

# Code-Switching in Facebook Chats in English among Thai EFL Students

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the patterns and reasons behind code switching (CS) in Facebook conversations among Thai students who are learning English as a language (EFL). The research was conducted with 40 final year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University in Thailand all of whom were enrolled in an English for Government and Business Purposes class. The study used a mixed method research design combining text analysis and semi structured interviews. The quantitative analysis revealed that the common CS patterns were switching from Thai to English (TH+E) and switching from English to Thai (E+TH) highlighting the prominence of English as a shared language. Qualitative insights uncovered the use of Thai particles to convey politeness and respect emphasized how CS is used to express group identity and revealed its use for location specific context and conveying complex ideas. This research offers an understanding of CS dynamics in communication shedding light on how language, culture and identity intersect in online interactions, among Thai EFL students.*

**Keywords: Code-Switching, Facebook chats, Thai EFL Students**

## Introduction

Language plays a role in expressing thoughts, emotions and perspectives. Effective communication relies on using the language(s) when interacting with individuals who share an understanding of that language. It becomes essential for people to be mindful of their partners language skills when engaging with those from backgrounds. In this context ‘background’ goes beyond national origins. Includes shared experiences and norms within specific social groups.

In today’s interconnected world the digital landscape has completely revolutionized how people communicate and express themselves. Online platforms and media have become spaces for linguistic interactions that transcend geographical boundaries ([Herring et al., 2013](#); [Crystal, 2011](#)). Among forms of communication Facebook chats stand out as spaces where individuals engage in conversations that often cross linguistic borders ([Thurlow & Poff 2013](#)). This study focuses on the phenomenon of code switching within Facebook chats among Thai students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The complex nature of these conversations involving both Thai, English and other languages provides a context to explore language usage and its underlying motivations.

The study of code switching, which refers to the transition between languages or linguistic codes within a single conversation has fascinated linguists and researchers for quite some time ([Auer, 1998](#); [Myers-Scotton, 2002](#)). However with the rise of communication this phenomenon has taken on dimensions ([Androutsopoulos, 2014](#); [Danet & Herring 2007](#)). This research aims to

investigate the patterns of code switching observed in Facebook chats among Thai students learning English as a language (EFL) as this group has become increasingly active in the sphere (Lee, 2016). Our objective is to analyze how these students use Thai and English languages in their Facebook chats. Furthermore we seek to explore the reasons behind their code switching behaviors and shed light on the choices they make when it comes to language use in discussions (Tagliamonte, 2012; Wei, 2018).

However there is a perception among the people when it comes to individuals who are proficient in English due to societal biases. In a society that predominantly uses one language Code Switching (CS) is often seen in a light and viewed as unnatural (Sangprem, 2015). The reason behind these attitudes towards CS is to protect the Thai identity. A previous study emphasized the importance of Thai language for unity, which has led to reluctance in embracing English as an official language (Rappa & Wee 2006). This helps explain why many Thai speakers of English feel hesitant to use English alone and consider code switching inappropriate when interacting with higher status individuals in situations.

Most of the research carried out in Thailand has primarily concentrated on patterns of code switching (CS) how often it is. People's attitudes, towards it in situations and, among different groups. These studies have shown that there are viewpoints regarding this form of communication.

The research has explored areas, including the field of education that encompasses ESL and bilingual classrooms (Kang & Lust 2019; Azlan & Narasuman 2013; Martin-Jones, 1995). It has also delved into service sectors, like airlines (Sraphothong, 2011) and hotels (Boonkongsaen, 1999). Furthermore it has extended its scope to platforms such as web chats and Facebook (Kongkerd, 2015; Shafie & Nayan 2013; Yiamkhamnuan, 2010; Lam, 2004).

Nevertheless, present research differs from these studies by focusing on a Thai university as the research environment. It involves Thai EFL students as participants. The main objective is to investigate the patterns of code switching in Facebook chats settings among Thai EFL students. Furthermore study aims to shed light on the underlying motivations that drive individuals to engage in code switching practices.

The significance of this research goes beyond studying language. Investigating the patterns of code switching, in Thai EFL students Facebook chats has implications. It helps us understand how language is used in environments, which can lead to the development of effective language education strategies and customized curricula that meet the specific communication needs of Thai learners (García & Wei, 2014; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). These insights can be utilized by EFL educators to create contextually relevant language instruction that aligns with the real life language practices observed in online interactions (Canagarajah, 2011).

This study aims to understand the complexities of code switching, in Facebook chats. To achieve this we are using a mixed method approach that combines text analysis and qualitative semi structured interviews (Braun & Clarke 2006; Creswell & Creswell 2017). We have selected 40 students who are not majoring in English at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, in Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand. Our participants come from majors and academic backgrounds providing a sample. By collecting and analyzing data rigorously our goal is to paint a picture of how Thai EFL students navigate the linguistic aspects of online communication (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

This study explores the phenomenon of code switching, in Facebook chats providing insights into how language's used in the digital age (Blommaert, 2010; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017). It is believed that the knowledge gained from this research will not enhance studies but also assist educators in meeting the language requirements of Thai EFL students, in a world that is becoming more interconnected (Kachru, 1986; Crystal, 2003).

### Research Objectives

1. To investigate the patterns of code switching in Facebook chats among Thai students learning English as a foreign language
2. To investigate the motivation of employing code switching in Facebook chats among Thai students learning English as a foreign language.

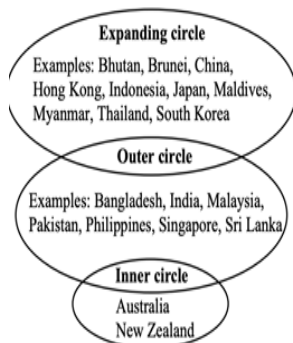
## Literature Review

English is used in forms, across regions of the world. The concept of ‘World Englishes’ or ‘New Englishes’ refers to these variations. Kachru’s concentric circles model categorizes the usage of English into three groups based on its prominence; the circle, outer circle and expanding circle.

In the described context English plays roles depending on circles. In the circle English serves as the language of a specific country. In the expanding circles English is used in contexts while the outer circle represents situations where English is employed as a language, in states influenced by English speaking nations. The expanding circle includes nations that although not colonized and without English as their language have embraced it as a language.

According to [Kachru \(1998\)](#) all three circles demonstrate that individuals who use English as a language feel a sense of ownership over it regardless of whether they adhere to its form or use localized variations. As a result each circle exhibits patterns of usage influenced by how English has spread and adapted to languages and cultures.

In the diverse region of Asia all three circles can be observed. Most Asian countries are categorized within the outer circle and expanding circle.



**Figure 1 Visualization of Three Circles representing the Variations of English Spoken in Regions of Asia (Adopted from Kachru’s Circle)**

The language’s presence in Southeast Asia can be traced back to the era of colonization by the American empires as noted by Chamcharatsri in 2013. In nations like the Philippines and Singapore colonial rule lasted for a period. Had a profound impact on their societal development. After gaining

independence these countries integrated English into their education systems, making it mandatory in official institutions. On the other hand, countries like Thailand and Japan were never directly governed by powers but had interactions with foreigners for purposes such as alliances, trade, entertainment, tourism and other connections. The introduction of English to these regions, where it’s not the language, has led to changes in how non native English speakers use the language within their local communities. As Crystal explained in 2000 non native speakers have adapted English vocabulary to fit patterns at phonetic lexical, syntactic and discourse levels while still following standard English patterns. These adaptations are tailored to situations within their communities.

As a result of this localization process, in Thailand’s context specifically Thai English (also known as Tenglish) incorporates elements of ‘Thainess’ into its structure. According to [Chutisilp \(1984\)](#), [Watkhaolarm \(2005\)](#) and [Trakulkasemsuk \(2012\)](#), there are characteristics of Thai English. These include incorporating social elements like using final particles to indicate the speaker’s gender and seniority as well as constructing phrases, like ‘khun + name’ when addressing someone. Thai English also involves translating Thai expressions word for word into English, such as idioms or fixed expressions and mixing Thai and English words together like ‘luuk Apple (ลูกแอปเปิ้ล)’ for a fruit apple.

## Code Switching

### Communication Methods, in Multilingualism

Multilingualism is valuable for institutions allowing individuals from backgrounds to communicate effectively both within and outside the institution. [Blommaert and Backus \(2013\)](#) propose the concept of ‘modes of multilingualism’ in Europe emphasizing communication rather than native language proficiency. According to [Backus et al. \(2013\)](#) achieving a level of language proficiency is not necessary in a business setting. Instead speakers should have language skills to communicate and understand others from cultural backgrounds. Therefore utilizing modes can enhance communication in various contexts. One such mode

is Code Switching (CS) which may occur in speech communities or even, among individuals living in officially monolingual societies where English serves as an additional language.

### Code Switching, on Social Platforms

The practice of alternating between languages or linguistic codes within a conversation, known as code switching, has become increasingly important in online communication especially on social media platforms. This section explores the growing body of literature that focuses on code switching in spaces.

#### Code Switching in Digital Communication:

The digital age has transformed the way people communicate by expanding language practices beyond boundaries ([Herring et al., 2013](#); [Crystal, 2011](#)). Code switching, which used to occur in face to face interactions has seamlessly transitioned into conversations ([Androusoopoulos, 2014](#); [Danet & Herring, 2007](#)). As users engage with an audience through media platforms the flexibility of code switching becomes apparent as it accommodates diverse linguistic repertoires ([Thurlow & Poff, 2013](#)).

**Linguistic Dynamics, on Social Media:** Social media platforms have introduced an era of diversity and creativity ([Tagliamonte, 2012](#)). On these platforms code switching goes beyond necessity; it serves to shape identities, foster social connections and convey subtle meanings ([Myers Scotton, 2002](#); [Auer, 1998](#)).

Social media users are skilled at blending languages and codes to create a linguistic landscape ([Blommaert, 2010](#)). When it comes to code switching in spaces researchers have identified various motivations and functions. One prevalent factor is the construction of identity, where users strategically use languages to align with online personas or group affiliations ([García & Wei, 2014](#)). Code switching is also used to express emotions and emphasize messages. The integration of emojis further enhances the range of communication ([Wei, 2018](#); [Danet & Herring 2007](#)).

The emergence of repertoires challenges traditional ideas about linguistic purity and standardization ([Cenoz & Gorter, 2011](#)). Social media users often draw from a range of languages and registers creatively blending them to suit the context

in which they are communicating ([Canagarajah, 2011](#)). This fluidity highlights how language evolves in the age ([Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017](#)).

### Facebook Group Chats; An Exploration of Code Switching

The phenomenon of code switching on social media platforms like Facebook extends beyond one on one conversations. In group settings such as group chats and discussion forums code switching takes on characteristics. Facebook's group features create an environment for users to engage in practices within a community of peers ([Danet & Herring 2007](#); [Tagliamonte, 2012](#)).

Within Facebook group chats individuals often employ code switching to accommodate the diversity among group members. These groups may comprise people from language backgrounds who share an interest or affiliation. Consequently code switching becomes a means to ensure communication within the group ([Androusoopoulos, 2014](#)).

The dynamics within Facebook group chats offer a context to explore patterns of code switching. The interaction, among group dynamics, common interests and the necessity to accommodate variety plays a significant role in the complex nature of code switching within these online communities.

This additional information sheds light on the context of Facebook group chats. How they facilitate the use of code switching practices, among users.

In this research study code switching (CS) is explored within the landscape of Facebook chats among Thai English, as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This serves as a contrasting environment compared to settings.

In the Thai university setting primary language used is Thai. However our study focuses on analyzing the interactions of Thai EFL students, who primarily communicate in English but also frequently incorporate code switching (CS) as a linguistic phenomenon. In this context English serves as a Lingua Franca, due to interactions. Similarly within Facebook chats and other digital platforms English takes on a role due to the nature of online communication. This research aims to explore the patterns of code switching involving Thai, English and emojis used by Thai EFL students in their conversations.

**Definitions**

**Code switching**

Code switching is commonly defined as the way of shifting between two or more languages within a conversation. This linguistic phenomenon can occur consciously or unconsciously. It involves switching between linguistic units of varying lengths. In words code switching can take place at the level of sentences within a single sentence or even, by swapping individual words or phrases throughout a conversation ([Grant & Nguyen, 2017](#)).

**Facebook Chats**

In this research, Facebook chats refer to the text based conversations that happen on the social media platform Facebook in the function of Group Chat of

GE02 class. These chats are usually informal. Also it can involve types of language use such as switching between languages or using specific jargon.

**Use of Code Switching**

There are reasons why individuals incorporate code switching into their speech to achieve purposes during social interactions. These motives can be broadly categorized as linguistic and psychological motivations ([Shin, 2010](#)). In a study conducted by [Malik \(1994\)](#) ten communicative functions of code switching were identified (Table 1). This current research aims to examine whether these ten reasons apply in the context of the Thai workplace or if interviewees provide motivations, for using code switching.

**Table 1 10 Motivations for Employing Code-Switching (based on Malik, 1994)**

No.	Reasons	Explanations
1	Lack of facility or looking for lexical compensation for equal translation ( <a href="#">Hoffman, 1991</a> )	When individuals are not familiar with the specific terminology that aligns with their intentions or struggle to immediately locate the appropriate word in another language, they resort to code-switching in such instances ( <a href="#">Azlan &amp; Narasumanb, 2013</a> ).
2	Lack of registral competence	Encountering challenges in finding suitable vocabulary within the desired language
3	Mood of speaker	This observation is especially evident in individuals who can speak two languages fluently. They often discover that using words from a language is effortless and time saving, in specific circumstances ( <a href="#">Choy, 2011</a> ).
4	Emphasis on a certain point	To make sure that the audience focuses on the issue at hand it is important to employ strategies that capture their attention and keep them engaged.
5	Habitual expressions	Expressions such as: greetings and apologies
6	Semantic significance	People sometimes use code switching to convey their perspective, intention and emotional state while also sharing social information ( <a href="#">Gal, 1979</a> as cited in <a href="#">Azlan and Narasuman, 2013</a> ).
7	To show identity with a group	Code switching is a signal that someone belongs to a group and shares common traits with that group. According to <a href="#">Auer (2005)</a> code switching has a sense of prestige that becomes apparent through peoples attitudes. Considering this if someone can skillfully incorporate code switching into their conversations they may be seen as knowledgeable. Could receive reactions, from their conversation partners or interlocutors
8	To address a different audience	People often switch between languages when they share a set of languages in situations related to formality and location
9	Pragmatic reasons	People frequently transition between languages when they find themselves in situations where the choice of language depends on factors such as formality and location
10	To attract attention	To capture the reader’s attention or captivate their interest.



## Language, Identity and Ideology

[Myers-Scotton \(1993\)](#) introduced the concept of the ‘markedness’ model to help understand why people switch between languages. According to this model each language used within a community is associated with roles and categories. It suggests that when people switch between languages they must have a shared understanding of the implied meanings behind each language or code. Without this shared understanding, conversation partners might struggle to grasp the intended messages conveyed through language choices ([Nilep, 2006](#)).

In terms when individuals belong to the group they often share a common language or way of communicating. This means that when they interact with each other using their shared language they are more likely to understand and respond appropriately to each other’s messages. Group identity goes beyond perspectives and includes a deep sense of belonging within a specific group. This identity becomes evident through interactions ([Bucholtz & Hall, 2004](#)). Is closely connected with how language’s used and communication patterns, within a particular speech community.

Some experts argue that the structure of institutions can greatly influence how individuals communicate within their group because each institution has its set of norms and culture ([Miller, 2015](#)).

In contrast, communicative constitution theorists take an approach when studying communication. They believe that communication is influenced by interactions between individuals. According to [Miller \(2015\)](#) these theorists argue that communication processes are shaped through interactions.

## Methodology

The research involves a group of 40 final year students, from Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University in Thailand who enrolled in English for Government and Business Purposes class (GE02). The participants are from various majors except English.

To thoroughly investigate the patterns of code switching in Facebook chats among Thai students learning English as a foreign language, this study adopts a mixed method research design. It focuses on the usage of Thai, English and other languages. This

approach combines text analysis with semi structured interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of why and how code switching occurs in this digital context.

For selection this study employs sampling. Purposive sampling is a random method that works well when researchers aim to understand specific characteristics, behaviors or experiences within a targeted population ([Creswell & Creswell 2017](#)).

By utilizing sampling in this study’s context , participants who are most relevant to the research objectives are selected. The aim is to gather insights, from Thai students learning English as a language who engage in Facebook chats and exhibit code switching behavior particularly switching between Thai and English languages.

## Quantitative Text Analysis

### Data Collection

A two-week data collection period is dedicated to gather data for the study. During this time, chat conversations from a group chat on Facebook utilized by the participants are collected. The collected chat data will encompass instances of code switching, which involve switching between the Thai and English languages.

### Facebook Corpus in this Study

In this research, a Facebook corpus served as the primary data source. The data was obtained over a period of three months by compiling the written posts and comments found on the participants’ Facebook profiles. This collection consisted of 74 texts, all accompanied by types of additional features. A detailed examination of the aspects within the Facebook dataset will be presented in the following chapter.

The information gathered from the participants’ Facebook group chats played a role in addressing our research question, which aimed to understand how Thai individuals in this study utilize both English and other languages in their interactions on Facebook. Within the Facebook platform users have access to a ‘Facebook Group Chat’ feature that allows them to express their thoughts, ask questions and communicate.

**Text Analysis:** Quantitative analysis will be conducted to investigate the motivation of employing code switching. This analysis involves counting and categorizing instances of code switching, observing the frequency and patterns of language switches between Thai, English and other possible languages.

### Qualitative Semi Structured Interviews

**Participant Selection;** The participants, for the structured interviews will be chosen from a group of 40 students enrolling GE02 class at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University in Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand who are not majoring in English. A subset of participants are selected using a purposive sampling method. Specifically out of the 40 students a total of 10 participants will be chosen for the interviews. These individuals were selected based on their code switching behaviors observed during their conversations. By focusing on this group we aim to delve into the reasons and complexities behind their code switching practices gaining valuable insights into this phenomenon among Thai EFL students, on Facebook.

### Data Collection Interview

Interviews are a widely used method to gather information in qualitative research. By having an interaction with the interviewee either face to face or over the phone we can easily address any issues or clarify unclear statements through further probing and discussion (Dörnyei, 2007). For this study, an approach using structured interviews was adopted to explore participants' reasons towards using code switching, in their Facebook settings.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the interviews will be analyzed using analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes and patterns are categorized related to the motivations and functions of code switching providing insights into the underlying reasons that drive code switching behaviors.

### Findings

This section presents the results that address research question 1 which focuses on the language

choices made by participants, on Facebook chats. Based on the review of existing literature and analysis of the Facebook corpus regarding language choice the findings are categorized into 6 main patterns.

Several instances of code switching were identified in the participants' Facebook chats. The following table displays the codes used for code switching in their updates along with their definitions and numerical counts indicating how frequently each language feature was used.

**Table 2 Code-Switching Codes found in Facebook Chats**

Codes	Definitions of the codes	Total
TH+E	Thai followed by English	26
E+TH	English followed by Thai	21
E+555	English and number 555 pronounced as hahaha in Thai	15
E+TH+555	English followed by Thai and number 555 pronounced as hahaha in Thai	7
TH+OL	Other languages or dialect followed by Thai	3
E+TH+OL	A mixture of English, Thai and other language	2

According to Table 1 the majority of participants primarily code switched using TH+E pattern (with 26 instances) and tended to use E+TH pattern (with 21 instances) (as demonstrated in example 1 and 2 below respectively). Since English is widely used as a language individuals who do not share the native language often turn to contact languages, on social platforms like Facebook (Jenkins et al., 2011). As a result Thai participants utilized English as a means of communicating with their audience, which consists of people from different backgrounds.

**Extract 1:** A substantial portion of the Code-Switching (CS) instances, specifically 26 out of the total 74 CS texts, adhered to Pattern 1, characterized by TH+E or Thai followed by English.

Pattern 1	TH+E	Thai followed by English
Examples	บอกไว้เลยว่า	not all อยากไป so much teacher ไม่แน่ใจเลย friends ไม่รู้ว่าจะ (why) P Fah what are you doing?

TH+E (Thai followed by English): In this code-switching pattern, participants predominantly start their communication with Thai and then seamlessly transition to English within the same conversation. This pattern, with a total of 26 instances, reflects the tendency of Thai speakers to initiate conversations in their native language and subsequently incorporate English elements

**Extract 2:** Within the Code-Switching (CS) instances analyzed, 21 texts were identified as following Pattern 2, characterized by E+TH or English followed by Thai. This pattern highlights a significant trend where participants initiated their communication in English and seamlessly integrated Thai elements into their text messages.

Pattern 2	E+TH	English followed by Thai
Examples	Good morning Krub when is the deadline kha Sorry ครับ (Krub) why na ขออภัย (sorry) na kha I know it's possible but เอ็นดูเขาเอ็นเรา ขาด (Thai Proverb) Absobloodylootely! I'll krubbbbb	

**Extract 3:** Among the Code-Switching (CS) instances examined, 15 texts were categorized under Pattern 3, characterized by E + 555. In this pattern, participants initiated their communication in English and incorporated the use of the number '555' which is pronounced as 'hahaha' in Thai, to convey humor or laughter within the conversation.

Pattern 3 reflects the creative and playful nature of CS as a communication tool. Participants strategically use '555' to add humor or lightheartedness into their messages, bridging the gap between two languages while simultaneously evoking laughter in a culturally relevant manner. This pattern exemplifies the adaptability and cultural sensitivity of CS, where participants leverage linguistic elements to enhance the emotional tone and engagement of their digital interactions.

Pattern 3	E+555	English and number 555 pronounced as hahaha in Thai
Examples	-yes 555 -me and who 555 -ouch 555	

**Extract 4:** Among the analyzed instances of Code Switching (CS), there were seven texts classified as Pattern 4. This pattern is characterized by participants starting their communication in English and then incorporating Thai elements the number '555' which is pronounced as 'hahaha' in Thai. The purpose of using this pattern is to add humor or laughter to their messages.

Pattern 4	E+TH +555	English followed by Thai and number 555 pronounced as hahaha in Thai
Examples	-Q&A เหมือนตอบคำถามชิงรางวัลเลยคะ 555 -3 pm ได้ไหมคะ 555 -Omg I can't แง 555	

**Extract 5:** Three texts were categorized as Pattern 5 among all CS texts. In this pattern participants used a combination of TH + OL (languages or dialects) followed by Thai. This indicates that individuals incorporated languages, like Isan (a Thai dialect) and Mandarin alongside Thai in their communication.

Pattern 5 showcases the participants ability to use languages effortlessly incorporating elements, from Isan or Mandarin into their Thai conversations. It highlights their flexibility and the diversity of their language skills, which go beyond standard Thai.

Pattern 5	TH+OL	Other languages or dialect followed by Thai
Examples	-เรียนอิหยัง? (‘อิหยัง’ Thai Northeastern dialect=what) This sentence means ‘which class?’ -อย่าง Hao chi (‘Hao chi’ TMandarin=delicious t) This sentence means very delicious	

**Extract 6:** During the analysis of instances of Code Switching (CS) we came across two texts that fit into Pattern 6. In this pattern participants mix English, Thai and other languages together incorporating elements from the Isaan dialect, which's a Thai dialect.

Pattern 6 demonstrates the participants ability to effortlessly use languages and dialects resulting in a blend of linguistic elements in their online conversations. This pattern reflects the environment observed in their communication, where they smoothly transition between English, Thai and Isaan



to convey nuances, express cultural connections or emphasize specific points.

by bridging cultural gaps while fostering intricate and multifaceted digital exchanges.

Pattern 6	E+ TH+OL	Other languages or dialect followed by Thai
Examples	ตอนเรียน you ตั้งใจ บ่สุ (tom study you tang jai borsu)	(‘บ่สุ’ Thai Northeastern dialect = yes or no, kiddo) This sentence means Did you pay attention while studying, yes or no kiddo?

The presence of Isaan within Pattern 6 highlights the significance of dialects in interactions. It showcases how participants draw from their repertoire to maintain ties with their heritage and engage with individuals who share similar backgrounds. This pattern exemplifies the inclusive nature of Code Switching, as a communication tool

### Qualitative Results

This section provides an analysis of the responses to interview questions focusing on the reasons behind participants’ choice to write in Thai, English or other languages.

During the interview, a key question was asked to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for employing Code-Switching (CS) in a specific section of Facebook Chats. The question was as follows: ‘Why do you choose to use code-switching in this particular section?’ The interviews with participants revealed seven primary reasons for the use of Code-Switching (CS) in their communication as shown in Table 3 below;

**Table 3 Reasons for Code-Switching in Facebook Chats Communication**

Interviewees	Reasons				
	No equal translation	Difficulty to find appropriate words in the target language	Show identity with a group	Pragmatic reasons; location, replacement for long translated words in Thai language, and transliteration	address different audience: formality
P.1				/	/
P.2			/		/
P.3			/		/
P.4	/			/	/
P.5			/		/
P.6			/		/
P.7			/	/	/
P.8					/
P.9		/			/
P.10		/			/

All participants indicated that they employ Code-Switching (CS) as a means to cater to diverse audiences, particularly in terms of formality.

To clarify, ‘คะ’ or ‘Kha’ is a politeness particle that is commonly used in Thai communication, by speakers. On the hand ‘ครับ’. Krub is the equivalent particle used by male speakers to express politeness and respect when addressing others. These particles have a role in upholding respectful communication within Thai culture.

Participant 1 mentioned that code switching is employed in the interaction between A (female) and

F (male) because he feels uncomfortable leaving the sentence in English without incorporating the politeness particles as customary in Thai communication. Example from his Facebook Chat

P.1: Hi, what are you doing, kub?

P.2: I have a question, kub.

(ครับ or Kub is the politeness particle as customary in Thai communication used by male speakers.)

Participant 3 revealed that she includes ‘kha’ and ‘na ja’ at the end of her English messages to demonstrate respect to her teachers and friends, particularly when the level of familiarity is not very

close. She explained that this practice aligns with the Thai communication style, and she believes that omitting these polite particles at the end of a sentence would be considered rude.

P.3: Good morning, kha

P.3: Where are you, I am here na ja.

To explain more, It's worth noting that all participants in this interview who use the E+TH codeswitching pattern in Facebook group chats by adding Thai particles like 'คะ' (Kha) or 'ครับ' (Krub) at the end of their sentences do so primarily to adhere to communication norms. This practice reflects the values of Thailand, where showing politeness and respect is highly regarded, especially when interacting with people or those in positions of authority. By incorporating these particles participants aim to convey their respectfulness and maintain a tone when speaking in English. This highlights the role that culture and politeness play in shaping their communication patterns.

### Show identity with a group

5 from 10 interviewees shared perspectives on the motivation of using Code Switching (CS) that is related to showing identity with the group.

Specifically Participant 2 emphasized importance of CS in expressing affiliation with a group. Based on Participant 3's insights it became clear that CS serves as a way for individuals to associate themselves with a social community. This behavior enables them to form and sustain a sense of belonging and identity within their communication context.

*Participant 2; You know when I chat with my friends from the region I often sprinkle in some phrases from our northern Thai dialect at the end of my sentences. like no เดีอ (meaning no with serious expression)*

*Participant 3; Well it's all in fun. It helps us bond. Brings a lot of joy. It's like our inside joke. Speaking in our dialect makes us feel connected to our hometown and showcases our shared heritage. Moreover it adds a touch to our conversations.*

### Pragmatic Reasons for Code-Switching

During the interviews it was interesting to observe that three out of ten participants mentioned Pragmatic reasons as their motivation for using Code Switching. These individuals provided insights into their use of CS.

### Addressing Location-Specific Context

P4: Extract See you at Mor. Na.

(Mor is an abbreviation of Mahawittayalai (มหาวิทยาลัย) in Thai language.

Participant 4 mentioned that

*Well, you see, 'Mahawittayalai' is quite a long and complex word to type out, especially when you're on a chat or messaging app. So, I use 'Mor' as a shortcut. It's just more practical and saves time, especially when I'm typing on my phone and want to keep the conversation flowing smoothly. Plus, 'Mor' isn't just a shortcut; it's also an exact location on our university campus. Using English just wouldn't convey the precise meaning.*

### Replacement for Lengthy Translated Words in Thai Language

Participant 1 explained that they used CS, specifically local terms or abbreviations, to quickly refer to their current location or discuss location-specific topics.

Extract P1: Sos ยากมาก

P.1 Well, 'SOS' is short, simple, and universally understood. It's much quicker to type and easier to grasp than typing out the full Thai phrase... and my friends get what I mean right away.

### Difficulty to find appropriate words in the target language

During the study it was observed that half of the participants (2 out of 10) mentioned using Code Switching (CS) in Thai to tackle the difficulty of finding words in the target language. What was intriguing is that these participants had approaches and techniques when it came to employing CS. Two participants preferred to rely on a Karaoke version of Thai, where Thai words and phrases are represented using script. Similarly two other participants incorporated the Thai alphabet itself as a way to bridge the gap.

Interestingly, within this group three participants also used words and phrases alongside their Thai text to effectively convey concepts that were hard to express solely in Thai. This variety in CS strategies showcases their adaptability and resourcefulness in overcoming challenges highlighting how CS serves as a versatile communication tool, in their digital interactions. Examples are provided below

P.9 Extract = I brought you pra pi ka net

*Participant 9; when I talk about 'prapikanet' a concept in Thai Buddhism that encompasses the cycle of life, death and rebirth I find it challenging to express it accurately in English.*

P.10 Extract = done? Can I จัก?  
(จัก pronounced as Jig means steal in a positive meaning)

*Participant 10; It's more than a simple idea and I feel that the English language doesn't fully capture its depth. So when discussing it with my Thai friends I switch to Thai to ensure they grasp the essence of this religious belief.*

## Discussion

According to Tourism Authority of Thailand, Thais generally prefer to use English when communicating with foreigners. However there are situations where Thais who are skilled in English may choose to use it when interacting with Thais on social media platforms like Facebook. As a result, elements such as code switching and the use of non standard Thai-English can be noticed in online conversations among Thais.

According to the patterns found in the quantitative results, one interesting analysis of Code Switching (CS) patterns in this research is how CS follows the grammar rules of both Thai and English to an extent. A notable example is the CS pattern 'I ja go' (where 'ja' or 'จะ' means 'will' in Thai) which consistently places the Thai word 'ja' in the syntactic position as its English equivalent 'will'. This consistent syntax demonstrates that participants adeptly navigate both systems. Within the context of CS it becomes clear that word usage often involves adapting their features to enhance communication and comprehension even if it means deviating from English grammar rules. This process of adaptation allows English to be customized for Thai speakers' needs. It highlights the flexibility and adaptability of CS as a tool for effective communication unconstrained by rigid grammatical conventions.

This observation emphasizes how CS serves a purpose prioritizing meaningful interaction over strict adherence to grammatical norms. Furthermore it underscores languages evolving and adaptable nature, in spaces, where speakers draw from their linguistic repertoire to effectively convey messages beyond traditional language boundaries.

Besides, participants' chats revealed the presence of Karaoke Thai, which's a form of Romanization for Thai language. While it allows for playful language usage it lacks the ability to indicate tones. An aspect in Thai for conveying meaning accurately. The inclusion of Karaoke Thai, in contexts suggests that participants specifically employ it during karaoke related discussions or informal conversations.

One interesting and notable finding in this study was the discovery of Northern Dialect and Chinese being used in Code Switching (CS) Pattern 6. This observation sheds light on how the linguistic landscape at the university's influenced by its location, which brings together people with diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultural influences.

The prevalence of Northern Dialect, a language variety within Thailand, can be attributed to the presence of students from Eastern regions studying at the university. These students bring with them the characteristics of their respective hometowns. This phenomenon highlights how geographical diversity plays a role in shaping CS patterns as individuals naturally incorporate elements of their dialects into their conversations.

Additionally the use of Chinese in CS can be linked to students who have learned Chinese as a language in Thai government schools. This bilingualism showcases the nature of the university environment, where students have opportunities to interact with peers from linguistic backgrounds. Therefore incorporating elements into CS reflects both adaptability and multiculturalism within the university setting.

In summary the presence of Northern Dialect and Chinese in CS Pattern 6 emphasizes the relationship between location, cultural diversity and language usage. CS or computer science plays a role in connecting people from linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It helps individuals navigate through the world of languages in their interactions. This discovery emphasizes the importance of diversity within university communities. Calls for more research on how regional and cultural factors impact CS trends, in various settings.

According to the qualitative analysis, the discussion also touches upon the use of Thai particles like 'kha' and 'krab' in online communication. These

particles are used to convey respect and politeness especially when engaging with individuals in positions. In Thai society the hierarchical structure has an influence on communication patterns. It is crucial for younger individuals to express politeness and reverence towards people in Thai culture (Intachakra, 2012). Failure to do so can be seen as aggressive and impolite if they don't exhibit behavior towards their elders. One manner of conveying politeness and respect to individuals is by using sentence ending words like 'ka' for females and 'krub' for males during interactions. Additionally these closing words, 'ka' and 'krub,' are also utilized to show politeness towards others (Etae et al., 2016). This cultural practice can affect how people engage in conversations as they try to incorporate 'ka' and 'krub' into their chats to express politeness and respect towards the person they're conversing with. This adaptation is necessary because written communication lacks verbal cues, like body language, facial expressions or tone of voice that can convey politeness (Nogales, 2010). By incorporating these particles into their conversations it highlights the significance of cultural norms and maintaining politeness while communicating digitally. This finding reinforces the idea that online communication is more than just about convenience; it also encompasses respecting cultural values and identity.

As a result Thais make an effort to show respect towards others by using 'ka' and 'krub', in their discussions (Kongkerd, 2015).

Factors such as the type of institution, teacher-students or students-students interactions influence the use of Thai language and the incorporation of words. For the university setting, Thai is a prerequisite language due to its power dynamics based on position and age. Consequently when considering appropriateness and formality it is crucial to adhere to Thai language conventions, in reports, written documents and presentations.

This occurs when a junior student communicates with a senior. During these interactions it is expected to use Thai language without any speech. Therefore students in GE02 class exclusively use Thai language when conversing with someone in a position or older age especially in official and formal settings.

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Malik (1994) provides explanations for the existence of code switching. Table 4 replicates the list from Table 1 but is ticked with respect to the collected data of this study.

**Table 4 Comparing Interviewees' Reasons for Code-Switching with Reasons from Malik (1994)**

Reasons from Malik (1994)										
Lack of facility	Lack of registral competence	Mood of speaker	Emphasis on a certain point	Habitual expressions	Semantic significance	To show identity with a group	To address different audience	Pragmatic reasons: depending on a context of conversation or other factors	To attract attention	
✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		

The interviews conducted during this research have confirmed that five, out of the ten motivations proposed by Malik for code switching are relevant. On the other hand the remaining five reasons did not receive support from the interviewees responses. This difference can be attributed to how English's perceived in Thailand, where it is primarily seen as a language rather than a second or native language. Typically individuals who are speakers or even those who are proficient in expressing their thoughts and emotions in English and use it for communication in their daily lives are the ones who utilize these five reasons for code switching (Yiumkhamnuan, 2010).

### Conclusion

This research provides a comprehensive exploration of language choice and Code-Switching (CS) dynamics within participants' Facebook chats, combining quantitative and qualitative findings to offer a nuanced understanding of this digital communication phenomenon. Quantitative analysis reveals prevalent CS patterns, with Thai followed by English (TH+E) and English followed by Thai (E+TH) as primary choices, underlining the role of English as a lingua franca in facilitating global interactions. Qualitative insights uncover the use of Thai final particles for politeness and respect, emphasizing cultural norms, while also highlighting CS's function in expressing group identity and belonging. Additionally, participants employ CS for pragmatic language use, addressing location-specific context and conveying intricate concepts. However, limitations of Karaoke Thai, a form of

Thai Romanization, are noted, emphasizing the importance of linguistic adaptability. This research underscores the intricate interplay of language, culture, and identity in the digital realm, offering valuable insights into the evolving landscape of online communication.

### Future Research

Because of time limitations we conducted this research on a scale, as a project. We collected the Facebook chats of 40 participants and interviewed 10 participants. However it's important to note that the findings cannot be applied universally to all universities or organizations. Nevertheless these results do indicate a trend in how Thai students perceive and utilize CS in their online conversations. For research we recommend adopting a methods approach for several reasons. Firstly this approach can enhance the validity of the data by combining the strengths of both paradigms and confirming results through triangulation (Dörnyei, 2007). A study utilizing this method would demonstrate consistency. Increase the likelihood of generalizability. Secondly, employing a methods approach would allow for a participant pool and generate various types of data (Dörnyei, 2007) since quantitative data is typically collected from numerous participants while qualitative data examines subjective motivations within smaller groups.

Moreover it is suggested to include examining how age influences this behavior, which could provide insights into how code switching varies across generations. Exploring this aspect may uncover perspectives. Shed light on the various reasons why individuals engage in code switching.

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