specifically through mostly English exclamations and mostly Russian swearwords. The other functions with fewer codeswitching instances included phatic, metalinguistic, and directive. Phatic switches, with 7 instances, were identified to be used as transitional elements in vloggers' conversations, facilitating smooth transitions between various segments rather than conveying meaningful information. 4 instances of metalinguistic switches appeared to suggest vloggers' conscious awareness of language choice and use, either through comments on the pronunciation or the lack of equivalents of specific terms in Lithuanian. Finally, directive switches, with only 3 instances, were used to direct, influence, or comment on the actions of somebody else or the speakers themselves.

While the primary aim of the present study was to examine the social functions of codeswitching in Lithuanian vlogs, an analysis of any gender- or age-related patterns of codeswitching was not within the scope of this research. However, further investigation could delve into the potential aspects related to gender and age to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Although not extensive in scope, the compiled corpus represents the first attempt at the analysis of codeswitching phenomena, more specifically the choice of language, the frequency, and the functions of codeswitching, within Lithuanian vlogs. The findings and the analysis highlight the uses and meanings of English and Russian, providing insights not only into the potential motivations behind codeswitching but also into the role of combined global and local languages in Lithuanian digital discourse.

Given the limited scope of the corpus, with data drawn from only four vloggers, it is vital to acknowledge the tentative nature of the findings. Future research could expand the sample size and include a more diverse range of vloggers to provide a more comprehensive understanding of codeswitching practices. Future research, combining functional, structural (e.g., Muysken 2000, 2013), and usage-based (e.g., Backus 2013) perspectives, could not only enhance the potential of the findings but also further contribute to the broader discourse on the use of codeswitching in digitally mediated communication. Additionally, the study included a limited and specific timeframe, which may not capture long-term codeswitching trends or patterns. Therefore, expanding the sample size and including a more diverse range of vloggers could provide a better understanding of codeswitching practices.

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