

*Research Article*

# Code-Switching between Romanized Bangla and English: A Sociolinguistic Study of Social Media Practices

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**Submitted:** 28/02/2026

**Revised:** 20/05/2026

**Accepted:** 06/10/2026

**How to cite this article:** Shahriar, M. M. F., Basher, N. B. & Hasan, M. (2026). Code-Switching between Romanized Bangla and English: A Sociolinguistic Study of Social Media Practices. *IJELR: International Journal of Education, Language, and Religion*, 8 (1), 65-78. <https://doi.org/10.35308/ijelr.v8.i1.14906>.

## Abstract

Bangla has strong symbolic value in Bangladesh because of its historical connection with national identity and the 1952 Language Movement. In digital communication, however, many users write Bangla in Latin script and combine it with English. This study examines how Bangladeshi social media users report using code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English, the factors that shape their choices, and the dominant types of switching in online interaction. The study used a descriptive quantitative survey with 20 Bangladeshi social media users. Data were collected through a Google Forms questionnaire adapted from earlier work on Romanization in Bangladesh and analyzed using frequencies and percentages in Microsoft Excel. The results show that 90% of respondents used Romanized Bangla and English code-switching at least sometimes, while 60% identified mixed Romanized Bangla and English as their usual language for posts and comments. Convenience was the strongest reason for Romanization, with 75% of respondents reporting that Romanized Bangla is faster and easier to type. Audience also shaped language choice, as 95% of respondents adjusted their language according to interlocutors. Inter-sentential code-switching was the most frequently reported pattern at 55%, followed by intra-sentential switching at 20% and tag switching at 15%. Most respondents viewed mixed language positively, with 70% describing it as natural and expressive. The findings suggest that, within this limited sample, code-switching is shaped by typing convenience, audience awareness, and bilingual identity rather than by linguistic deficiency alone. The study highlights the need for broader corpus-based and longitudinal research on Bangla-English digital language practices.

## Keywords

Code-switching; Romanized Bangla; Romanization; Digital Communication; Language Identity

## Introduction

In the digital communication era, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp etc. are widely used to connect and communicate with people. As a result, many online languages have

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been invented and evolved, and one of the interesting features of these online languages is frequent switching and mixing between languages and scripts. This feature is called code-switching and is often found in multilingual communities like Bangladesh. Bangla speakers, mainly the young generation, frequently blend English with Romanized Bangla. Romanization is the special case of transliteration where the target script is the Latin script. (Demirşahin et al., 2022). And Romanized Bangla is writing Bangla using the Roman alphabet (English) instead of its original Bengali script. This blending of linguistic codes and scripts creates a unique form of communication that reflects both linguistic flexibility and evolving cultural identity.

Code-switching refers to the alternation of two or more languages within a conversation, sentence, or written text. Poplack (1980) classifies code-switching into tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. The first is tag switching, which occurs when a speaker inserts a single word or short phrase, often used for emphasis or as an expression, at the beginning or end of a sentence, such as “Tumi jano na, you know?” or “Ami jabo na, okay?” These tags usually add emotion or style in informal conversations. The second type is inter-sentential code-switching, where the language changes between entire sentences; for example, a speaker might say, “Ajke ami khub tired. I need some rest,” with the first sentence in Romanized Bangla and the next in English. The third type is intra-sentential code-switching, which happens within a single sentence or clause. An example is “Ami ekta meeting e jabo tomorrow,” where English words are smoothly blended into a Romanized Bangla sentence, creating a natural mix of both languages. Gumperz (1982) and Myers-Scotton (1993) further show that language alternation is not random because it often responds to audience, setting, topic, identity, and social meaning. In online contexts, these choices are also shaped by platform design and keyboard accessibility. Digital sociolinguistic studies have shown that online multilingualism is influenced by both social networks and technological affordances (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Barton & Lee, 2013; Herring, 2004; Lee & Barton, 2011; Seargeant & Tagg, 2014).

The theoretical background of this study is designed to feel accessible and relatable, highlighting why everyday users on social media naturally switch between Romanized Bangla and English. Grounded in sociolinguistic research, these ideas help explain experiences familiar to many bilingual Bangladeshis whether chatting with friends online or posting on favorite platforms. Poplack’s theory helps explain the day-to-day language patterns people encounter online. For example, short tags are often dropped into posts, such as an English “okay?” at the end of a message that is otherwise written in Bangla (Poplack, 1980). Some users switch languages between sentences, and other users smoothly weave English words into Bangla phrases, including within the same sentence. Poplack’s work emphasizes the idea that such creative blends are not haphazard; they often follow grammatical rules and are more apt to occur when the speaker feels confident in both languages involved (Poplack, 1980; Poplack, 2004).

Language is linked with many identities and histories. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's postcolonial language theory provides tools for understanding how the mix of Romanized Bangla and English on social media a matter of convenience is not only but also part of users expressing themselves in a world framed by both the legacy of Bengali language activism and the tides of modern global influences. The choice of Romanized Bangla or English supports a delicate balancing of pride in one's roots and openness to the greater world in the shaping of identity (1986).

Finally, digital sociolinguistics focuses on the role of technology in conversations on websites and apps. For instance, platforms like Facebook or Instagram often make it easier to type in English or Romanized Bangla, which nudges people toward blended writing styles, simply because those are the quickest and most convenient options to use (Androutsopoulos, 2015). Thus, digital spaces reflect not just existing language habits but actively help in creating new ones as users fluidly adapt to whatever digital tool is in front of them. This approachable theoretical background illustrates that code-switching is both a matter of personal choice and a collective pattern shaped by history, identity, and technology.



Recent studies on Bangladeshi language practices suggest that Bangla-English mixing is common among young and educated users, especially in informal digital communication. Mahboob and Rahman (2017) discuss Romanization as a widespread practice in Bangladesh and link it to technological convenience and inconsistent spelling habits. Alam (2019) finds that Bangla-English code-switching appears in Facebook advertisements and contributes to the hybrid character of online communication. Ferdous et al. (2023) report that social media influences code-switching and code-mixing among young Bangladeshis, while Sultana (2019) explains how young adults use language crossing to negotiate identity in Bangladesh. These studies support the view that code-switching can express bilingual identity, modernity, and social alignment rather than mere language deficiency.

Despite these contributions, several issues remain underexplored. Earlier research has discussed Romanization, code-switching, and language crossing, but limited attention has been given to a compact descriptive mapping of how users report their language choices across audience types, motivations, contexts, and code-switching categories in Romanized Bangla-English digital communication. In addition, claims about the possible weakening of formal Bangla writing need to be treated carefully because small-scale self-report data cannot prove language decline. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on reported practices within a clearly delimited sample of Bangladeshi social media users.

Bangladeshi social media spaces have become vibrant sites for the negotiation of language, particularly through the code-switching and code-mixing of Romanized Bangla and English. Recent studies consistently reveal that this bilingual phenomenon is not only common but has also grown in frequency and complexity as digital communication becomes essential in daily life (Mahboob & Rahman, 2017; Alam, 2019).

Research indicates that the most frequent form of code-switching in Bangladesh, especially among youth and educated urban populations, is intra-sentential, wherein speakers blend English words or phrases within Romanized Bangla sentences, or vice versa (Ferdous et al., 2023). Inter-sentential and tag switching are present but less common. These findings echo broader global trends in multilingual societies, where digital spaces catalyze creative language-mixing as a marker of group identity, modernity, and pragmatic convenience (Grosjean, 2015; Sultana, 2018).

The literature highlights several sociotechnical and cultural motivators for this hybrid linguistic behavior. Ease of typing due to lack of user-friendly Bangla keyboards, peer influence, the prestige of English, and a desire for expressive flexibility are notable factors (Mahboob & Rahman, 2017; Ferdous et al., 2023). Surveys and qualitative studies show that users often switch codes to fill lexical gaps, project intelligence or cosmopolitan identity, emphasize points, and navigate communicative situations requiring specialized terminology (Alam, 2019; Sultana, 2018).

Romanization in Bangladesh carries significant historical baggage, rooted in both colonial missionary activity and pragmatic adaptation to digital limitations (Mahboob & Rahman, 2017). Earlier state-driven attempts to enforce Roman or Arabic scripts met fierce resistance due to the association of the Bangla script with national identity, especially following the 1952 Language Movement. Despite this, the informal Romanization of Bangla for digital convenience is now ubiquitous, indicating both flexibility and a shifting stance toward language purity and hybridization.

While code-switching in digital communication has empowered bilingual self-expression and eased technological adaptation, scholars express growing concern about its corrosive impact on formal language proficiency (Ferdous et al., 2023; Kurzon, 2010). Many studies report that students and frequent social media users unconsciously transfer informal mixed language habits into academic writing and exams, undermining pure Bangla proficiency and diluting the melody and distinctiveness of their mother tongue (Alam, 2019). The absence of standard Romanization rules leads to inconsistency and miscommunication.



Nevertheless, the literature largely agrees that code-switching and Romanization are not merely evidence of linguistic deficiency but signal a dynamic bilingual identity, agency, and linguistic creativity (Alam, 2019; Sultana, 2018). Participants themselves often perceive hybrid language as a natural means of learning new vocabulary and adapting to a globalized, technological world, even while acknowledging, or sometimes disregarding, perceived risks to mother tongue preservation.

The body of research demonstrates that code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English is a multifaceted, pragmatically motivated, and deeply social phenomenon, shaped by the interplay of technological constraints, historical memory, peer networks, and the forces of globalization. Its rise reflects both the possibilities and challenges of digital bilingualism in 21st-century Bangladesh (Mahboob & Rahman, 2017; Ferdous et al., 2023).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Bangladeshi social media users employ code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English during online communication. It also aims to identify the factors that influence their linguistic choices such as age, education, environment, the absence of Bangla script on certain devices, and the expression of identity. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine the frequency and patterns of different types of code-switching, intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching, to reveal how these practices reflect broader sociolinguistic trends, cultural hybridity, and the impact of digital communication in contemporary Bangladeshi society. This study does not consider the common malpractices of Romanization (example), focusing instead on the functional and social aspects of code-switching in digital spaces. The novelty of the study lies in its combined attention to typing convenience, audience awareness, language identity, and structural switching patterns within one descriptive quantitative survey. The study does not claim to represent all Bangladeshi users. It offers an initial empirical picture that can guide broader corpus-based and longitudinal studies on Bangla-English digital language practices.

Based on the explanation above, the research question can be formulated

1. How often do respondents report using Romanized Bangla and English code-switching on social media?
2. What social and technical factors shape their language choices?
3. Which type of code-switching do respondents report using most often?

## Method

This study used a descriptive quantitative survey design. The design was selected because the study aimed to describe reported patterns of code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English among Bangladeshi social media users. A descriptive survey is suitable for identifying frequencies, tendencies, and self-reported perceptions within a defined sample (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The participants were 20 Bangladeshi social media users. The study used non-probability convenience sampling because respondents were recruited through accessible online networks. This sampling strategy is appropriate for exploratory descriptive studies, although it limits generalization beyond the sample (Etikan et al., 2016; Taherdoost, 2016). The sample consisted of 13 male respondents and 7 female respondents. Most respondents were between 18 and 25 years old ( $n = 18$ ), while 2 respondents were between 26 and 35 years old. In terms of education, 10 respondents had completed higher secondary education, 9 had completed undergraduate study, and 1 had completed postgraduate study. Thirteen respondents reported Bangla as their primary home language, 2 reported English, and 5 reported both Bangla and English.

Data were collected through a Google Forms questionnaire. Several items were adapted from Mahboob and Rahman (2017), especially items related to Romanization practices and attitudes toward Bangla



writing. The questionnaire included closed-ended items on demographic profile, platform use, frequency of code-switching, reasons for using Romanized Bangla, audience-based language choice, perceived impact on formal Bangla writing, types of code-switching, and personal attitudes toward mixed language use. Online questionnaire distribution was used because the research focused on digital communication practices and because online surveys allow efficient access to social media users (Dillman et al., 2014).

The data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The analysis focused on frequencies and percentages for each response category. The study did not conduct inferential statistical testing because the sample size was small and the purpose was descriptive, not hypothesis testing. Ethical considerations were observed by informing respondents about the purpose of the study, collecting responses anonymously, and using the data only for academic analysis. No identifying personal information is reported in this article.

## Results

The survey comprised 20 respondents from Bangladeshi social media platforms, with a predominantly young demographic. Most participants (90%,  $n = 18$ ) were between 18 and 25 years old, while only 2 participants (10%) were in the 26-35 age bracket. The gender distribution showed 65% male participants ( $n = 13$ ) and 35% female participants ( $n = 7$ ). The sample was well-educated, with 45% ( $n = 9$ ) completing undergraduate degrees, 50% ( $n = 10$ ) completing higher secondary education, and 5% ( $n = 1$ ) having completed postgraduate studies. Most participants (65%,  $n = 13$ ) identified Bangla as their primary language of communication at home, while 25% ( $n = 5$ ) reported using both Bangla and English equally, and only 10% ( $n = 2$ ) spoke English as their primary home language. These demographics indicate a bilingual youth population with strong Bengali linguistic roots alongside exposure to English.

Facebook emerged as the most frequently used platform, with 15 out of 20 respondents (75%) using it regularly, followed by Instagram ( $n = 13$ , 65%), WhatsApp ( $n = 11$ , 55%), X/Twitter ( $n = 4$ , 20%), and TikTok ( $n = 2$ , 10%). Regarding posting frequency, a significant majority (50%,  $n = 10$ ) posted or commented multiple times per day, indicating active engagement. An additional 15% ( $n = 3$ ) posted once daily, 10% ( $n = 2$ ) posted several times weekly, and 25% ( $n = 5$ ) engaged rarely. This distribution reveals that most of this cohort are highly active social media users, creating multiple opportunities for code-switching behavior daily.

When asked about their usual language for social media posts and comments, respondents demonstrated a strong preference for bilingual communication (Table 1). The most common choice was "a mix of Romanized Bangla and English" (60%,  $n = 12$ ), followed by "Romanized Bangla/Banglish only" (30%,  $n = 6$ ). A small minority (10%,  $n = 2$ ) used only English. Notably, no respondent reported using only the Bangla script in their social media communication, suggesting that digital language mixing has become normalized in this context.

*Table 1: Primary Language Choice in Social Media Posts*

Language Choice	Frequency	Percentage
A mix of Romanized Bangla and English	12	60%
Romanized Bangla (Banglish) only	6	30%
Only English	2	10%
Only Bangla script	0	0%

Regarding how often respondents mixed Romanized Bangla and English in a single post, message, or comment, responses were distributed across the spectrum (Table 2). A plurality of 35% (n = 7) reported "sometimes" engaging in mixing, while 30% (n = 6) reported doing so "often." A smaller group (25%, n = 5) reported "always" mixing languages in their online communication. Only 5% (n = 1) reported "rarely" mixing, and 5% (n = 1) reported "never" doing so. This distribution indicates that the vast majority (90%, n = 18) engage in code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English at least sometimes, with 55% (n = 11) doing so often or always. This pattern demonstrates that code-switching is a deeply embedded practice in this sample's digital communication.

*Table 2: Frequency of Romanized Bangla and English Mixing*

Mixing Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	25%
Often	6	30%
Sometimes	7	35%
Rarely	1	5%
Never	1	5%

When asked why they preferred writing Bangla in Roman script instead of Bangla script, respondents provided multiple reasons (Table 3). The dominant factor was convenience and typing ease, with 75% (n = 15) citing "it is faster and easier to type." Keyboard familiarity was the second most common reason, with 40% (n = 8) reporting "I am more used to English keyboards." Social factors also played a role: 25% (n = 5) stated "my friends also use Romanized Bangla," and 15% (n = 3) indicated "it looks more casual or trendy." Technical limitations appeared less significant, with only 10% (n = 2) mentioning that their "device does not support Bangla typing." These findings suggest that typing convenience and technical familiarity are the primary drivers of Romanization, rather than technological constraints, with cultural and social factors providing secondary motivations.

*Table 3: Reasons for Preferring Romanized Bangla*

Reason for Romanization	Frequency	Percentage
Faster and easier to type	15	75%
More used to English keyboards	8	40%
Friends also use Romanized Bangla	5	25%
Looks more casual or trendy	3	15%
The device does not support Bangla typing	2	10%

An important finding emerged regarding the intentionality of language switching. When asked whether respondents consciously decide when to switch between Romanized Bangla and English or if it happens naturally, responses varied. The largest group (50%, n = 10) reported that switching occurs "naturally," suggesting relatively unconscious behavior. However, 35% (n = 7) indicated that it depends on context ("both depending on the context"), implying some level of consciousness and strategic choice-making. Only 15% (n = 3) reported making deliberate, conscious decisions about when to switch. This pattern suggests that while some users are metacognitively aware of their code-switching, the majority engage in it as an automatic, habitual behavior. This finding aligns with Poplack's (1980) observations that code-



switching often reflects fluency and comfort in both languages, emerging naturally rather than through deliberate planning.

A critical aspect of code-switching behavior is the influence of the audience. When asked whether they thought their choice of language depends on the people they are communicating with, 70% (n = 14) responded "yes, always," indicating strong audience sensitivity. An additional 25% (n = 5) responded "sometimes," while only 5% (n = 1) reported "rarely," considering the audience. This suggests that a full 95% of respondents exhibit audience awareness in their language choices, supporting sociolinguistic theory that communication is fundamentally audience responsive.

To understand how the audience shapes language choice, respondents were asked to specify how they write to different groups:

### Writing to Peers and Friends

When communicating with friends, 55% (n = 11) used "a mix of Romanized Bangla and English," 30% (n = 6) used "Romanized Bangla only," 10% (n = 2) used "only English," and 5% (n = 1) used "only Bangla script." This distribution shows that peer communication is dominated by mixed code (85%, n = 17) rather than any single language.

### Writing to Colleagues

Communication with colleagues showed greater formality, with 30% (n = 6) using only English and 35% (n = 7) using mixed code, while 20% (n = 4) used Romanized Bangla only, and 15% (n = 3) used Bangla script. The increased use of English in professional contexts reflects code-switching constrained by formality requirements.

### Writing to Teachers/Elders/Superiors

The most dramatic shift occurred in communication with authority figures and elders. A substantial 45% (n = 9) used only English, while 25% (n = 5) used mixed code, 20% (n = 4) used Romanized Bangla, and 10% (n = 2) used Bangla script. This pattern reveals a clear linguistic accommodation to power dynamics and formality, with English serving as the "high" variety reserved for formal contexts and authority relationships (Table 4).

Table 4: Language Use by Audience Type

Context	Mixed	Romanized Only	English Only
Friends	55%	30%	10%
Colleagues	35%	20%	30%
Teachers/Elders	25%	20%	45%

When asked which factors most influenced their language choice (selecting up to three options), respondents identified multiple motivations (Table 5). "Habit/typing convenience" was the leading factor for 65% (n = 13), followed closely by "audience/friends' preference" for 50% (n = 10). Notably, "formality of context" influenced 45% (n = 9) of respondents, and "personal identity expression (bilingual identity)" motivated 40% (n = 8). Fewer respondents cited "device or keyboard limitation" (15%, n = 3) or "pop culture influence" (0%). This pattern indicates that code-switching is driven by a combination of pragmatic factors (convenience, typing habit) and sociolinguistic factors (audience, formality, identity), with technical constraints playing a minimal role.



*Table 5: Factors Influencing Language Choice*

Influencing Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Habit/typing convenience	13	65%
Audience/friends' preference	10	50%
Formality of context	9	45%
Personal identity expression	8	40%
Device or keyboard limitation	3	15%
Pop culture influence	0	0%

Responses regarding whether Romanized Bangla usage affects formal Bangla writing ability were diverse. While 45% (n = 9) reported "not really," indicating they see no significant impact, 30% (n = 6) reported "somewhat" negatively affected, and 15% (n = 3) reported "yes, significantly." Only 10% (n = 2) reported "not at all" affected. This suggests that roughly 45% (n = 9) perceive at least some concern about the impact on formal Bangla writing, though the majority remains reassured.

When asked whether mixing languages represents bilingual identity or weakens Bangla skills, responses revealed competing interpretations. A plurality (55%, n = 11) viewed mixing as representing "bilingual identity," seeing it as a natural expression of multilingualism. However, 20% (n = 4) selected "both," acknowledging that it might simultaneously represent identity and pose risks to language purity. A smaller group (15%, n = 3) believed it "weakens Bangla skills," while 10% (n = 2) were "not sure." This distribution suggests that a clear majority interprets their code-switching practices as identity work rather than linguistic deficiency, though some ambivalence exists regarding long-term impacts.

Participants' preferences for specific code-switching types, as theorized by Poplack (1980), revealed a clear pattern (Table 6). Inter-sentential code-switching (switching between sentences) was the most common, reported by 55% (n = 11) as their primary style. Respondents provided examples such as "Ami tired. Let's go now." Intra-sentential code-switching (mixing within sentences), illustrated by examples like "Ami very tired today," was used by 20% (n = 4). Tag switching (appending English tags to Bangla phrases), exemplified by "Tumi onusthane ashbe, right?," was employed by 15% (n = 3). A final 10% (n = 2) were unsure about their patterns. This distribution indicates that users most frequently maintain sentence-level language boundaries while switching between sentences, suggesting an organization of code-switching at the syntactic level.

*Table 6: Types of Code-Switching Used Most Often*

Type of Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage
Inter-sentential (between sentences)	11	55%
Intra-sentential (within sentences)	4	20%
Tag switching (final tags)	3	15%

Not sure	2	10%
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Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Messenger were identified by 40% (n = 8) as the primary context, followed by casual posts/comments for 25% (n = 5), and memes and captions for 25% (n = 5). Only 5% (n = 1) reported using mixed language in academic or professional discussions. This distribution aligns with the observation that code-switching intensifies in informal, synchronous contexts where there is less time for editing and monitoring, while more formal written contexts receive greater linguistic attention.

*Table 7: Contexts Where Mixed Language is Used Most Often*

Context of Use	Frequency	Percentage
Messaging apps (WhatsApp/Messenger)	8	40%
Casual posts/comments	5	25%
Memes and captions	5	25%
Academic or professional discussions	1	5%
Other	1	5%

When asked how they personally feel about using mixed language online, responses were predominantly positive (Table 8). A substantial 70% (n = 14) characterized it as "natural and expressive," viewing their code-switching as a normal and authentic form of communication. A smaller but notable 15% (n = 3) saw it as "trendy but not necessary," suggesting awareness of fashion trends in language choice. Only 10% (n = 2) believed it "harms proper language use," reflecting concerns about linguistic purity and standards, and 5% (n = 1) had no strong opinion. This overwhelming positive perception suggests that the majority of young Bangladeshi social media users view their code-switching practices not as a deficiency but as a healthy bilingual expression.

*Table 8: Personal Attitudes Toward Mixed Language Use*

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Natural and expressive	14	70%
Trendy but not necessary	3	15%
Harms proper language use	2	10%
No strong opinion	1	5%

A revealing question asked whether respondents would like to use the Bangla script more often on social media if typing were easier. Responses showed interesting variation: 45% (n = 9) answered "yes," suggesting latent demand for Bangla script use that is currently constrained by technological friction. An equal 30% (n = 6) answered "maybe," indicating uncertainty, while 25% (n = 5) answered "no." This distribution suggests that nearly half the sample would potentially shift toward greater use of the Bangla script if technology were not a constraint, indicating that Romanization is a pragmatic adaptation rather than a preference for the Latin script per se.



Finally, respondents were asked whether language mixing reflects cultural change among young Bangladeshis. An overwhelming 60% (n = 12) answered "yes," viewing code-switching as evidence of broader cultural transformation. An additional 30% (n = 6) expressed uncertainty with mixed or nuanced perspectives, acknowledging both change and continuity. Only 10% (n = 2) rejected the characterization that code-switching reflects cultural change, arguing it is merely a matter of convenience. Qualitative responses from those answering "yes" revealed several recurring themes: (1) globalization and international influence creating new linguistic possibilities; (2) the normalization of bilingualism as young Bangladeshis grow up with both Bangla and English in school and online spaces; (3) code-switching as an expression of modern, cosmopolitan identity distinct from purely Bengali identity; and (4) technology driving users toward linguistic innovation. These perspectives align with postcolonial language theory and digital sociolinguistics, suggesting that code-switching represents not cultural erosion but cultural hybridity and adaptation

*Table 9: Key Summary Statistics*

Measure	Finding
Sample Size	20 participants
Age Profile	90% aged 18-25
Gender Distribution	65% male, 35% female
Daily Active Users	50% post multiple times daily
Code-Switching Prevalence	90% code-switch at least sometimes
Natural (Unconscious) Switching	50%
Audience-Responsive	95%
Positive Attitude Toward Mixing	70%
Would Use Bangla if Typing Easier	45%
Perceive as Cultural Change	60%

## Discussion

The findings suggest that, within this limited sample, code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English is a common digital practice. The result that 90% of respondents code-switch at least sometimes supports earlier observations that digital spaces facilitate multilingual writing and hybrid language choices (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Barton & Lee, 2013; Ferdous et al., 2023). The finding should not be generalized to all Bangladeshi users because the sample was small, young, and educated. It does, however, show that mixed language use is a normal communicative option among the respondents.

Typing convenience was the strongest factor behind Romanized Bangla use. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that Romanized Bangla is faster and easier to type, and 40% reported greater familiarity with English keyboards. This supports the argument that digital platform design affects language choice. The result also extends earlier discussion of Romanization in Bangladesh by showing that Romanization may reflect practical keyboard habits rather than rejection of Bangla script (Mahboob & Rahman, 2017; Kurzon, 2010). The fact that 45% of respondents would use Bangla script more often if typing were easier further supports this interpretation.

Audience sensitivity appeared as another important factor. Ninety-five percent of respondents reported that their language choice depends at least sometimes on the person they communicate with. The higher use of English with teachers, elders, or superiors suggests that English functions as a formal or high-status code in some contexts. This pattern is consistent with Ferguson's (1959) discussion of functional language differentiation and with



sociolinguistic accounts of audience-based language choice (Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993). At the same time, respondents used more relaxed mixed forms with friends, which indicates that code-switching also works as a marker of intimacy and peer alignment.

The structural findings show that inter-sentential switching was the most frequently reported pattern at 55%. This result differs from some earlier claims that intra-sentential mixing is the dominant form among young Bangladeshi users (Ferdous et al., 2023). The difference may come from the small sample, the self-report method, or the way respondents understood the examples in the questionnaire. It may also suggest that some users prefer switching between sentences because it keeps each sentence internally clearer while still allowing bilingual expression. This finding should be tested with actual social media corpus data rather than self-report alone.

The respondents' attitudes also show that code-switching carries identity value. A majority interpreted mixed language as bilingual identity, and 70% described it as natural and expressive. This supports the view that multilingual speakers use mixed resources to negotiate identity, social belonging, and communicative efficiency (García & Li Wei, 2014; Grosjean, 2015; Sultana, 2019). The minority who viewed mixed language as harmful to proper language use remains important because it reflects continuing concern about formal Bangla proficiency and language preservation. The findings therefore point to a balanced interpretation. Code-switching is neither simply a threat to Bangla nor merely a harmless habit. It is a socially meaningful practice shaped by identity, context, and technology.

The study also has pedagogical and technological implications. In education, code-switching can be discussed explicitly so students understand when informal digital writing is appropriate and when formal Bangla writing is required. In technology design, improved Bangla keyboards, predictive text, and platform-level support may reduce reliance on Romanized Bangla for users who prefer Bangla script. These implications are preliminary because the study used a small sample and self-reported data. Future research should compare survey responses with actual social media posts and include more diverse participants from different age groups, regions, and educational backgrounds.

## Conclusion

At the heart of this study is a simple observation that many Bangladeshis will recognize instantly: when young people go online, they rarely stay inside the boundaries of a single language. Their messages, comments, and captions move fluidly between Romanized Bangla and English, sometimes within the same sentence, sometimes between sentences, sometimes just in a small English tag that colors the tone. What might look, from the outside, like “broken” Bangla or “half” English turns out to be a rich, patterned, and meaningful way of speaking to friends, colleagues, and elders in a digitally connected world.

The survey responses show that for this group of users, mixed language is not an occasional trick but a default option. Most participants reported code-switching at least sometimes, and many chose mixed language as their main mode of communication on social media. They are drawn to Romanized Bangla in part because it is simply easier: English-based keyboards, predictive text, and long familiarity with Latin letters make typing in Roman script feel faster and more natural than navigating Bangla layouts on a phone screen. Yet convenience is not the whole story. Respondents also adjust their language carefully according to who is on the other side of the screen, shifting toward more English with teachers and superiors and using more relaxed mixtures with friends.

Structurally, the way they mix languages is revealing. Inter-sentential code-switching, changing languages between sentences, is the most common strategy, suggesting that many users prefer to keep sentences internally consistent while still moving between codes at natural break points. Intra-sentential



mixing and tag switching also appear, but less frequently, hinting at an underlying sensitivity to what “sounds right” even in informal digital contexts. These patterns echo broader sociolinguistic findings from other multilingual societies while reflecting the rhythms of Bangla-English interaction in Bangladesh.

Perhaps the most striking element of the data is how positively many respondents feel about their own language practices. A majority describe mixed language as natural and expressive, and more than half see it as a reflection of their bilingual identity rather than as a sign that their Bangla is in decline. They do not experience themselves as abandoning Bangla, but as bending and stretching it to fit new communicative needs, new media, and new cultural influences. At the same time, the presence of worry about “proper” Bangla, about formal writing, about the impact of constant mixing shows that older anxieties about linguistic purity and national identity have not disappeared. They now coexist with a more flexible, hybrid sense of what it means to be a Bangladeshi speaker in a globalized, English-saturated world.

This study suggests that technology is a quiet but decisive actor in this story. The design of keyboards, apps, and interfaces nudges users toward Romanization even when their emotional and historical attachments are to the Bangla script. That many respondents say they would happily write more in Bangla if typing were easier points to an important conclusion: current patterns of script use are shaped as much by design decisions as by personal preference. Changing those designs could subtly reshape the linguistic landscape of Bangladeshi social media without policing how young people choose to speak. In the end, code-switching between Romanized Bangla and English emerges not as a simple threat to Bangla, nor as a harmless quirk, but as a complex practice where history, identity, technology, and everyday communication meet. It shows young Bangladeshis negotiating multiple worlds at once: honoring the legacy of a language that was fought for, engaging with the global prestige of English, and experimenting with new, hybrid ways of expressing who they are.

By tracing these patterns, this paper adds a small but meaningful piece to a larger conversation about how languages live, change, and coexist in digital spaces. It invites teachers, policymakers, designers, and speakers themselves to see code-switching not only as a site of risk but also as a site of creativity and agency, one that deserves careful attention rather than simple approval or condemnation.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

Every research project is, in some sense, a snapshot: it captures a particular group of people, in a particular moment, under conditions. This study is no exception. The voices heard most loudly here are those of young, educated, urban and semi-urban social media users—people who are online often, comfortable with technology, and already moving easily between Bangla and English. With only 20 participants, 90% of them between 18 and 25, the patterns that emerged cannot simply be projected onto older generations, rural communities, or Bangladeshis with different educational and economic backgrounds.

The method itself also shapes what can be seen. Because the data came from a questionnaire, the study reflects what participants think and say about their language use, rather than a large corpus of actual posts and messages. Self-report can be insightful, but it is always filtered through memory, self-image, and partial awareness; people do not always notice the full complexity of their own linguistic habits. A cross-sectional design adds another layer of limitation: it shows how respondents write and think about language now, but not how their practices might change as they move from university to workplace, or as new platforms and technologies emerge.



These limitations, however, point directly toward what should happen next. Future studies could listen to a wider and more varied chorus: rural users checking Facebook on low-cost phones, older adults using WhatsApp to talk to family abroad, students from Bangla-medium, English-medium, and madrasa backgrounds who bring different relationships to each language. A larger, more diverse sample would reveal whether the patterns described here truly define “young Bangladeshis,” or whether they are specific to a tech-savvy urban minority.

Alongside surveys, researchers could step into the “wild” of social media itself, collecting and analyzing real posts, comments, and chat logs (with proper consent) to see how code-switching appears in practice. Comparing what people say they do with what they write would deepen understanding of unconscious habits, subtle shifts in tone, and the fine-grained structures of mixed-language sentences. Longitudinal work following users over several years would show whether the playful Banglish of student life solidifies, softens, or disappears as people take on professional roles or become parents themselves.

The findings also suggest concrete steps for educators and policymakers. Rather than treating code-switching as an invisible or shameful practice, language classrooms could bring it into the open: asking students to reflect on when they mix languages, why they do it, and how they can consciously shift between informal digital styles and formal academic Bangla. Such metacognitive work would not “ban” mixed language but would help learners see it as one register among many, appropriate in some contexts and not in others.

On the technological side, the results hint at a quiet but powerful frustration: many users would be happy to type more in Bangla script if it did not feel so slow or awkward. Investing in smoother Bangla keyboards, better predictive text, and consistent support for Bangla across devices and apps could make it easier for users to choose Bangla script without sacrificing speed or convenience. In this sense, technology design becomes a form of language policy, nudging people toward certain scripts and styles by making them easier or harder to use.

Seen together, these recommendations suggest that code-switching should not be approached only as a problem to fix, but as a reality to understand and work with, something that requires more listening, more nuanced teaching, and more thoughtful digital tools.

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