



Code Mixing Used by Characters in Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V)

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Abstract*

Code mixing has become an important topic in sociolinguistics because it reflects how multilingual speakers construct identities and negotiate social relationships. However, its representation in commercial video games remains underexplored. This study investigates the types of English-Spanish code mixing in the dialogues of Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V) and the social factors influencing its variation. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyzed 14 dialogue excerpts collected from gameplay recordings, selected missions, and cinematic cutscenes. Data were gathered through documentation and systematic note-taking and analyzed using Poplack's code-mixing classification and the Identity and Interactional Sociolinguistics framework. The findings identify three types of code mixing: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag code mixing. Their occurrence is shaped by ethnicity, regional background, situational context, and social networks, demonstrating that language choice functions as a strategic resource for constructing identities and social relationships rather than as random language alternation. This study extends sociolinguistic research into digital narrative discourse by highlighting video game dialogue as a valuable source for examining multilingual practices and identity construction.

1. Introduction

Language is widely recognized as a social practice through which individuals construct identities, negotiate relationships, and position themselves within particular communities rather than merely as a system of grammatical rules (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). From this perspective, multilingual language practices such as code mixing are not random linguistic deviations but socially meaningful resources that speakers employ to express cultural affiliation, solidarity, authority, and group membership. Early studies on bilingual discourse demonstrated that language alternation follows systematic grammatical and interactional constraints rather than occurring arbitrarily (Poplack, 1980). Likewise, Muysken (2000) defines code mixing as the embedding or combination of linguistic elements from two or more languages within a single discourse, while Myers-Scotton (1993) argues that bilingual language choice reflects speakers' communicative intentions and social motivations. Heller (2007) further emphasizes that

multilingual language practices should be understood as social resources through which speakers negotiate power, identity, and group affiliation in multilingual communities. Consequently, code mixing has become an important topic in sociolinguistics because it reflects the dynamic relationship between language, identity, and social interaction.

The growing popularity of digital media has expanded the contexts in which multilingual practices can be observed. Digital communication environments increasingly provide spaces where language is used to construct identities and negotiate social relationships through multimodal interaction (Georgakopoulou, 2015). Video games, particularly narrative-driven open-world games, portray multilingual communities through dialogue that reflects cultural diversity, regional identities, and everyday social interaction. Unlike scripted educational materials, video game dialogue is intentionally designed to simulate authentic conversational practices, making it a valuable source of sociolinguistic data. Previous research has shown that language in digital games contributes to characterization, immersion, and the representation of cultural identities by incorporating dialects, multilingual speech, and socially recognizable linguistic styles (Ensslin, 2012; Ensslin & Balteiro, 2019). As digital narratives continue to shape contemporary cultural experiences, examining language use in video games provides valuable insight into how multilingual identities are represented and negotiated within virtual environments.

One particularly relevant case is *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V), which is set in the fictional city of Los Santos, a city modelled after Los Angeles and characterized by substantial ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Similar to its real-world counterpart, Los Santos portrays multilingual urban communities where English serves as the dominant language while Spanish frequently appears in interactions involving Hispanic neighborhoods, criminal organizations, and multicultural social networks. The game's protagonists and supporting characters originate from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds, resulting in diverse speech styles that include slang, regional varieties, and multilingual expressions. Such linguistic diversity reflects the game's attempt to construct a believable multicultural urban environment through stylized dialogue. Accordingly, GTA V provides an appropriate object for sociolinguistic analysis because its dialogues represent not only fictional conversations but also stylized representations of real-world multilingual communication, identity construction, and social interaction.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that multilingual language practices contribute significantly to identity construction and social positioning. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that linguistic choices function as important semiotic resources through which identities are continuously produced during interaction, while Myers-Scotton (1993) explains that bilingual speakers strategically select linguistic codes to negotiate interpersonal relationships and social meanings. Heller (2007) similarly views multilingualism as a socially situated practice embedded within broader relations of power and community membership. Beyond face-to-face interaction, recent research has increasingly examined multilingual practices in digital discourse. Georgakopoulou (2015) argues that digital communication creates new interactional spaces in which multilingual users negotiate identities through language choice, discourse style, and multimodal resources. Likewise, Ensslin (2012) and Ensslin and Balteiro (2019) demonstrate that language in video games functions not merely as a narrative device but also as a powerful mechanism for representing cultural diversity, social identities, and interpersonal relationships within fictional worlds. Studies on multilingual representation and stylized speech further suggest that linguistic variation in digital narratives enhances authenticity, immersion, and characterization by reflecting recognizable cultural backgrounds and social identities. Collectively, these studies indicate that code mixing should be understood not merely as a

structural linguistic phenomenon but also as a communicative strategy through which identities and social meanings are constructed across both physical and digital environments.

Despite these advances, limited attention has been devoted to examining English–Spanish code mixing in *Grand Theft Auto V* from a sociolinguistic perspective that integrates structural analysis of code mixing with identity construction. Existing GTA V research has predominantly focused on gameplay mechanics, narrative design, player behavior, violence, or cultural representation, whereas relatively few studies have investigated multilingual dialogue as a sociolinguistic resource. Furthermore, previous studies on code mixing have primarily examined naturally occurring interactions such as classroom discourse, social media communication, broadcast media, and everyday conversation, leaving digital narrative environments comparatively underexplored. Therefore, the novelty of the present study lies not simply in examining language use in a commercial video game but in demonstrating how English–Spanish code mixing in GTA V functions as a linguistic resource through which characters construct identities, negotiate social relationships, and represent multilingual urban communities within an interactive digital narrative.

Based on this research gap, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of code mixing occur in the dialogues of *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V)?
2. What social factors influence code mixing variation among the characters in *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V)?

By answering these questions, this study extends sociolinguistic research into the domain of digital narrative discourse. It demonstrates that multilingual practices in commercial video games constitute meaningful sociolinguistic resources through which identity, social relationships, and multicultural urban realities are represented. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing field of digital discourse studies by highlighting video game dialogue as a legitimate and valuable source of sociolinguistic inquiry.

2. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach because the data consist of linguistic units in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences rather than numerical data. A qualitative approach is appropriate for investigating sociolinguistic phenomena because it allows researchers to describe and interpret language use within its social and interactional context. The study focuses on English–Spanish code mixing in the dialogues of *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V) and examines how multilingual language practices contribute to identity construction and social positioning among the game's characters.

The data source consists of dialogues spoken by the main and supporting characters in *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V), developed by Rockstar Games. The data were collected from direct gameplay recordings covering the main storyline, selected side missions, and cinematic cutscenes. A total of 14 dialogue excerpts containing English–Spanish code mixing was selected. The selected cutscenes were chosen because they contain multilingual interactions portrayed in the game narrative. Only dialogues containing English–Spanish code mixing were included in the dataset. Other forms of language variation found in GTA V, such as African American English, criminal jargon, slang, or regional dialects, were excluded because they represent different sociolinguistic phenomena that require separate analytical frameworks. Restricting the analysis to English–Spanish code mixing allows for a more focused examination of bilingual language practices and facilitates consistent application of the selected theoretical framework.

Data were collected using the documentation method combined with systematic note-taking, allowing the researchers to systematically record and organize relevant linguistic data for subsequent analysis (Patton, 2015; Saldaña, 2021). First, the selected gameplay sessions and cutscenes were observed repeatedly. Gameplay recordings were reviewed while the in-game subtitles were transcribed verbatim. For each occurrence of English–Spanish code mixing, the researcher recorded gameplay context, timestamp, speaker, original dialogue, and surrounding conversational context. Each dialogue was subsequently cross-checked with official subtitles to ensure transcription accuracy and data authenticity. This verification procedure was employed to verify that every dialogue analyzed in the study originated from GTA V and accurately represented the original in-game utterance.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using the Identity and Interactional Sociolinguistics framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) together with the code-mixing classification adopted in this study (Poplack, 1980). The analysis consisted of four stages. First, all dialogue excerpts containing English–Spanish code mixing were identified and classified according to the selected code-mixing categories. Second, each dialogue was interpreted in relation to its narrative context, including the characters involved, the interactional setting, and the communicative purpose of the utterance. Third, the occurrence of code mixing was examined in relation to sociolinguistic factors, particularly ethnicity, regional background, social networks, and situational context, to explain how multilingual language choices reflect identity construction and social relationships. Finally, the findings were interpreted to demonstrate how English–Spanish code mixing functions as a meaningful linguistic resource for representing multicultural urban identities within the digital narrative of *Grand Theft Auto V*.

3. Discussions

This section discusses the results of the analysis conducted to answer the research questions about the types of code mixing used by the characters in Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V). The data were taken from various dialogues spoken by the main and supporting characters throughout the gameplay. The analysis identified different types of code mixing based on the classification proposed by Poplack (1980), including intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag code mixing.

3.1 Types of Code Mixing

3.1.1 Intra Sentential Code Mixing

Intra-sentential code mixing refers to the insertion of linguistic elements from one language into a sentence that is primarily structured in another language. This type of code mixing occurs within a single clause or sentence and does not involve a complete switch of language between sentences. Based on the collected data, intra-sentential code mixing in GTA V mainly involves the insertion of Spanish words, phrases, or slang into English sentences. English functions as the matrix language, while Spanish elements serve as embedded language components. These insertions usually occur in the form of adjectives, nouns, interjections, or culturally specific terms that add emphasis, emotion, or social meaning to the utterance. The use of such mixed forms creates a more realistic and authentic representation of urban speech, particularly in settings that depict street life, crime, and close social interactions.

Data 1

Character: Franklin Clinton

Dialogue: “Man, this situation is *loco*, we gotta move fast.”

In this dialogue, the Spanish adjective *loco* is inserted into an English sentence. Grammatically, the sentence remains English, but the inclusion of the Spanish word intensifies the emotional expression of urgency and danger. The choice of *loco* instead of its English equivalent “crazy” reflects Franklin’s cultural environment and social background, where Spanish expressions are commonly used alongside English. This linguistic choice reinforces Franklin’s identity as a character who is deeply rooted in a multicultural urban setting.

Data 2

Character: Franklin Clinton

Dialogue: “We take this route, *rápido*, so nobody sees us.”

The dialogue above shows an example of intra-sentential code mixing because the Spanish word *rápido* is inserted into an English sentence. The grammatical structure of the sentence remains English, while the inserted word functions as an adverb describing how the action should be carried out. The use of *rápido* instead of the English equivalent “quickly” emphasizes urgency and efficiency in a more expressive way. This linguistic choice reflects Franklin’s habitual speech style, which frequently integrates Spanish expressions due to his multicultural social environment. The insertion of the Spanish lexical item does not interrupt the syntactic flow of the sentence but instead enhances emotional intensity and immediacy.

Intra-sentential code mixing contributes to narrative realism within the game. By incorporating mixed-language expressions, the game mirrors real-life communication practices in multilingual urban communities. This linguistic strategy allows players to perceive the characters as more authentic and believable. The natural flow of mixed-language dialogue helps establish a strong connection between the character and the social setting in which the narrative takes place.

3.1.2 Inter Sentential Code Mixing

Inter-sentential code mixing refers to the alternation of two or more languages across sentence boundaries, where one sentence or clause is spoken in one language and the following sentence or clause is spoken in another language. Unlike intra-sentential code mixing, which occurs within a single sentence, inter-sentential code mixing requires a higher level of linguistic competence because the speaker must be able to switch between complete grammatical systems. In *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V), this type of code mixing is commonly found in dialogues that involve strong emotions, power struggles, or intense interactions between characters. Based on the collected data, inter-sentential code mixing appears frequently in confrontational scenes, arguments, and moments of urgency. Characters tend to switch languages between sentences to intensify meaning, assert dominance, or convey emotional instability. In GTA V, English usually functions as the primary language, while Spanish is often used as the secondary language to strengthen expression and add cultural nuance.

Data 3

Character: Trevor Philips

Dialogue: “You don’t mess with me. *Ahora escucha bien.*”

The dialogue above is an example of inter-sentential code mixing because the speaker alternates between two different languages across sentence boundaries. The first sentence, “You don’t mess with me,” is delivered in English and functions as a direct threat that establishes dominance and authority. The second sentence, “*Ahora escucha bien,*” means “Now listen carefully” and is expressed in Spanish, clearly marking a shift in language from the previous

sentence. This language switch strengthens the intensity of the utterance. By moving from English to Spanish, Trevor adds emphasis and seriousness to his warning. The Spanish sentence functions as a reinforcement of the threat, commanding the listener to pay close attention. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this instance of inter-sentential code mixing reflects Trevor Philips' aggressive and unstable personality. His abrupt shift between languages mirrors his unpredictable behavior and tendency to assert power through confrontational speech. The use of Spanish also suggests a strategic choice to intensify meaning and create psychological pressure on the listener.

Data 4

Character: Supporting character

Dialogue: "We need to leave now. *Vámonos antes de que llegue la policía.*"

The dialogue above represents an instance of inter-sentential code mixing because the speaker alternates between two languages across sentence boundaries. The first sentence, "We need to leave now," is expressed in English and functions as an urgent statement indicating immediate action. The second sentence, "*Vámonos antes de que llegue la policía,*" is delivered in Spanish, which translates into English as "Let's go before the police arrive." The shift from English to Spanish strengthens the sense of urgency already established in the first sentence. By repeating the intention to leave in another language, the speaker emphasizes the seriousness of the situation and reinforces the need for immediate movement. The Spanish sentence provides additional detail about the reason for leaving, specifically the approaching danger represented by the police. In this case, the first sentence is in English, expressing urgency, while the second sentence is in Spanish, reinforcing the command to leave immediately. The use of Spanish after English strengthens the sense of danger and panic. This type of code mixing reflects how bilingual speakers may switch languages to express heightened emotion or urgency more effectively.

3.1.3 Tag Code Mixing

Tag code mixing refers to the insertion of a short word, phrase, or fixed expression from one language into an utterance that is otherwise structured in another language. This type of code mixing usually involves tags such as discourse markers, address terms, exclamations, or fillers, and it does not affect the grammatical structure of the main sentence. In *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V), tag code mixing appears frequently in casual conversations and informal interactions, making it an important linguistic feature in character dialogue. Based on the collected data, tag code mixing in GTA V commonly involves the use of Spanish words or expressions inserted into English sentences. These tags often function as terms of address, expressions of agreement, or markers of familiarity. Because tag code mixing requires minimal syntactic integration, it is considered the simplest form of code mixing. However, despite its structural simplicity, tag code mixing plays a significant role in conveying social meaning and shaping character identity.

Data 5

Character: Michael De Santa

Dialogue: "You know what I'm saying, *amigo*?"

In this utterance, the Spanish word *amigo* is inserted at the end of an English sentence. The word functions as a tag that addresses the listener directly. Grammatically, the sentence remains English, and the Spanish word does not alter its structure. The use of *amigo* creates a casual and friendly tone, suggesting familiarity or an attempt to build rapport between the

speakers. This reflects Michael's tendency to adopt informal language to navigate social interactions smoothly.

Data 6

Character: Supporting character

Dialogue: "Relax, *hombre*, everything's under control."

In the beginning of the sentence, the tag functions as an informal address term, emphasizing closeness and shared social space. The use of such tags reflects how multilingual speakers naturally insert culturally familiar expressions into speech to express emotion or attitude without switching fully into another language.

Tag code mixing in GTA V is often associated with relaxed, non-threatening situations, unlike inter-sentential code mixing, which tends to occur in high-tension moments. Characters use tag code mixing to soften commands, add humor, or express sarcasm. This linguistic strategy helps maintain conversational flow while subtly signaling cultural background or group membership.

Intra-sentential mimics how multilingual speakers naturally speak in multicultural contexts. When a speaker completely changes languages from one phrase to another, inter-sentential code mixing happens less frequently. The least common is tag code mixing, which is typically employed to introduce informal expressions like brief tags or interjections from another language or to highlight emotion.

3.2 Factors Influencing Code Mixing Variation in GTA V

The second investigation focuses on determining how the characters' multilingual behaviors are influenced by some factors. The major factors found to be influencing language variation were ethnicity, region, situational context, and social networks as key variables that systematically influence the occurrence and functions of English-Spanish code mixing in the dialogues. The findings indicate that language variation is not random or accidental, but socially structured and closely connected to identity construction, group membership, and social positioning. Each factor contributes in specific ways: ethnicity signals cultural heritage and community belonging; region shapes dialectal differences; context determines levels of formality; and social networks reinforce shared linguistic features within peer groups. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that language variation emerges from the interaction between individual speakers and their social environments, functioning as a meaningful reflection of social structure and human interaction rather than as mere irregularity in language use.

3.2.1 Ethnicity

Ethnic background contributes to language variation through shared history, cultural traditions, and community membership. Particular accents, expressions, or speech patterns may signal affiliation with a specific ethnic group. These linguistic features often serve as markers of identity and solidarity. In multilingual or multicultural societies, contact between languages can produce distinctive ethnic varieties. These forms should not be regarded as incorrect versions of the standard language but as meaningful reflections of cultural identity.

Data 7

Character: Franklin Clinton

Context: Conversation with a business contact

Dialogue: “This contract needs to be reviewed carefully before we proceed.”

Dialogue: “That deal was risky, *carnal*, but we pulled it off.”

Franklin inserts the Spanish word “*carnal*,” which means “brother” or “close friend.” This code mixing indexes contact with Latino culture and multicultural urban communities. In sociolinguistic terms, the use of Spanish lexical items within English speech can function as an ethnic marker, signaling solidarity with Hispanic or Chicano identity groups, or at least close interaction with them. It reflects shared neighborhood culture and cross-ethnic social networks.

Data 8

Character: Trevor Philips

Context 1: Strategic planning

Dialogue: “We wait until nightfall. That’s the safest option.”

Dialogue: “You think I’m afraid? *Mira quién manda aquí*.”

In the second dialogue, however, Trevor inserts the Spanish clause “*Mira quién manda aquí*” (Look who’s in charge here). This code mixing introduces an ethnic element into the interaction. Even if Trevor himself is not ethnically Latino, the use of Spanish can index contact with Hispanic communities or reflect the multilingual environment of Los Santos in Grand Theft Auto V. In multicultural urban settings, borrowing from Spanish can function as a marker of toughness, street credibility, or alignment with local ethnic groups.

3.2.2 Region (Geographical location)

Geographical location is a major source of linguistic diversity. Speakers from different regions may develop unique dialects that vary in accent, vocabulary, and grammar. Regional variation can exist within one country or across several countries that share a common language. Different areas may use distinct terms for the same object or pronounce certain sounds differently. Over time, geographic separation and limited interaction among communities contribute to the development of regional dialects. Even within relatively small areas, urban and rural speech can show clear differences.

Data 9

Character: Franklin Clinton

Region: South Los Santos

Dialogue: “We gotta stay sharp, *ese*. This city don’t forgive.”

From a regional perspective, both data illustrate how code mixing reflects the multicultural geography of Los Santos and its surrounding areas in Grand Theft Auto V. In South Los Santos, Franklin’s insertion of the Spanish term “*ese*” indexes close contact with Latino communities typical of urban neighborhoods inspired by Los Angeles. The code mixing signals regional identity shaped by ethnic diversity and street culture. Similarly, in Blaine County, Trevor’s use of “*amigo*” reflects the borderland atmosphere of a desert region culturally connected to Mexico. In both cases, Spanish lexical insertions within English dialogue function as regional markers, showing how geographical setting influences linguistic practices and constructs localized identity through everyday multilingual interaction.

Data 10

Character: Denise Clinton

Region: Los Santos Westside

Dialogue: “I’ll pick you up *en la tarde*, don’t worry.”

In this Westside Los Santos context, Denise's insertion of the Spanish phrase "*en la tarde*" ("in the afternoon") shows how code mixing can reflect a regional identity tied to everyday interactions in neighborhoods with significant bilingual populations. Here, English provides the main grammatical frame, while Spanish lexical items index cultural connections and local linguistic norms. This use of code mixing illustrates how speakers adapt language to their regional environment, signaling both social awareness and participation in the multilingual dynamics of Los Santos.

3.2.3 Context

Language varies according to the communicative situation, a concept referred to as register. Register involves the level of formality and stylistic choices appropriate for a given context. The language used in formal settings, such as job interviews or academic presentations, is typically more structured and formal than everyday conversation with friends. Speakers adjust their tone, vocabulary, and grammatical complexity based on their audience and purpose. This adaptability demonstrates that language is flexible and responsive to social circumstances.

Data 11

Character: Lamar Davis

Context: Negotiating a deal on a busy street corner

Dialogue: "Check the stock, *asegúrate que todo esté correcto*, before the buyers arrive."

In this example, the context a bustling street deal drives the use of code mixing. Lamar combines English task-oriented vocabulary ("check the stock," "before the buyers arrive") with the Spanish phrase "*asegúrate que todo esté correcto*" ("make sure everything is correct") to give clear instructions under time pressure. The situational context of urgency and public negotiation encourages the blending of languages, demonstrating how speakers adapt their multilingual resources to fit immediate circumstances while ensuring the message is effective and socially appropriate.

Data 12

Character: Trevor Philips

Context: Planning a high-speed escape after a heist

Dialogue: "We hit the freeway *rápido y sin problemas*, then split at the first exit, understood?"

From a contextual perspective, this dialogue illustrates how code mixing is influenced by the immediate situational demands. Trevor combines English phrases like "hit the freeway" and "split at the first exit" with the Spanish insertion "*rápido y sin problemas*" ("quickly and without problems") to convey urgency and precision. The choice to mix languages here is shaped by the high-pressure, fast-paced context of the escape, signaling both efficiency in communication and alignment with a bilingual crew. This shows that code mixing can be strategically employed based on context, allowing speakers to adapt their language to situational needs while maintaining clarity and social cohesion.

3.2.4 Social Network

Patterns of interaction within social networks strongly influence language behavior. Individuals tend to adopt the speech styles of those with whom they interact frequently. Close-knit groups often maintain distinctive linguistic features because members reinforce one another's usage. Among adolescents, peer influence is particularly strong. Young people may

adopt specific slang, pronunciation patterns, or expressions to signal group membership. Strong social ties can either encourage linguistic innovation or preserve traditional forms.

Data 13

Character: Franklin Clinton

Context: Chatting with close friends about weekend plans

Dialogue: “We’re hitting the club *este fin de semana, amigos*, so everyone’s gotta be ready by 10.”

From a social network perspective, this dialogue shows how code mixing reflects relationships and group membership. Franklin uses English as the main structure while inserting the Spanish phrase “*este fin de semana, amigos*” (“this weekend, friends”) to signal solidarity and intimacy with his peer group. The choice of language is influenced by the close-knit social network he interacts with, where bilingual expressions strengthen bonds and create a sense of shared identity. Code mixing here functions less as a formal linguistic strategy and more as a marker of social cohesion within a particular network.

Data 14

Character: Lamar Davis

Context: Coordinating a crew for a local job

Dialogue: “Make sure the deliveries are done *sin problema, compas*, and everyone stays on schedule.”

In this example, Lamar blends English with the Spanish phrase “*sin problema, compas*” (“without problem, buddies”) to communicate with his trusted crew. The multilingual insertion reflects the social network of close collaborators who share cultural and linguistic ties. Code mixing in this context reinforces trust, solidarity, and group loyalty, showing that the structure of a speaker’s social network strongly influences when and how languages are combined in everyday interaction. Through these examples, it becomes clear that code mixing variation among the characters in GTA V is influenced by multiple factors. Characters do not mix languages randomly; their language choices are shaped by regional background, social networks, and situational contexts. Each instance of code-mixing functions as a strategic resource, allowing characters to reflect their regional identity, demonstrate professional or educational knowledge, maintain social bonds, or adapt to specific circumstances.

In GTA V, language operates not only as a means of communication but also as a way for characters to navigate their social environment, signaling relationships, group membership, and cultural positioning while performing their roles within the game world. The examples above demonstrate that code mixing variation among the characters in GTA V is shaped by multiple factors and is not uniform across all interactions. Characters adjust their use of languages depending on ethnicity, region, social network, and situational context. Code mixing does not occur in every utterance but emerges selectively to achieve specific social, cultural, or communicative goals. In line with a factor-based perspective, the variation in multilingual usage highlights how these influencing factors interact, showing that language choices are strategic and context-dependent. This dynamic approach to code mixing emphasizes the complexity and realism of the characters’ speech patterns within the game’s social world.

4. Novelties (Bold 12)

The novelty of this study lies in extending sociolinguistic research on code mixing into the domain of digital narrative discourse through the analysis of *Grand Theft Auto V* (GTA V).

Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined code mixing in face-to-face interaction, classroom communication, social media, or broadcast discourse, this study demonstrates that multilingual dialogue in commercial video games constitutes a valuable source of sociolinguistic data. Specifically, it provides a systematic analysis of English–Spanish code mixing in *GTA V* by integrating structural classification of code mixing with the Identity and Interactional Sociolinguistics framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). This integrated approach reveals how bilingual language practices function not only as linguistic phenomena but also as interactional resources through which characters construct identities, negotiate social relationships, and represent the multicultural realities of an urban environment. Consequently, this study contributes to sociolinguistics by expanding the application of code-mixing analysis to digital discourse, to video game studies by demonstrating the linguistic significance of character dialogue, and to identity research by illustrating how multilingual practices shape character representation within interactive digital narratives.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the occurrence of English–Spanish code mixing in the dialogues of *Grand Theft Auto V* (*GTA V*) and identified the social factors influencing its variation. The analysis revealed three types of code mixing based on Poplack's (1980) classification, namely intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag code mixing. These forms of code mixing are systematically employed throughout the game's dialogue and serve as meaningful linguistic resources within the narrative rather than as random language alternation.

The findings further demonstrate that the variation of code mixing is shaped by several sociolinguistic factors, including ethnicity, regional background, situational context, and social networks. These factors influence how characters select and combine English and Spanish to construct identities, express social relationships, and reflect the multicultural urban environment represented in Los Santos. Accordingly, the study supports the view that multilingual language practices in digital narratives are socially motivated and context-dependent, reinforcing the relationship between language, identity, and interaction proposed in contemporary sociolinguistic theory.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of sociolinguistic analysis to digital narrative discourse by integrating structural code-mixing analysis with the Identity and Interactional Sociolinguistics framework of Bucholtz and Hall (2005). It also demonstrates that video game dialogue constitutes a valuable source of sociolinguistic data for examining multilingual language practices and identity construction in contemporary digital media.

Nevertheless, this study is limited to English–Spanish code mixing identified in a relatively small corpus of dialogues from a single video game. Consequently, the findings should not be generalized to multilingual practices in digital narratives more broadly. Future studies are encouraged to examine larger datasets, compare multilingual language use across different video games or digital media, and explore additional sociolinguistic dimensions, such as language ideology, stance, or identity performance, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of multilingual communication in interactive digital environments.

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