

# Code-Switching in Bilingual Spanish-English Speaking Children

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Capstone Independent Research Study  
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## Introduction

### ELs

- English Learners account of about 10 of the elementary school population in the United States.
- More than 75 percent of ELs in 2014–15 were Hispanic or Latino but made up just 25 percent of all students.
- Bilinguals may have a variety of skills in each language depending on several factors such as age of acquisition of L2, parental use of L1 and L2, and language used by siblings and peers.

### Code-Switching

- Follows grammatical rules in that code-switched utterances do not violate the grammar of either languages
- With the increase of dual-language learners within this country, it is important to study how code-switching varies as a function of language, gender, and grade/age.

## Methods

- Secondary data analysis of longitudinal data collected as part of parent study (Francis, et al., 2005).
- Each child in the study was initially read aloud one story (e.g., *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969), in either English or Spanish, and then the child was asked to retell it. The same procedure, using a different story (e.g., On Frog Too Many) was repeated in the other language.
- This procedure was done as the students progressed in grades (Kindergarten, Grade 1, & Grade 2)
- The transcripts were then analyzed used the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) computer program to analyze the frequency of code-switching.
- In order to determine the use of codeswitching, transcripts were analyzed for codeswitches at the **word** (CS) and **utterance** level (C).
- The prevalence of code-switching was determined by calculating three percentages which include:
  - Percentage of children who code-switched
  - Percentage of utterances that were code-switched
  - Percentage of words code-switched

## Discussion

Bilingual children code switched more often in their Spanish narratives (38%) than in their English narratives (25%).

Codeswitching varied by grade in English and Spanish samples.

In the Spanish narratives, there was an increase in codeswitching by grade 2 (37%, 34%, and 44% in K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>).

In the English narratives, there was a gradual decrease by grades (35%, 26%, 14% in K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>).

No gender differences in the number of boys and girls who code switched was evident (30% and 32%).

The number of utterances code switched and the number of words codeswitched followed similar pattern:

Increase in the number of utterances and words codeswitched in Spanish

Decrease in the number of utterances and words codeswitched in English. Highest code switching occurred in the English narratives of Kindergarten children

### Clinical Implications:

Spanish-English ELs are more likely to code-switch from Spanish to English during a narrative.

## Research Questions

The current study used Language Sample Analysis to answer the following questions:

- In which of the two languages is codeswitching most evident?
- Does the amount of codeswitching vary across grades?
- Does the amount of codeswitching vary across genders?

## Participants

- Spanish-English Dual Language Learners (DLLs)
  - English Narratives:** 1227 participants
  - Males: Kindergarten (N520), Grade 1 (N178), Grade 2 (N168)
  - Females: Kindergarten (N236), Grade 1 (N240), Grade 2 (N231)
  - Spanish Narratives:** 1230 Participants
  - Males: Kindergarten (N174), Grade 1 (N180), Grade 2 (N168)
  - Females: Kindergarten (N236), Grade 1 (N216), Grade 2 (N232)

## Results

Table 4: By Gender + Grade	Grade	Gender	Percent of children CS	Percent of utterances CS	Percent of words CS
Spanish	K	Males	40.0	2.58	0.71
		Females	35.0	1.60	0.42
	1	Males	38.1	2.30	0.48
		Females	30.5	2.09	0.43
	2	Males	49.7	3.09	0.49
		Females	40.9	2.09	0.36
English	K	Males	32.7	4.06	1.57
		Females	37.2	3.30	1.47
	1	Males	24.7	1.37	0.24
		Females	24.5	1.17	0.21
	2	Males	11.3	0.47	0.07
		Females	17.3	0.68	0.09

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