

## CODE-SWITCHING FROM FRENCH INTO ENGLISH AS A REFLECTION OF PERSONALIZATION FUNCTION IN NETFLIX SERIES “EMILY IN PARIS”

### *MUDANÇA DE CÓDIGO DO FRANCÊS PARA O INGLÊS COMO REFLEXO DA FUNÇÃO DE PERSONALIZAÇÃO NA SÉRIE DA NETFLIX “EMILY IN PARIS”*

### *CAMBIO DE CÓDIGO DEL FRANCÉS AL INGLÉS COMO REFLEJO DE LA FUNCIÓN DE PERSONALIZACIÓN EN LA SERIE DE NETFLIX “EMILY IN PARIS”*

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**ABSTRACT:** The plot of the series “Emily in Paris” is rather simple. It also should be noted that most of the people “Emily” meets are able to converse in English, but find it hard to find equivalents in English for their speech. We should cite first as an example the word “la plouc”, which is used as a reference to Emily’s New York style and manners. It can be translated as “country girl”. “Bonjour, la plouc!” The second French word, which follows Emily is “ringarde”, common in English. A French designer, who sees a fluffy accessory attached to the bag, calls Emily “common”. It is recommended that further research of Code-switching (CS) in series language will be made to examine speaker’s intentions in a larger sample of inclusions, as well as their syntactic structure, semantics, and psychological motivation.

**KEYWORDS:** Basic verbs. Code-switching. English. Emily. French.

**RESUMO:** O enredo da série “Emily in Paris” é bastante simples. Também deve-se notar que a maioria das pessoas que “Emily” conhece são capazes de conversar em inglês, mas acham difícil encontrar equivalentes em inglês para seu discurso. Devemos citar primeiro como exemplo a palavra “la plouc”, que é usada como referência ao estilo e às maneiras de Emily em Nova York. Pode ser traduzido como “garota do campo”. “Bonjour, la plouc!” A segunda palavra francesa, que segue Emily é “ringarde”, comum em inglês. Um designer

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*francês, que vê um acessório fofinho preso à bolsa, chama Emily de “comum”. Recomenda-se que mais pesquisas de troca de código (CS) em linguagem em série sejam feitas para examinar as intenções do falante em uma amostra maior de inclusões, bem como sua estrutura sintática, semântica e motivação psicológica.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Verbos básicos. Troca de código. Inglês. Emily. Francês.*

**RESUMEN:** *La trama de la serie “Emily en París” es bastante simple. También se debe tener en cuenta que la mayoría de las personas que conoce “Emily” pueden conversar en inglés, pero les resulta difícil encontrar equivalentes en inglés para su habla. Debemos citar primero como ejemplo la palabra “la plouc”, que se utiliza como referencia al estilo y modales de Emily en Nueva York. Se puede traducir como “chica de campo”. “¡Bonjour, la plouc!” La segunda palabra francesa, que sigue a Emily es “ringarde”, común en inglés. Un diseñador francés, que ve un accesorio esponjoso adjunto a la bolsa, llama a Emily “común”. Se recomienda que se realicen más investigaciones sobre el cambio de código (CS) en el lenguaje en serie para examinar las intenciones del hablante en una muestra más grande de inclusiones, así como su estructura sintáctica, semántica y motivación psicológica.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Verbos básicos. Cambio de código. Inglés. Emily. Francés.*

## Introduction

The Norman conquest of England in 1066 had a great influence not only on the country but also on the English language. William the Conqueror brought with him Norman French, which became the unspoken language of the royal court, government, and upper classes for the next three centuries. The common people continued to use English, and Latin was considered the language of the church.

While Norman French was the dominant language, English was rarely used in writing and began to change. Before the conquest, English grammar was much more difficult than 70 years after it. This phenomenon is called “the transformation from Old English to Medieval English.” At the same time, Norman French became Anglo-Norman, as Norman itself was influenced by the English language. Linguists began to take an interest in the study of examples only at the turn of the century. This happened due to the processes of globalization, which captured all spheres of society, including linguistics. The expansion of interethnic contacts contributes to various linguistic processes that irreversibly change the linguistic picture of the world and require linguistic individuals to be able to adapt to a rapidly changing linguistic environment. Quite often, foreign language inclusions were considered along with other lexical resources as alternative means of linguistic nomination used in the text to give a

certain stylistic coloring. The appearance of foreign language inclusions in the text can awaken certain cognitive and mental associations in the reader. Thus, we can safely say that the creative possibilities of the code-switching phenomenon are almost limitless. We have to understand which cognitive mechanism and semiotic processes are the main ones in the formation of the stylistic potential of this phenomenon. Therefore, in this study we will try to understand the reasons for the use of foreign language inclusions in the creation of TV series about France, namely, the Netflix series “Emily in Paris” through psycholinguistic stylistic analysis and the use of models of linguosemiotics and cognitive semantics. We will also try to consider this phenomenon through the prism of bilingualism, which is believed to be necessary for successful communication with foreign language inclusions (GARCÍA; LIN, 2016).

## **Methodology**

The purpose of the study is to identify and describe the conceptual cognitive differences in linguosemiotic models and structural modeling of the bilingual conversation in the series “Emily in Paris” based on the data, collected from the dialogues in the series. For the purpose of the study, we used the script of the dialogues of the series. In accordance with the purpose and objectives of the study, general-scientific methods of observation, description, and generalization were applied. In order to disclose and clarify the lexical content of the code-switching concept in the French and English languages, lexicographic material was used. To this end, the conceptual analysis is used as the basic method, including the following techniques: (1) analysis of dictionary definitions, including etymological analysis; (2) systematization of basic and figurative features in the structure of the series dialogues; and (3) conceptual analysis. Based on analysis the results of conversational functions of code-switching were identified referring to social-distancing as a means of personalization.

## **Research Questions**

The research question that we ask is as follows: What are the implications of using French inclusions? We look for the answers to these questions in the works of the linguists, studying lemmas. In the “lemmas” research, Longxing Wei (2003) suggests that the mental

lexicon and the abstract elements, such as “lemmas” are going through activation during bilingual conversation, thus creating CS process. “The mental lexicon” as Levelt defined it, is an ultimate storage of conceptual information. Each lexical unit contains a lemma, which corresponds to the grammatical function of the accepting language.

Let’s look at the example:

*“-Merci. Have **un bonne journée**.  
- Une! Pas “un”.  
Une bonne journée!”*

This scene takes place at the bakery, but the curious thing here is how a French lemma corresponds with the English grammar, the phrase combines a lexical collocation “have a nice day” and “**une bonne journee**”. Instead of saying it to the French manner as just “**Bonne journee**”, the heroine uses grammatical structure, which is more familiar to her. Pre-understanding of the meaning of the utterance as well as prior knowledge of cultural and linguistic systems and codes become a part of the frame establishment field or a higher-order principle. Decoding means understanding a language pairing with a similar semantic equivalent to identify its meaning (BILÁ, KAČMÁROVÁ, VAŇKOVÁ 2017). The conceptualization takes place on a deeper structure level.

When the conceptualization is adopted, the CS usage may be considered successful. If we take the concept of a lingua-cultural identity as a starting point, we need to disassemble it as a set of principles of social distance, and a questionnaire of “Is the person a regular and accepted member within a group I belong to?” “Do I perceive this person to be similar or different from me?”. What are syntactic and conversational patterns of mixed (two language) lines in the series? Gumperz’ theory categorized each CS based on its functions (interjection, repetition, quotation, addressee etc.). The quotation function means that a line in another language is taken from another speaker. Interjection is a filler in the sentence, usually, if we are taking French into consideration – it’s a “voilà” or an “ooh la la”. A function of repetition is a double writing of a notion or a phrase in two consecutive languages. A form of addressee in French is usually dubbed by “Mademoiselle” or “Monsieur”. Example:

*-The...The pink roses?  
- Je comprends pas.  
- Uh, the rosé rose...  
- The... The rosé roses...  
- Ah, non! Non, **mademoiselle**. Those are not for you. They're roses from the South.*

What is the motivation for using two languages in a conversation? Tajolosa defined a Code-switching motivation framework to analyze the intentions of a speaker to use a CS. The intentions may represent a stylistic or semantic purpose, a euphemism or language economy. Language economy is used when words in a CS system are more convenient and easier for understanding and used as a substitute.

- Cinq soixante.*
- It's five euros sixty, but round it up to six.*
- *Really? Oh. Merci very much.*

Euphemisms have a function of avoiding language equivalents that might be inappropriate. The stylistic and syntactic use of CS implies the creation of a particular linguistic situation, which will lead the addressee in an intended direction.

In series and films a certain CS scheme is common: a speaker uses a certain language for narration and switches to another for suggestion or inquiry. The addressee absorbs the message quicker.

- Um, j'aime le café, les fruits et un croissant avec le préservatif.*
- *Okay, there's a vending machine for that in the men's room.*
- *What did I just say?*
- *"Préservatif" doesn't mean preserves. You just ordered a croissant with a side of condoms.*

The CS proves the above theory that another language is used for suggestion or explanation. Lines in the examples were collected from the series, as it provides authentic data for such type of analysis. Garcia (2016) claims that series are a mirror to the society, as they show what is prevailing in the particular circle as well as giving a particular context for the language usage, as the viewer sees the plot, the character's background, the scenery. Nowadays, movies and series represent a considerable corpus for the research of code-switching.

The problem for the researchers of identifying formal and informal ways of linguistic conduct in the Anglo-Saxon linguistic culture urges to provide an analysis based on the conceptualization scheme. The framework of lingua-cultural identity requires the placing of social distance as a form of controlling discursive practices.

Clyne, Norrby & Warren suggest such social distance framing principles as (2009): familiarity principle, maturity principle, relative age principle, address mode accommodation principle, social identification principle, network membership principle. These principles can describe relationships based on certain rules pertinent to a particular culture, such as of providing objective information and involvement in the message.

Speakers are motivated to code-switch in order to express stylistic purposes of communication and express their identity more clearly. These assumptions served as the framework of the present study to identify the motivations for CS in the *French* lines in *Emily in Paris* series (EMILY IN PARIS, 2020).

Mirroring French ways of expressing themselves in real-life experiences and reflecting authentic communication as situations in the series, was inspired and motivated by real-life dialogues, thus making the viewer escape the reality portraying scenes truthfully, due to the CS language in the series.

- Ah, mademoiselle. Vos paquets sont arrivés.
- Vos paquets. Paquets. American paquets.
- My paquets! Finally.
- Um, madame, c'est possible pour...
- Je suis occupée.
- Never mind, then. I got it.

The interjection in the aforementioned dialogue is used to attract attention to the scene, where Emily seeks help carrying her “paquets” and doesn’t find it. Social distancing concept is shown here by the carrier, who uses French to distance himself from the forthcoming job of carrying the bags. If he doesn’t speak her language, then he won’t feel any pangs of remorse in not providing any assistance to the poor girl.

CS in real-life dialogues may also be used for communicative efficiency, in order to make communication faster and easier. Dela Rosa (2016) claims in her works that the main function of CS is in putting emphasis. Shaunesay *et al.* (2007) names the facilitation of communication between two languages as the most important reasons for CS. Benson and Cavusoglu (2013) insist that CS serves as a meaning clarification and saves much time of communication, if both speakers understand the message, as in the example below.

- Tonight. Now?
- Ce soir? Non, malheureusement.

The results of conversational functions of code-switching refer to social-distancing as a means of personalization. The speakers use CS inclusions which are in circulation in everyday speech and are relatable to the addressee.

## Results and Discussion

*Code-Switching in Series.* The sociolinguistic approach to code-switching (CS) provides an answer to the question of why interlocutors switch from one code to another during their speech. There are two types of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. When the topic of conversation changes, it is a metaphorical device. This type is based on the functions of language switching and on the speaker's intentions to convey additional emotional connotations (BENSEN; ÇAVUSOĞLU, 2013).

According to the authors, the exchange of a metaphorical code enriches the communicative situation, since the speaker's attitude towards it, is based on different social positions, informing about the presence of multifactorial social relations in it. An example of such a switch is a dialogue from the scene of renting an apartment, when Emily, not speaking French, tries to communicate with a realtor, and he translates the conversation into a description of the apartment.

*"-That's weird.*

*-Non, c'est normal. Et voilà. Your magnificent **chambre de bonne.***

*-Chambre de what now?*

*-Chambre de b... Um, it means, uh, the room for the housekeeper.*

*The top two floors were typically reserved for the servants. The space is small, but the view..."*

The series is notable for the fact that the main character always tries to copy the manner of speaking and phrases of the local residents of Paris, thereby trying to understand and remember certain things. «**Chambre de** what now? ». This example combines two structures - French and English. «The room of what now?». This is followed by the technique of repeating a phrase in English - «the room for the housekeeper» - «**chambre de bonne**».

And then an explanation of the culturological concept: «The top two floors were typically reserved for the servants». Switching the code in this case is motivated by the author's desire to present cultural symbols or evoke associations that accompany conceptual formations of foreign cultural origin (TUTOVA, 2017).

A situational change in the code implies another change in the language situation, while the metaphorical one remains unchanged: it is more about the speaker's internal motives. The following example shows a situation where the heroine comes to work in a French office where no one wants to speak English. The French are famous for their unwillingness to perceive speech in a language other than French.

- “I’m going to be working in this office. **Je vais travailler dans ce bureau.**
- Ah. The American girl is here.
- You lost me at **bonjour**. Well, I’m going to take a class, but...**je parle un peu français** already.
- Well, perhaps it’s better not to try.”

So, Emily tries to build up a dialogue with the Francophone, but is almost unsuccessful. Emily dubs each phrase she says in French to evoke understanding among her colleagues. In this case, she switches the code depending on the situation, while the topic of the conversation does not change. At the end of the dialogue, we can observe Emily’s dismissive commentary from a native French speaker towards French proficiency.

The level of proficiency in each of the languages and attitudes towards them can vary significantly. The mental switch takes longer to determine which language system is “on” or “off”. More often a bilingual person does not seek to abide by the rules of any language (GARCÍA; LIN, 2016). The choice of language in a given situation is not always easy. It can be influenced by various mutually influencing factors. The two main factors are the interlocutor and the preferred language of the bilingual person (ELIZABETH, 2007).

It should be considered that the choice of language in each specific situation, as well as, the transition to another language itself, can be successful only if listeners and speakers understand and interpret it correctly. The marker reflects the speaker’s intention to highlight a certain element of the language. It is used to obtain a particular result from the act of communication.

Let’s look at this example:

- “-So, **ça va?** It’s good?
- Oui. Oui. Très** good.
- **Très** wonderful.
- Great.
- Can I just get my keys, **s’il vous plaît?**
- Yeah. “

Here is a very interesting example of interjections and adverbs, Emily compiles a French amplifying adverb and an English adjective, but at the same time the act of communication is valid and the interlocutors understand each other. We can observe how the

mixing of codes occurs smoothly and unconsciously characterized by transitions between elements of languages in a sentence or phrase. In bilingual communities, the transition from language to language is unlabeled and natural. Such stylistic devices are inherently free from certain content and are used in a statement solely for emotional and aesthetic purposes. As a result, we can conclude that foreign language inclusions can be used in the creation of stylistic means on the same basis as other language resources.

It claims that the mental lexicon does not simply contain lexemes and their meanings, but also lemmas, which are abstract entries in the mental lexicon that support the surface realization of actual lexemes. The CS instances described and analyzed in this paper provide evidence that the Bilingual speaker’s two linguistic systems are unequally activated in CS, and CS is an outcome of bilingual lemmas in contact (ELIZABETH, 2007).

The theory developed by Levelt is of the mental lexicon and the abstract elements called “lemmas” underlying lexemes. Applying Levelt’s monolingual speech production model to the bilingual processes with a focus on the notion of bilingual lemma activation during CS, we can see that “the mental lexicon” is generally defined as the store of information about particular words in one’s language (LEVELT, 1993).

Levelt defines a “lemma”, as a “nonphonological part of an item’s lexical information” and claims that “it is the lemmas of the mental lexicon that link conceptual information to grammatical function” (LEVELT, 1989, p. 162).

When speakers construct a speech line, they build a sentential frame notwithstanding for the phonological aspects of words using the syntactic information and aspects of the morphological information contained in the lexical items as retrieved from the mental lexicon.

When we presume the interlocutors have retrieved the lexical items from the mental lexicon, we claim that they have acquired access to the lemmas that are relevant for the construction of the word’s syntactic environment.

The mental lexicon contains declarative knowledge for each lexical item about the word’s meaning, and information about its syntax and morphology which is necessary for constructing the word’s syntactic environment.

Influenced by the above linguistic and psycholinguistic models of the bilingual lexical/conceptual representation, this paper claims that lemmas in the bilingual mental lexicon are language-specific. This is because while the monolingual “mental lexicon represents a complex self-organizing system,” the “bilingual mental lexicon, as opposed to the monolingual one, integrates the units of two linguistic systems and, therefore, ensures the

processes of speech perception and production in two languages” (LESHCHENKO DOTSSENKO, DOTSSENKO, 2018, p. 1040).

*“-Bonjour, la plouc!  
-Bonjour, la plouc!  
-Bonjour, la...  
-Bonjour!  
-What is "la plouc"?"  
-Oh, um... It's a little term of endearment, like, um, mon petit chou, la plouc...  
Bonjour.”*

This example shows that the context is very important. The heroes exchange this utterance between each other, while Emily, who is addressed, has no understanding of the term.

## Conclusion

The presented study focused on the analysis of the CS lines in the American Netflix series, *Emily in Paris*. We have analyzed the reasons for CS motivation and its conversational functions. Based on the analysis, we can make further conclusion. In the series lines, intrasentential CS prevailed to reduce social distance with viewers and make them relatable to the French atmosphere. The main heroine struggling to speak French seemed more natural in the given surroundings. Most of the code-switched constituents were phrases, consisting of nouns, basic verbs and interjections to refer to present-day situational language use. The function which was common among the CS inclusions was personalization in order to achieve successful communication. Regarding examples from a popular series, we may conclude that the modern language is dynamic and creative, so speakers need to adapt how to use given linguistic resources. The English speakers, who are unable to speak French fluently, watching the series, will understand most of the CS examples, as they are usually doubled by the English to express the main heroine’s confusion and inability to express clearly in French. It is recommended that further research of CS in series language will be made to examine speaker’s intentions in a larger sample of inclusions, as well as their syntactic structure, semantics, and psychological motivation.

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