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CODE-SWITCHING IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG FORMER IISMA STUDENTS AT UC CHILE (A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS)

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Abstract: This study examines the use of Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching among former Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) students at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (UC Chile). It aims to identify the types of code-switching employed, analyze their communicative functions, and explain how such practices support intercultural communication and adaptation in a Spanish-speaking academic environment. This research adopts a qualitative approach within the framework of interactional sociolinguistics and intercultural communicative competence. The findings reveal that intra-sentential switching is the most dominant type, indicating a high level of multilingual competence among the participants. Code-switching serves several key functions, including clarification, solidarity and identity marking, and emphasis. Among these, clarification is the most frequent, reflecting the need to maintain mutual understanding in a multilingual environment. Furthermore, code-switching supports intercultural communication by facilitating interactional flexibility, enhancing cultural awareness, and enabling speakers to adapt to different communicative contexts. In conclusion, code-switching is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a strategic communicative resource that plays a significant role in intercultural adaptation. This study contributes to sociolinguistic and intercultural communication research by highlighting the importance of trilingual code-switching in non-English-speaking academic settings.

Keywords: *Code-switching; Intercultural Communication; IISMA; Multilingualism; Sociolinguistics*

INTRODUCTION

In its broadest sense, intercultural refers to situations in which individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into contact and interact, bringing with them distinct systems of values, beliefs, practices, and ways of meaning-making. These interactions are shaped not only by national cultures but also by linguistic, social, and educational experiences that influence how individuals perceive and interpret the world (Hall, 1976; Jackson, 2014).

As global mobility increases, intercultural encounters have become a routine aspect of everyday

life, particularly in educational settings where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds share common academic spaces. Building upon this concept, intercultural communication concerns the process through which people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds exchange meanings and negotiate understanding in interaction. It encompasses not only the use of language but also the ability to recognize cultural differences, interpret culturally embedded meanings, and adjust communicative behavior in response to varying sociocultural norms (Jackson, 2014; Samovar et al., 2017).

In this sense, effective intercultural communication requires more than grammatical or lexical competence; it involves sensitivity to context, awareness of cultural perspectives, and adaptability in communication practices. In an era of increasing global academic mobility, communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries has become an integral part of students' educational experiences. Intercultural communication encompasses interactions among individuals who bring different cultural backgrounds, linguistic repertoires, and social norms into a shared communicative space. Such interactions require more than grammatical competence; they demand the ability to interpret culturally embedded meanings, negotiate differences, and adapt communicative behavior to diverse sociocultural expectations (Samovar et al., 2017). Within international higher education contexts, intercultural communication plays a crucial role as students engage daily with peers and lecturers from various cultural traditions. Participation in academic discussions, collaborative projects, and informal social interactions often involves navigating unfamiliar communicative styles, values, and norms. Consequently, students in international mobility programs must develop communicative strategies that enable them to manage linguistic diversity while fostering mutual understanding and effective interaction in multicultural academic environments (Deardorff, 2015).

Within intercultural communication studies, intercultural pragmatics highlights how speakers use language strategically to achieve mutual understanding across cultural boundaries. Jackson (2014) emphasizes that language use in intercultural encounters is closely linked to identity and meaning-making, as speakers draw on available linguistic resources to manage interaction, express stance, and align with others. This perspective suggests that linguistic choices in intercultural contexts are not neutral, but socially and culturally motivated.

Intercultural communication also involves various intercultural phenomena, such as accommodation, identity negotiation, and multilingual language practices. These phenomena emerge as individuals adapt their communication to different cultural expectations, social relationships, and power dynamics (Giles, 1973; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). In academic settings where participants come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, language alternation becomes a prominent

feature of interaction.

To understand such language practices, sociolinguistics offers a relevant analytical framework, as it examines how language use is shaped by social context, identity, and interactional goals (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). One key sociolinguistic phenomenon in multilingual communication is code-switching, commonly defined as the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation or utterance (Poplack, 1980). Research over the past decade has consistently shown that code-switching is a systematic and meaningful practice used to negotiate meaning, express identity, and manage social relationships, rather than a sign of linguistic deficiency (Gardner-Chloros, 2023).

Beyond this basic definition, code-switching can also be understood as a systematic and rule-governed linguistic practice, rather than random mixing. It occurs when speakers draw on their full linguistic repertoire to achieve specific communicative purposes. As noted by Gardner-Chloros (2023), code-switching reflects speakers' ability to navigate multiple linguistic systems and to select the most appropriate linguistic resources depending on context, interlocutor, and communicative intent.

From a structural perspective, code-switching may occur at different levels of linguistic organization, including within a sentence (intra-sentential), between sentences (inter-sentential), or through the insertion of tags and discourse markers (tag-switching) (Poplack, 1980). These forms demonstrate varying degrees of linguistic complexity, with intra-sentential switching often requiring a higher level of grammatical competence in more than one language.

From a functional perspective, code-switching serves multiple communicative and social purposes. It can be used to clarify meaning, manage conversational flow, emphasize particular ideas, express emotions, or signal group identity and solidarity. In multilingual settings, speakers often switch languages to accommodate interlocutors, negotiate understanding, or fill lexical gaps when certain expressions are more accessible in one language than another.

Importantly, code-switching is also closely tied to identity construction and intercultural positioning. Speakers may strategically shift between languages to align themselves with particular cultural groups, display membership, or navigate social relationships. In intercultural communication contexts, code-switching becomes not only a linguistic choice but also a meaning-making resource that reflects speakers' awareness of cultural norms and communicative expectations.

Research over the past decade has consistently shown that code-switching is a systematic and meaningful practice used to negotiate meaning, express identity, and manage social relationships, rather than a sign of linguistic deficiency (Gardner-Chloros, 2023).

Studies in multilingual contexts indicate that speakers employ different types of code-switching—such as intersentential, intrasentential, and tag switching—depending on interactional

needs and interlocutors (Poplack, 1980). In environments where more than two languages are present, code-switching becomes more complex and functions as a key communicative strategy for managing understanding and social alignment (Albirini, 2016; Sánchez, 2020).

Indonesia is a linguistically diverse country where multilingualism is part of everyday communication. Many Indonesians speak local languages and Bahasa Indonesia, while English is learned as a foreign language and increasingly used in academic and global contexts. This linguistic situation encourages frequent code-switching, particularly between Indonesian and English, which has become common in educational and professional discourse (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Dewirahmadanirwati & Aditiawarman, 2023). In this context, English often functions as a lingua franca, enabling communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The use of English as a lingua franca is also evident among Indonesian students participating in international mobility programs such as the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA). While Indonesian remains dominant in interactions among fellow Indonesian students, English is primarily used in academic communication with international peers and lecturers. In non-English-speaking host countries, this linguistic dynamic is further enriched by the presence of the local language, creating multilingual interactional spaces (Nur'aini & Fitriana, 2024).

One of IISMA's partner institutions, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (UC Chile), provides such a multilingual environment. As a leading research university with a diverse academic community, UC Chile primarily uses Spanish, while English functions as an international academic language (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2023). Former IISMA students at UC Chile therefore engage in daily interactions that involve Indonesian, English, and Spanish, resulting in trilingual code-switching practices in both academic and social contexts. These practices allow students to negotiate meaning, maintain relationships, and adapt to intercultural situations.

Despite growing attention to multilingualism and code-switching in recent studies, research that specifically examines trilingual code-switching among Indonesian students in non-English-speaking study-abroad contexts remains limited. Existing studies tend to focus on bilingual code-switching or English as a lingua franca without sufficiently addressing how Indonesian students navigate multiple languages simultaneously in intercultural academic environments (Hamzah, 2017; Dewirahmadanirwati & Aditiawarman, 2023). Moreover, few studies integrate sociolinguistic perspectives with intercultural communication competence to explain how language alternation supports intercultural adaptation.

To address this gap, this study focuses on multilingual code-switching among former IISMA students at UC Chile. The study is theoretically oriented toward interactional sociolinguistics and

intercultural communicative competence, which together provide a coherent framework for understanding language alternation as both a communicative strategy and an intercultural resource. By examining how students switch between Indonesian, English, and Spanish in real interactional contexts, this research is intended to contribute to sociolinguistic and intercultural communication studies, particularly within the context of Indonesian student mobility in non-English-dominant academic settings.

This study seeks to examine how former IISMA students at UC Chile use Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching across academic, daily, and social interactions, including the forms that emerge in these contexts. It also investigates the reasons behind their use of code-switching and how this practice supports communication and adaptation in a Spanish-speaking environment.

This study aims to describe the use and forms of Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching in academic, daily, and social contexts. In addition, it seeks to identify the factors underlying the use of code-switching and to explain how it supports communication and intercultural adaptation among former IISMA students at UC Chile.

Theoretically, this study contributes to sociolinguistic and intercultural communication research by providing empirical insight into trilingual code-switching in a non-English-speaking study-abroad context. It extends existing studies by examining how Indonesian students strategically use multiple languages to negotiate meaning, identity, and social relationships. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for educational institutions and international program organizers by highlighting the role of multilingual strategies in facilitating communication and adaptation. These findings may inform the development of intercultural communication training and support systems for students in global mobility programs.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how former IISMA students at UC Chile use multilingual code-switching (Indonesian–English–Spanish) in intercultural communication. Qualitative research is an approach that aims to understand social phenomena by examining meanings, experiences, and language use from participants' perspectives rather than measuring variables numerically. Qualitative research is suitable for this study because it allows an in-depth understanding of language practices, motivations, and social contexts (Creswell, 2018). The study focuses on understanding the forms, patterns, and functions of code-switching in authentic communicative situations, as well as the sociocultural factors influencing students' language choices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Code-Switching Types Used in Intercultural Communication among Former Iisma Students at UC Chile

a. Tag Switching

Tag-switching refers to the insertion of a tag, discourse marker, or filler from one language into an utterance that is otherwise entirely structured in another language (Poplack, 1980). Tags are syntactically independent elements, meaning they do not disrupt the grammatical structure of the sentence. Because of their detachable nature, tag-switches are considered structurally simple and require minimal grammatical integration between languages.

In multilingual interactions, tag-switching often appears in the form of expressions such as "you know," "right," "okay," or culturally specific discourse particles inserted into sentences spoken in another language. Although structurally minor, tag-switching remains analytically significant as it signals the presence of multilingual alternation within discourse.

In the present dataset, five instances of tag-switching were identified across the participants' interactions. These examples mainly involve discourse markers, agreement particles, and vocative expressions originating from Spanish or Chilean Spanish.

Data 1 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*Yeah, sí po, that's true*." (sí po) (Appendix A, R1–Q6–CS9)

In this excerpt, Respondent 1 inserts the Chilean discourse marker "sí po" into an English sentence. The sentence remains grammatically complete without the insertion ("Yeah, that's true"), indicating that the Spanish element does not integrate syntactically into the clause.

The function of "*sí po*" is pragmatic rather than structural. In Chilean Spanish, it expresses emphatic agreement and shared understanding. Its presence suggests that the respondent maintains cultural alignment and emotional nuance even while speaking English. According to Poplack (1980), such discourse markers qualify as tag-switching because they are syntactically detachable and can be inserted freely without altering grammatical construction.

Data 2 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*I don't know the word, weón*." (weón) (Appendix A, R1–Q6–CS10)

Here, Respondent 1 inserts the Chilean slang vocative "weón" at the end of an English sentence. The clause remains structurally intact if the word is removed. The vocative functions as a relational and identity marker, signaling intimacy and informal peer interaction. It does not form part of the grammatical structure of the sentence but operates at the discourse level.

Poplack (1980) categorizes vocatives and discourse particles as tag-switching because they are syntactically peripheral and easily transferable across languages.

Data 3 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*Sí.*" (sí) (Appendix A, R2–Q2–CS3)

This excerpt shows a standalone agreement marker. The Spanish "sí" functions independently and is not grammatically integrated into an English clause.

Its use reflects automatic retrieval of the speaker's Spanish repertoire in interaction. The switch occurs at the discourse level rather than within clause structure. As explained by Poplack (1980), agreement markers and interjections are typical examples of tag-switching due to their syntactic independence.

Data 4 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*Claro*." (claro) (Appendix A, R2–Q2–CS3)

Similar to the previous example, "claro" operates as a pragmatic agreement marker. It does not form part of a bilingual syntactic construction but stands independently as a discourse-level element. The recurrence of Spanish agreement markers across respondents strengthens the argument that tag-switching in this dataset is systematic rather than incidental.

Data 5 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"*Sipo*." (sipo) (Appendix B, R4–Q5–CS2)

Respondent 4 uses "sipo" as a reaction marker. The word is syntactically independent and does not interact with clause structure. Its function is purely pragmatic, signaling informal affirmation. The repetition of this Chilean discourse marker across participants indicates identity continuity and pragmatic alignment in intercultural interaction.

The structural analysis of the identified excerpts shows that all instances classified as tag-switching are consistent with the framework proposed by Shana Poplack (1980). According to Poplack, tag-switching involves the insertion of syntactically independent elements—such as discourse markers, interjections, or vocatives—into an utterance without

affecting its grammatical structure.

In the analyzed data, the switched elements (sí, claro, sí po, sipo, and weón) are structurally detachable from the host clause. When removed, the English sentence remains grammatically complete, indicating that the inserted items do not participate in clause construction. The switches occur at the discourse level and do not involve grammatical integration between languages.

Across the excerpts, a consistent structural pattern is observed. The switched elements appear as peripheral insertions and do not trigger syntactic restructuring. This uniformity supports their classification as tag-switching rather than intra-sentential or inter-sentential switching. Therefore, based on structural criteria and in alignment with Poplack's (1980) typology, the identified data are accurately categorized as tag-switching.

b. Intra-Sentential Switch

Based on the structural analysis of the data, intra-sentential switching appears as the most dominant type of code-switching among the participants. According to Poplack (1980), intra-sentential switching occurs when elements from two languages are combined within the same sentence or clause, requiring grammatical integration between the matrix language and the embedded language.

In the analyzed data, ten instances of intra-sentential switching were identified, making it the most dominant structural type among the participants. These examples involve the grammatical embedding of lexical items or phrases from Spanish, English, or Indonesian into the clause structure of another language.

Data 1 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*Yeah, should I go to you ahora*?" (**ahora**) (Appendix A, R1–Q2–CS3)

In this excerpt, Respondent 1 inserts the Spanish adverb *ahora* into an English clause. The word occupies the syntactic position of a time adverb within the sentence. The grammatical structure of the English clause remains intact, and the Spanish lexical item functions as part of the clause rather than as a separate unit.

According to Poplack (1980), intra-sentential switching occurs when elements from two languages are combined within the same sentence, requiring grammatical integration. Since

ahora is structurally embedded inside the English clause, this example qualifies as intra-sentential switching.

Data 2 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*What did you guys do today en la cocina*?" (**en la cocina**) (Appendix A, R1–Q2–CS4)

In this sentence, the Spanish prepositional phrase *en la cocina* is inserted into an English interrogative clause. The phrase functions as an adverbial modifier of place and fills a syntactic slot within the English sentence structure.

The Spanish element is grammatically integrated into the clause rather than forming a separate sentence. Based on Poplack's (1980) structural criteria, this type of embedding within a clause is categorized as intra-sentential switching

Data 3 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*No sé the word*." (**No sé**) (Appendix A, R2–Q4–CS5)

Here, the Spanish verb phrase *no sé* is directly followed by the English noun phrase *the word*. The two linguistic systems operate within a single clause, with the English phrase functioning as the complement of the Spanish verb. Because the switch occurs inside the clause boundary and both languages are syntactically interdependent, this example clearly demonstrates intra-sentential switching under Poplack's (1980) classification.

Data 4 – Respondent 3 (R3)

"*No entiendo this concept*." (**No entiendo**) (Appendix A, R3–CS1)

In this excerpt, the Spanish verb phrase *no entiendo* functions as the predicate, while the English noun phrase *this concept* serves as its object. The object complements the verb structurally, forming one unified clause. The switch does not occur at sentence boundaries but within the clause itself. This grammatical integration reflects the structural complexity described by Poplack (1980) as intra-sentential switching.

Data 5 – Respondent 3 (R3)

"I *love you dan aku cinta kamu*." (**dan aku cinta kamu**) (Appendix A, R3–CS2)

In this example, the Indonesian conjunction *dan* introduces a second clause within the same sentence. The sentence combines English and Indonesian elements in one syntactic structure.

Although the sentence contains two clauses, the switching occurs within a single

sentence unit rather than between separate turns. The coordination of clauses within one sentence aligns with Poplack's (1980) definition of intra-sentential switching.

Data 6 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"*Don't worry, I can speak Spanish a little*." (**a little bit**) (Appendix A, R4–CS4)

The English adjective *a little* is embedded at the end of an English clause and functions as a complement modifying the verb phrase. The sentence remains grammatically coherent, and the inserted element occupies a syntactic position inside the clause. Since the switch occurs within the clause boundary and involves grammatical integration, this case is classified as intra-sentential switching (Poplack, 1980).

Data 7 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"*Oh my God, it's cero grados today*." (**cero grados**) (Appendix A, R4–CS6)

In this excerpt, the Spanish noun phrase *cero grados* replaces what would normally be expressed in English as "zero degrees." The inserted phrase functions as the complement of the verb *is* within the English clause. The Spanish phrase is structurally integrated and fulfills a syntactic requirement of the sentence. Therefore, based on Poplack's (1980) structural typology, this example represents intra-sentential switching.

Data 8 – Respondent 5 (R5)

"*Apakah kita harus pergi ke El Banyo*?" (**El Banyo**) (Appendix A, R5–CS2)

In this case, the Spanish noun phrase *El Banyo* is embedded within an Indonesian interrogative sentence. It functions as the object of the preposition *ke*. The Spanish element is syntactically integrated into the Indonesian structure and does not stand independently. Following Poplack's (1980) framework, this constitutes intra-sentential switching.

Data 9 – Respondent 6 (R6)

"*I'm so muy… I'm muy muy cansado*." (**muy / muy cansado**) (Appendix A, R6–CS1)

This example demonstrates multiple Spanish insertions into an English clause. The Spanish adverb *muy* and adjective *cansado* function together to express intensity and state. They occupy positions that are grammatically required within the sentence. Because the switching occurs within the clause and involves lexical integration rather than sentence boundary shifting, it is categorized as intra-sentential switching according to Poplack (1980).

Data 10 – Respondent 6 (R6)

"*Pero yo tengo presentation alas 250*." (**presentation**) (Appendix A, R6–CS3)

In this example, the Spanish clause frame *pero yo tengo* incorporates the English noun *presentation* as its direct object. The English lexical item fulfills the syntactic role required by the Spanish verb *tengo*.

This structural embedding within a single clause demonstrates grammatical integration across languages. Therefore, this example fits the definition of intra-sentential switching as proposed by Poplack (1980). Across these excerpts, the common structural characteristic is the grammatical embedding of lexical items or phrases from one language into the clause structure of another language. The switches do not occur at sentence boundaries, nor do they function merely as discourse markers. Instead, the inserted elements occupy syntactic positions such as object, complement, or modifier within the clause.

The dominance of intra-sentential switching in the dataset suggests that the participants possessed sufficient bilingual or multilingual competence to manipulate multiple grammatical systems simultaneously. This finding supports Poplack's (1980) argument that intra-sentential switching requires a higher level of structural control compared to tag-switching or inter-sentential switching.

Therefore, based on structural criteria and consistent grammatical integration across participants R1–R6, the identified instances are accurately classified as intra-sentential switching.

c. Inter-Sentential Switching

According to Poplack (1980), inter-sentential switching occurs when a language shift takes place at clause or sentence boundaries. Each clause or sentence remains grammatically complete in its own linguistic system, and the switch does not require internal syntactic integration. In this study, ten instances of inter-sentential switching were identified across the respondents' interactions. These switches occur at clause or sentence boundaries, where each segment remains grammatically complete within its respective language system.

Data 1 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*We were cooking together pero no sabemos la palabra*." (pero no sabemos la palabra) (Appendix A, R1–Q2–CS5)

In this excerpt, the first clause is produced in English ("We were cooking together"),

followed by a Spanish clause ("pero no sabemos la palabra"). Both clauses are grammatically complete within their respective linguistic systems. The switch occurs at the clause boundary, and the Spanish clause stands independently in terms of syntax. According to Poplack's (1980) classification, this boundary-level shift qualifies as inter-sentential switching.

Data 2 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"*Oh my God, ¿qué es esto*?" ***(¿qué es esto*?**) (Appendix A, R1–Q2–CS6)

Here, the English expression "Oh my God" is followed by a complete Spanish interrogative clause "*¿qué es esto*?". The Spanish sentence is grammatically independent and structurally complete. Because the switch occurs between two distinct sentence units rather than within a single clause, this example fits the category of inter-sentential switching (Poplack, 1980).

Data 3 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*No entiendo, can you explain again*?" (**can you explain again?**) (Appendix A, R2–Q1–CS1)

In this example, the Spanish clause "*No entiendo*" is followed by the English clause "can you explain again?". Each clause maintains its grammatical integrity and could stand alone as a complete sentence. The language shift occurs at the clause boundary, without syntactic embedding. Therefore, this instance is classified as inter-sentential switching.

Data 4 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*Quiero esto, this one*." (**this one**) (Appendix A, R2–Q5–CS6)

The Spanish clause "*Quiero esto*" is followed by the English phrase "this one," which functions as a clarifying independent unit. The initial clause is structurally complete in Spanish, and the English segment forms a separate unit of meaning. Since the shift occurs after a completed clause, this example aligns with Poplack's (1980) definition of inter-sentential switching.

Data 5 – Respondent 2 (R2)

"*Es difícil, but I try*." (**but I try**) (Appendix A, R2–Q6–CS7)

In this excerpt, the Spanish clause "Es difícil" is followed by the English clause "but I try." Both clauses are grammatically complete and operate within their respective language systems. The switch occurs at the conjunction boundary between two independent clauses. As

no internal syntactic integration occurs, this example represents inter-sentential switching.

Data 6 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"*Can I get this? ¿Cuánto for this*?" (**¿Cuánto for this?**) (Appendix A, R4–CS1)

This example contains two interrogative sentences: one in English and the following in Spanish. Each sentence is structurally complete and independent. The language shift occurs between two separate sentences, which is a prototypical case of inter-sentential switching according to Poplack (1980).

Data 7 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"*Hi Leon, ¿cómo estás*?" (***¿cómo estás*?**) (Appendix A, R4–CS2)

In this excerpt, the English greeting "Hi Leon" is followed by a complete Spanish question "*¿cómo estás*?". The Spanish clause functions independently and is grammatically complete. The switch takes place at the boundary between two sentence units, fulfilling the criteria for inter-sentential switching.

Data 8 – Respondent 5 (R5)

"*adonde vas, dimana kamu pergi*?" (***dimana kamu pergi*?**) (Appendix A, R5–CS1)

The first clause "*adonde vas*" is grammatically complete in Spanish, while the second clause "*dimana kamu pergi*?" is grammatically complete in Indonesian. Both could stand independently as full interrogative sentences. Because the shift occurs at the clause boundary and involves two syntactically independent structures, this case is categorized as inter-sentential switching (Poplack, 1980).

Data 9 – Respondent 6 (R6)

"*Donde estas? Gua lagi di rumah*." (***Gua lagi di rumah*.**) (Appendix A, R6–CS2)

This example consists of two separate sentences: the first in Spanish ("*Donde estas*?") and the second in Indonesian ("*Gua lagi di rumah*."). Each sentence is structurally complete and independent. The language shift clearly occurs at the sentence boundary, which is the defining characteristic of inter-sentential switching.

Data 10 – Respondent 6 (R6)

"*vamos, are you done*?" (**are you done?**) (Appendix A, R6–CS5)

In this excerpt, the Spanish imperative "*vamos*" is followed by the English interrogative clause "are you done?". The English clause is grammatically complete and independent. Since

the switch takes place between two clause-level units without syntactic integration, this example is categorized as inter-sentential switching (Poplack, 1980). The inter-sentential instances identified across Respondents 1–6 consistently demonstrate switching at clause or sentence boundaries. Each segment remains grammatically complete within its respective language system, and no internal syntactic embedding occurs.

In contrast to intra-sentential switching, which requires structural integration, inter-sentential switching reflects alternation between complete linguistic systems. This structural distinction confirms the accuracy of classification under Poplack's (1980) typology.

2. Social and Intercultural Functions of Code Switching

a. Social Functions of Code-Switching

To analyze the social motivations underlying code-switching in this study, this research adopts the interactional sociolinguistic framework proposed by John J. Gumperz (1982). Gumperz views code-switching not merely as alternation between linguistic systems, but as a communicative resource that conveys social meaning in interaction. Within this framework, language alternation functions as a contextualization cue, signaling how utterances should be interpreted in relation to speaker intention, relational stance, and conversational dynamics.

Gumperz (1982) identifies several interactional functions of code-switching, including: *Emphasis or emotional expression, Solidarity and group identity marking, Topic shift, Clarification or message qualification, Quotation, Reiteration for emphasis*.

1) Emphasis and Emotional Expression

This utterance occurs in a classroom context when reacting to unfamiliar content. The English exclamation "**Oh my God**" is immediately followed by the Spanish clause "¿***qué es esto?***" ("**what is this**?").

The emotional cue is located in the exclamatory structure. The speaker could have produced the entire sentence in English or Spanish. Instead, the alternation amplifies the reaction. The English phrase functions as an affective marker of surprise, while the Spanish clause grounds the reaction within the local academic environment.

The switch does not fill a lexical gap; both languages are available to the speaker. Therefore, the alternation operates as a contextualization cue marking emotional stance rather than informational necessity.

Data 1

"*Oh my God, it's cero grados today*." (R4 – CS6, see Appendix A)

Here, the speaker reacts to extreme weather conditions. The emotional marker "Oh my God" expresses shock or discomfort. The insertion of "***cero grados***" instead of "**zero degrees**" is not due to inability, as the speaker is proficient in English.

Instead, the Spanish phrase anchors the emotional reaction in the Chilean setting. It indexes lived experience in a Spanish-speaking environment. The switch adds local authenticity and reinforces intensity. From Gumperz's perspective, the alternation serves as a metaphorical signal: the emotional force of the utterance is heightened through the linguistic shift.

Data 2

"I love you dan *aku cinta kamu*." (R3 – CS2, see Appendix A)

This example demonstrates affective layering. The speaker repeats the same propositional meaning in two languages: English and Indonesian. The duplication is not corrective. Rather, it conveys nuanced emotional differentiation. The speaker explicitly states in the interview that each language conveys slightly different emotional intensity. This aligns with Gumperz's notion that code-switching can mark subtle interpersonal meaning. The repetition intensifies emotional sincerity and signals identity positioning across linguistic repertoires. Unlike clarification-based switching, this alternation adds affective depth rather than resolving misunderstanding.

Data 3

"*I'm so muy… I'm muy muy cansado*."

(R6 – CS1, see Appendix A)

This utterance occurs in casual speech. The speaker first begins in English ("I'm so…"), inserts the Spanish intensifier "***muy***," then completes the sentence in Spanish ("muy muy cansado").

The repetition of "***muy***" functions as exaggeration. The shift intensifies the expression of fatigue. The speaker could have said "**very very tired**," but instead uses Spanish emphasis markers.

This supports the interpretation that the switch functions emotionally rather than

structurally. The duplication and repetition mark heightened affect.

It is important to distinguish these examples from clarification-based switches such as: "*No entiendo, can you explain again*?" (R2 – Q1 – CS1)

That example signals comprehension breakdown and therefore belongs to **clarification**, not emphasis.

Similarly:

"*No sé the word*." (R2 – Q4 – CS5)

This clearly indicates lexical gap strategy. By excluding such data, this analysis avoids theoretical overextension.

2) Solidarity and Identity making

According to John J. Gumperz (1982), code-switching may function as a signal of group membership and shared identity. In bilingual interaction, speakers do not switch languages randomly. A switch can indicate alignment with a particular community, cultural background, or interpersonal relationship.

Data 1 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"We often mixed three languages when talking together. For example: '*Hola, ¿dónde estás?*' 'Gue lagi di sini.' 'Yeah, should I go to you *ahora*?'" (Appendix A, R1–Q2–CS1, CS2, CS3)

This sequence illustrates multilingual interaction among Indonesian peers. The alternation between Spanish, Indonesian, and English is not triggered by misunderstanding but reflects shared multilingual competence. The switching here functions as an in-group marker: all participants understand the three languages, and the alternation reinforces their collective IISMA identity.

The use of Spanish greetings within Indonesian-English interaction signals that Chilean linguistic elements have become part of their shared social repertoire. According to Gumperz, this type of switching indexes solidarity because it signals "we belong to the same multilingual group."

Data 2 – Respondent 1 (R1)

"Using their slang made us feel more adaptive and showed that we respected their culture." For example: "Yeah, ***sí po***, that's true." (Appendix A, R1–Q6–CS9)

Here, the insertion of "*sí po*" is not merely emphatic; it is identity alignment with Chilean speakers. The respondent explicitly states that using Chilean slang made them feel adaptive. The switch signals cultural accommodation and social closeness.

In Gumperz's framework, such switching functions as a contextualization cue that marks interpersonal alignment and solidarity with the host community.

Data 3 – Respondent 4 (R4)

"Hi Leon, ¿cómo estás?" (Appendix A, R4–CS2)

The English greeting followed by Spanish continuation functions socially rather than structurally. The switch to Spanish indexes recognition of the interlocutor's linguistic identity. It signals inclusion and willingness to engage within the local norm. This aligns with Gumperz's idea that switching may mark interpersonal positioning and relational negotiation.

3) Clarification

According to Gumperz (1982), code-switching may function as a strategy of clarification when speakers shift languages to ensure comprehension, restate meaning, or provide explanation. In this function, switching serves as a communicative repair mechanism that reduces ambiguity and facilitates mutual understanding.

Unlike solidarity, clarification is primarily cognitive rather than relational. The speaker switches language to make the message clearer, not necessarily to express identity or emotion.

Data 1

"Sometimes I said, 'No entiendo, can you explain again?'" (Appendix: R2–Q1–CS1)

In this excerpt, the speaker first produces the Spanish clause "*No entiendo*" ("I don't understand") and immediately switches to English: "can you explain again?". The switch occurs across clause boundaries (inter-sentential switching).

Data 2

"Sometimes I said, 'No sé the word.'" (Appendix: R2–Q4–CS5)

Here, the speaker combines Spanish ("*No sé*") and English ("the word") within a single clause (intra-sentential switching). The utterance occurs in the context of explaining vocabulary limitation.

Accord ing to Gumperz, conversational code-switching often appears at moments where speakers experience lexical search or communicative strain. The alternation here signals

a lexical gap. By switching to English to complete the utterance, the speaker maintains interactional flow while marking difficulty in retrieving the appropriate Spanish lexical item. The switch functions as clarification because it explicitly indexes expressive limitation and prevents communicative breakdown.

Data 3

"I would say, 'Quiero esto, this one.'" (Appendix: R2–Q5–CS6)

This utterance appears in an ordering situation. The speaker first produces the Spanish clause "*Quiero esto*" ("I want this"), followed by the English reinforcement "this one."

The second segment does not introduce new propositional content; instead, it reiterates the referent in another language. Within Gumperz's framework, this constitutes a repair strategy: the repetition across languages strengthens referential clarity. The alternation functions as a contextualization cue indicating that precision is required in the transactional exchange. Thus, the switch operates as clarification by reinforcing meaning and reducing potential ambiguity.

b. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was introduced by Michael Byram (1997) as a framework for understanding how individuals communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Unlike linguistic theories that primarily focus on grammatical structure or conversational function, ICC emphasizes the broader capacities required to interact in intercultural settings.

In this framework, successful communication depends not only on language proficiency but also on attitudes, interactional skills, and cultural understanding.

The first statement of the problem asks:

How do former IISMA students at UC Chile use Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching in academic, daily, and social interactions, and what forms of code-switching emerge in these contexts?

This question is primarily addressed through the structural classification of code-switching using Poplack's framework and the identification of interactional functions through Gumperz's theory. However, ICC becomes relevant when interpreting how these multilingual practices operate within a broader intercultural setting. While Poplack explains the forms

(inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching), and Gumperz explains the conversational functions, ICC helps explain what these practices reveal about the students' intercultural engagement.

The second statement of the problem asks:

Why do former IISMA students at UC Chile engage in Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching, and how does this practice support their communication and adaptation in a Spanish-speaking environment?

This question directly aligns with ICC. The reasons behind code-switching such as maintaining clarity, negotiating meaning, adapting to interlocutors, reducing misunderstanding, and facilitating social connection reflect the dimensions of interactional skills and attitudes described by Byram. When students switch languages to ensure comprehension, they demonstrate skills of interaction. When they attempt to use Spanish expressions or adapt to local norms, they demonstrate intercultural attitudes. When they show awareness of contextual appropriateness, they reflect knowledge of cultural context.

Thus, ICC provides the conceptual bridge between linguistic behavior and intercultural adaptation. The first research objective is:

To describe how former IISMA students at UC Chile use code-switching in academic, daily, and social domains, and to identify the forms of code-switching that appear.

This objective is fulfilled primarily through Poplack's structural typology and supported by Gumperz's functional analysis. ICC does not replace these analyses but complements them by explaining how multilingual practices operate within intercultural interaction.

The second research objective is:

To identify the factors behind students' use of multilingual code-switching and to explain how this practice supports their communication, adaptation, and management of challenges in a Spanish-speaking environment.

This objective directly requires an intercultural framework. ICC allows the writer to interpret code-switching not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a communicative strategy that facilitates adaptation, reduces barriers, and supports interaction in a multilingual academic and social environment. ICC does not duplicate the role of Poplack or Gumperz. Instead, it provides a broader interpretative framework that situates code-switching within

intercultural communication. Structurally, Poplack operates at the linguistic level. Functionally, Gumperz operates at the interactional level. Conceptually, Byram operates at the intercultural competence level. Together, the three frameworks create a coherent analytical progression: form → function → intercultural meaning.

R2 frames adaptation as part of learning:

"Because that is part of my learning process… it was impossible to speak 100% Spanish fluently within one month."

(Appendix A, R2–Q4)

Rather than expressing frustration or rejection, the respondent positions difficulty as natural and part of adaptation. Code-switching is described as necessary and constructive. This indicates acceptance of cultural and linguistic difference, which aligns with Byram's concept of intercultural openness.

R3 also highlights intentional engagement:

"*It allowed me to adjust my speech depending on my interlocutor's linguistic background*."

(Appendix A, R3–Q5)

This shows awareness of others' linguistic needs and willingness to accommodate. In Byram's terms, this reflects openness combined with relational sensitivity.

In this study, the author observes that code-switching serves as far more than a simple linguistic tool; it functions as a bridge for deeper social and emotional connection across participants. By blending languages, individuals demonstrate a remarkable openness toward using Spanish, even when their proficiency is limited, prioritizing connection over perfect grammar. This behavior reflects a deeply positive evaluation of linguistic adaptation, where participants see the ability to shift codes as a strength rather than a deficit.

Therefore, based on Byram's framework, the author concludes that code-switching in this study is supported by intercultural attitudes characterized by openness, curiosity, and readiness to engage in a Spanish-speaking environment.

1) Skills of Interaction

In Byram's framework, skills of interaction refer to the ability to manage communication in real-time intercultural encounters. This dimension includes the capacity to

negotiate meaning, respond to misunderstanding, adjust linguistic choices according to interlocutors, and maintain interaction despite linguistic limitations. In the context of former IISMA students at UC Chile, this competence is observable through patterned multilingual code-switching practices across academic, daily, and social domains.

Across the data, the author identifies three dominant interactional patterns: (1) clarification and negotiation of meaning, (2) strategic lexical substitution to maintain fluency, and (3) adaptive alignment with interlocutors' linguistic repertoires. These patterns align with Gumperz's social functions—particularly clarification, message qualification, and solidarity—while extending the explanation to intercultural competence.

A recurring pattern across participants is the use of inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching to immediately repair comprehension gaps. Rather than withdrawing from interaction when misunderstanding occurred, participants shifted languages to ensure clarity.

In social settings, this pattern appears in utterances such as "I'm so *muy*… I'm *muy muy cansado*" (R6) and "Ini difficult to explain" (R3). The switch enables continuity of speech. Instead of pausing or abandoning the utterance, the speaker completes the idea using the available linguistic resource.

This strategy demonstrates an important interactional skill: maintaining conversational flow. Participants do not treat languages as isolated systems but as complementary resources. The switching helps them remain engaged, responsive, and communicatively effective. In Gumperz's terms, such switches often function as clarification or message qualification. In Byram's framework, they reflect the ability to manage communicative constraints without disrupting social interaction.

This pattern also answers Research Question 1 regarding how code-switching appears in academic and daily domains. In academic contexts, as described by R2 and R6, switching occurred during presentations and discussions when technical vocabulary in Spanish was limited. In daily contexts, such as kitchens or stores, lexical substitution ensured practical survival. Therefore, code-switching emerges as a structured communicative response to multilingual demands rather than accidental mixing.

A third pattern concerns participants' sensitivity to interlocutors' linguistic competence. Switching often occurred in response to who was present in the interaction. R4 explains that if

Chilean peers did not fully understand English, he shifted to Spanish; if he lacked Spanish vocabulary, he inserted English. R5 reports that when speaking with the residencia staff who did not speak English, mixing Spanish facilitated comprehension. R6 notes that in serious academic contexts, he tried to remain fully in English out of respect, but switching still occurred when vocabulary limitations required it.

Opening greetings such as "*Buenos días* everyone" (R2) and "Hi Leon, *¿cómo estás*?" (R4) illustrate accommodation at the beginning of interaction. These switches function socially as solidarity markers (as discussed in the Gumperz section), but in the ICC framework they also demonstrate the ability to adjust language choice strategically depending on the communicative setting.

2) Knowledge of Cultural Context

Across the dataset, three consistent patterns emerge: (1) recognition of domain-specific language norms, (2) incorporation of culturally embedded expressions, and (3) awareness of cultural differences influencing communication style. These patterns align with Gumperz's social functions—particularly solidarity and clarification—while extending the explanation toward intercultural knowledge.

All participants demonstrate awareness that different domains required different linguistic behavior. Academically, English was dominant because courses were delivered in English. However, several respondents note that Spanish remained present in materials, peer discussions, or lecturer explanations.

R6 explains that although a class was conducted in English, materials and curriculum were written in Spanish. R2 describes a Financial Technology class fully conducted in Spanish, where he intentionally opened his presentation in Spanish before shifting to English for technical vocabulary.

This indicates not only adaptation, but understanding of academic expectations within UC Chile. The author observes that switching was not random; it reflected recognition of institutional norms. In serious academic contexts, R6 states that mixing too much English in Spanish class would not be polite. This awareness demonstrates knowledge of appropriate linguistic conduct according to setting.

Such knowledge directly addresses Research Question 1 regarding *how code-switching*

*appears across academic, daily, and social domain*s. The data show that language alternation is shaped by contextual expectations. Furthermore, this pattern supports Research Objective 1, which aims to describe usage across domains. The alternation reflects informed decisions grounded in contextual understanding rather than unconscious mixing.

A second strong pattern concerns the use of Chilean-specific expressions such as "*sí po*" and "*weón*" (R1–Q5–CS7; R1–Q5–CS8; R1–Q6–CS9; R1–Q6–CS10; R5–CS3). Participants explicitly mention learning these expressions from local friends and incorporating them into their own speech. R1 states that using such slang made them feel more adaptive and showed respect for local culture.

When viewed collectively, the data indicate that former IISMA students gradually developed contextual knowledge about: (1) which language is appropriate in academic versus informal settings, (2) how Chilean Spanish expresses agreement, emphasis, and familiarity, (3) how cultural norms shape expectations about politeness and inclusion, and how language choice influences social acceptance.

For Research Question 1, the findings show that forms of code-switching (*inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching*) appear differently depending on contextual knowledge of academic, social, and daily domains. The patterns are structured by awareness of setting and interlocutor.

For Research Question 2, the data demonstrate that students engage in code-switching because they understand that adaptation in a Spanish-speaking environment requires participation in local linguistic practices. Knowledge of cultural context enables them to use switching strategically to integrate socially and function effectively.

Regarding the Research Objectives, this section fulfills Objective 2 by identifying knowledge of local norms as one of the key factors behind multilingual code-switching. It shows that switching is not only a response to lexical limitation (*as seen in clarification*) nor solely a relational gesture (*as seen in solidarity*), but also evidence of developing intercultural awareness.

The author finds that knowledge of cultural context is reflected in participants' sensitivity to domain expectations, incorporation of culturally specific expressions, and explicit awareness of communication norms in Chile. These findings demonstrate that

multilingual code-switching among former IISMA students at UC Chile is supported not only by linguistic flexibility and interactional skill, but also by informed understanding of the host sociocultural environment.

CONCLUSION

This study explored Indonesian–English–Spanish code-switching among former IISMA students at UC Chile within a multilingual academic mobility context. By combining structural, interactional, and intercultural perspectives, the study demonstrates that code-switching functions as a meaningful communicative resource rather than as incidental language alternation.

The findings indicate that multilingual practices among the participants reflect strategic language management shaped by context, interlocutor, and communicative purpose. Code-switching emerges as a dynamic process through which students negotiate meaning, position identity, and maintain interactional flow across academic, daily, and social settings. Rather than signaling linguistic insufficiency, language alternation reveals communicative awareness and adaptability.

Furthermore, the study shows that multilingual code-switching operates within broader intercultural engagement. The participants' language choices reflect openness toward the host culture, sensitivity to contextual expectations, and the ability to navigate cross-cultural interaction in real time. Their practices illustrate how multilingual competence develops through lived experience and social participation in a Spanish-speaking environment.

Overall, this study highlights that code-switching in an international academic setting is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a socially and interculturally situated practice. It serves as a bridge between languages, identities, and cultural systems, enabling students to function effectively within complex communicative landscapes. The integration of structural and intercultural analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of how multilingual individuals construct meaning and belonging in transnational academic spaces.

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