

# Elementary Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Their Students' Use of Code-Switching in South Texas<sup>1</sup>

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This study was an attempt to investigate some of the academic consequences of elementary teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards their students' use of code-switching in a South Texas border area. The study presented both qualitative and quantitative data to examine and compare the teachers' discourse patterns from fourteen different elementary schools, seven South Texas and seven North Texas schools located in a southern region of the United States. A non-parametric test including descriptive statistics was used. The focus of this study consisted of describing the impact of elementary teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards their students' use of code-switching and their implications in elementary education.

**Keywords:** code-switching, code-mixing, social mirrors, minority group, bilingualism.

## **Actitudes y creencias de los profesores de primaria sobre el cambio de código en un distrito del Sur de Texas**

En este estudio se presentan algunas de las consecuencias académicas que tienen las creencias y actitudes de los maestros de escuelas primarias en la frontera sur de los Estados Unidos hacia el uso del cambio de código (*code-switching*). El estudio incluye datos cuantitativos y cualitativos para analizar y comparar patrones discursivos de 278 profesores en 14 escuelas, 7 del norte y 7 del sur, de la frontera sur del estado de Texas. Se realizó una prueba no paramétrica incluyendo estadísticas descriptivas. El objetivo principal fue describir el impacto de las creencias y actitudes de los maestros de escuelas primarias hacia el uso del cambio de código en sus alumnos, así como sus efectos en la formación.

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<sup>1</sup> This investigation is part of the doctoral dissertation entitled: A Comparative Analysis of Teachers' Discourse Patterns Regarding Language Policies and the Use of Code-Switching at the Elementary Level in a Southern U.S Border Region. During the course of this research, the main researcher, Dr. Nava, was working as an assistant researcher under the mentorship of Dr. Emma A. Garza in the Department of Bilingual Education at Texas A & M University-Kingsville, U.S.A. She was awarded with an assistant-researcher scholarship from August 2004 to December 2006.

**Palabras clave:** cambio de código, mezcla de códigos, estereotipos sociales, grupo minoritario, y bilingüismo.

**Attitudes et croyances des enseignants du primaire face à l'usage du *code-switching* dans une région du Texas Sud**

Cette étude tente d'explorer les conséquences des attitudes et des croyances des enseignants face à l'usage de l'alternance de codes (*code-switching*) chez les élèves de l'école primaire dans une région frontalière du Texas Sud aux États-Unis. Cette étude comprend des données quantitatives et qualitatives pour analyser et comparer les modèles discursifs de 278 professeurs dans 14 écoles primaires (7 du Nord et 7 du Sud). Un test non paramétré incluant des statistiques descriptives a été réalisé. L'objectif principal était de décrire l'impact des attitudes et des croyances des enseignants sur l'utilisation l'alternance de codes par les élèves ainsi que leur impact sur l'éducation dans le primaire.

**Mots clés:** alternance de codes, mélange de codes, stéréotypes sociaux, groupes minoritaires, bilinguisme.

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This study attempted to raise teacher awareness regarding the role of code-switching in their students' linguistic development as well as the recognition of it as a communicative strategy conducive to learning. The hypothesis is that code-switching represents a sign of bilingualism in children's linguistic development, which sometimes is obstructed by teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards this particular linguistic phenomenon. This discussion leads to a further distinction to identify which language is used for everyday communication and which one is used in academia.

Code-switching occurs as part of the speaker's linguistic tools that students living in the South Texas border utilize to connect what is familiar with what is new or unfamiliar. It is the speaker's normal processing of linguistic cues that become prevalent in spoken and at times written language. In addition, if code-switching is accepted in academic settings as a normal phenomenon of bilingualism/bicognitivism, a more positive outcome could be experienced by bilingual children, especially those who are exposed to two languages constantly within their communities (Liang, 2006). Good and Brophy (2003), for instance, also suggest that teachers' expectations are inferences they make about the future behavior

or academic achievement of their students, based on what they know about them now (immediate experience). The evidence suggests that attempts have been made to relate teachers' attitudes and perceptions to the social environment from which they come. Teachers, therefore, try to recreate a society in their classrooms using social mirrors.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Along the South Texas border region, for instance, Spanish and English are the major spoken languages. Consequently, code-switching has been the result of this linguistic contact. However, code-switching users are looked down by their monolingual counterparts. Moreover, the enrollment of Spanish-speaking monolingual children in United States public school system is increasing nationally. The reactions are thus different towards the children's overwhelming language needs. Spanish-speaking children are usually labeled as Limited English Proficient (LEP, hereafter) or linguistically disadvantaged; and they are transitioned at an early age from their mother tongue to the target language. As a consequence, it is necessary to investigate the impact and effects of teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards their students' language use, while being transitioned from one language to another. This forced transition does not credit or value the mother tongue for its role in creating a bilingual individual.

#### **REVIEW OF THE SELECTED LITERATURE**

To begin this discussion, it is important to describe briefly the role of social attitudes and beliefs that teachers' might have towards their students' mother tongue. Research has shown that teachers who hold negative, ethnocentric or racist attitudes towards English language learners (ELLs, hereafter), or who believe in any of the numerous fallacies surrounding the education of language minority students, often fail to meet their academic and social needs and work to maintain the hegemonic legitimacy of the dominant social order (Tse, 2001; Valdes, 2001; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Liang, 2006). Additionally, Krashen (2002) declares that evidence of societal attitudes and its consequences can be observed in Arizona, California and Massachusetts, where voter referendums have

banned bilingual education and rejected ELL (English Language Learner) instruction for a single year of structured immersion<sup>2</sup>. Voters in these states have been influenced largely by prevailing societal attitudes, media bias, and propaganda campaigns supported by organizations such as “English for the Children” and “English-only” rather than accurate educational research. For instance, Baker (2006) suggests that assessment *per se* is an alternative form to emphasize the negative attitudes of a dominant culture over a non dominant culture such as that formed by the Hispanic children in the U.S.

In this regards, pioneer work was done by a group in Canada led by Lambert, of McGill University in Montreal, and by Gardner, of the University of Western Ontario (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, in Stern, 1983). In this study, it was found that while attitude measures show a slight change in a positive direction; the data from the interviews prove that the participants do not spontaneously produce the stereotypes of the kind included in attitude tests, but express an affective response to their immediate experience, and expressly refuse to generalize about characteristics of Anglophones and Francophones (Hanna, Smith, Mclean, & Stern, 1980).

For Lippmann (1992), the distinction between “the world outside and the pictures in our heads” not only led him to the first discussion of stereotypes, but also neatly encapsulated the essence of cognitive social psychology. This emphasis on cognition has been the focal point on the study of perception, evaluation, interpretation, attribution, among others (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997). In other words, when people overgeneralize an idea or concept over a certain category or group, it gradually becomes accepted and transformed into a social norm.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Baker (2006), English Language Learner Instruction is provided as *pull out* classes. This type of instruction is intended for language minority students who are withdrawn from their mainstream classrooms in order to receive ESL instruction. However, the societal and educational aim is assimilation and subtractive schooling. As a result, monolingualism (in the dominant language) is produced. Similarly, structured immersion or mainstreaming/submersion schooling implies a fast move into the L2 in the second language context or setting, in this process, the students are exposed to tailored language and curriculum content. In contrast, Canadian immersion programs address two languages biculturally. In other words, the success of those programs relies greatly on the gradual development of the L2 without eliminating students’ L1. The outcome of these programs is two-pronged: bilingualism and biliteracy. Finally, students in these programs are enriched and socially empowered.

Walker, Shafes and Liams (2004), in a later work, conclude that “it is crucial to remember that negative attitudes are quick to develop but slow to change” (p. 156). As a consequence, major efforts are needed in order to help teachers effectively. For instance, teachers who deal with ELLs should use an inclusive policy in their teaching practices such as wide-ranging settings, more comprehensive and appropriate activities, and long-term goals to avoid negative attitudes that delay progress and academic achievement.

### **DEFINITIONS OF STEREOTYPES**

Definitions of stereotypes vary widely and cannot be considered in detail in this study. Moreover, defining stereotypes could be a complex task to do since terms such as prejudices, stereotyping, discrimination, racism, and sexism often overlap in education (Myers, 1996). Stereotypes determine behavior since they are attitudes that predispose human behavior (Halonen & Santrock, 1996). Additionally, Myers (1996) adds that to stereotype is to generalize. Human beings tend to simplify the world by generalizing. Consequently, stereotypes can be overgeneralized, inaccurate, and resistant to new information. Stereotypes also involve a combination of feelings, inclinations to act, and beliefs (Myers, 1996). For instance, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) depict the tremendous ethnic tensions that prevails in many American schools and how this process impacts students' academic achievement.

### **Language Characterizes Cultural and Social Identity**

Language is a meaningful variable that characterizes an individual's cultural and social identity (Crystal, 2006). Children learn certain stereotypes about speakers of a language other than English in their communities. Therefore, the perception that some children grow up with is that Hispanics have negative socio-economic consequences in the U.S. The problem with this perception is that school systems often mirror the ethnic and linguistic stereotypes illustrated by the many experiences of Hispanics (Gutmann, 1987). Education policies set-up on behalf of minority students aggravate the problem of language role stereotyping. Non-discrimination has been taken to mean or imply that minority students' accessibility to bilingual programs is the solution to language

role, as well as to social and economic stereotyping. These programs have been implemented in an effort to eradicate discrimination but the premise of many bilingual programs is making a quick transition into English. It is the emphasis on monolingualism that further aggravates the problem of language role stereotyping. Language gives us a position in this world (Nettle & Romaine, 2000). It is through language that we learn how to communicate and interact with others.

Research has shown correlations between the effect of negative attitudes towards the users of a particular language and the language itself (Labov, 1982; Trudgill, 1983; Milroy & Milroy, 1992). Some of the results have also shown that social categorization embraces a cognitive process by which the social world is placed into categories or groups (Tajfel & Forgas, 1981; Mervis & Rosch, 1981). Hamilton (1979), for example, describes those cognitive biases that result from stereotypic conceptions by considering a stereotype as a 'structural framework' having the properties of a schema.

### **Code-Switching: A Linguistic and Social Variation**

The interactional and sequential levels of code-switching involve code choices that are closely connected to the performance of particular language and discourse tasks (Gumperz, 1982). The code choices made by speakers often reflect the ideology that their communities embrace with regards to language, culture, values and politics. The varieties of language alterations found in code-switching behaviors are seen in situational switching, negotiations of identity and nonreciprocal choices. Regardless of the mode of language choices selected by the speaker, the co-occurrence of switching behaviors constitutes communication codes that contextualize meaning (Álvarez-Cáccamo, 1989). Moreover, studies in various parts of the world (Ryan, Hewstone & Giles, 1984) have shown that speakers of 'high' or 'powerful' speech styles are stereotyped in terms of competence and traits related to socioeconomic status, while speakers of 'low' or 'powerless' speech styles are stereotyped less favorably among these dimensions. Teachers' stereotypes towards their students' use of code-switching impact their academic performance socially, culturally, ideologically, organizationally as well as linguistically. These divisions are stressed by important factors such as economical power, education, prestige, and language status. For the aforementioned reasons, this

paper analyzed the impact of teacher's attitudes and beliefs toward their students' use of code-switching which is considered a functional linguistic variation that resulted from the contact between the English and Spanish languages.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method of data analysis in this study was twofold. First, descriptive statistics were utilized in analyzing the ten-item survey. A quantitative type of research was also carried out in the first phase of the study in order to analyze and report the results. Second, a qualitative research method was utilized to analyze the participants' responses. Thus, a discourse analysis was implemented in order to identify the most frequent linguistic patterns in the participants' responses. The data discussed consisted of a corpus of 2,780 written responses. While the closed questions were analyzed separately, the open-ended questions were carefully designed to elicit the participants' responses. The participants were proportionately represented across the K-5<sup>th</sup> grade spectrum.

### **Instrumentation**

A ten-item survey was selected for the purposes of this paper using close and open-ended questions. The survey was developed to elicit responses related to the relationship between elementary teachers' attitudes towards their students' use of code-switching, and the impact of those teachers' beliefs towards their students' use of code-switching on the elementary students' academic performance. The open-ended questions allowed the researcher to ask participants for opinions based on their experience with code-switching. Survey questions were developed both on the basis of the literature review and on a previous pilot study that served for content and face validity purposes.

### **District and Participants Profile**

The participants for this study were 278 elementary school teachers from 14 elementary schools, 7 located in the South, and 7 located in the North side of the community. These 14 schools are located in a Southern U.S. border region. The school district chosen for this study was a pioneer

in implementing bilingual education at the first grade level in 1964. This region is characterized by a highly representative Spanish-speaking community. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, 2000, there are 166,216 Hispanics or Latinos representing 94.1 % of the total population from which 133,185 are Mexican or Mexican descendants (75. 4%). Most of the students attending the participating schools are exposed to Spanish at home. Therefore, this area serves as a filter through which thousands of Spanish-speakers enter the United States forming a major part of the language communities along this U. S. border region.

**RESULTS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE DATA**

The variables taken into account in the data base were those linguistic patterns that were classified together within groups of “subjects” or “themes”. In the questionnaire the participants were asked the following:

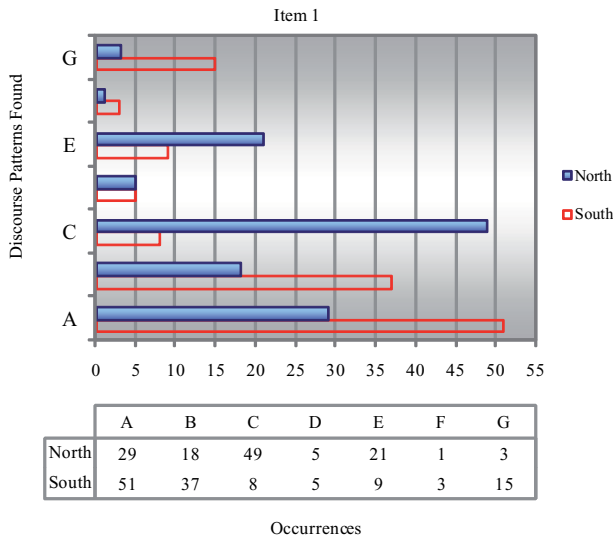


Figure 1. Do you feel that code-switching interferes with learning? If so, how does it interfere? Explain.

Note. A=It affects understanding; B=It affects the students’ oral performance; C=It does not interfere with learning; D=I do not know; E=It depends on the students’ level of proficiency in both languages; F=It is the result of the students’ low language proficiency in both languages; G=It is a natural way to communicate which is culturally embedded.



Figure 1 shows that 40% (n=51) out of n=128 participants from the South schools believed that code-switching affects their students' levels of comprehension compared to 23% (n=29) out of 126 participants from the North schools. In addition, 29% (n=37) out of n=128 participants from the South schools considered that code-switching affects their students' oral performance compared to 14% (n=18) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. A total of 6% (n=8) out of n=128 participants from the South schools indicated that code-switching does not interfere with learning as opposed to 39% (n=49) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Finally, 7% (n=9) out of n=128 participants from the South schools indicated that code-switching may or may not interfere with learning depending on the students level of proficiency in both languages compared to 16% (n=21) out of n=126 participants in the North schools.

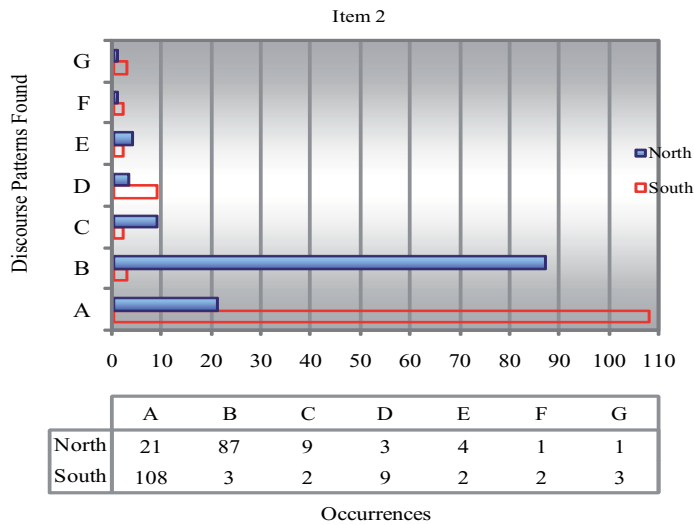


Figure 2. Does code-switching affect learning in students? Does code-switching hold students back or interfere with learning concepts? Explain.

Note. A=It does affect learning and hold students back; B=It does not affect learning; C=I do not know; D=It does affect comprehension mainly; E=It is just a cultural issue; F=Teachers consider that code-switching necessary for clarification purposes; G=Sometimes.

Figure 2 shows that 84% (n=108) out of n=129 participants from the South schools reported that code-switching affects learning in students compared to 17% (n=21) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. A total of 2% (n=3) out of n=129 participants from the South schools compared to 69% (n=87) out of 126 participants from the North schools indicated that code-switching does not affect learning. In addition, only 1% (n=2) out of n=129 participants from the South schools believed that code-switching affects comprehension as opposed to 7% (n=9) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. The majority of respondents from the North schools considered that code-switching does not affect learning compared to those respondents from the South schools who consider that it does affect learning.

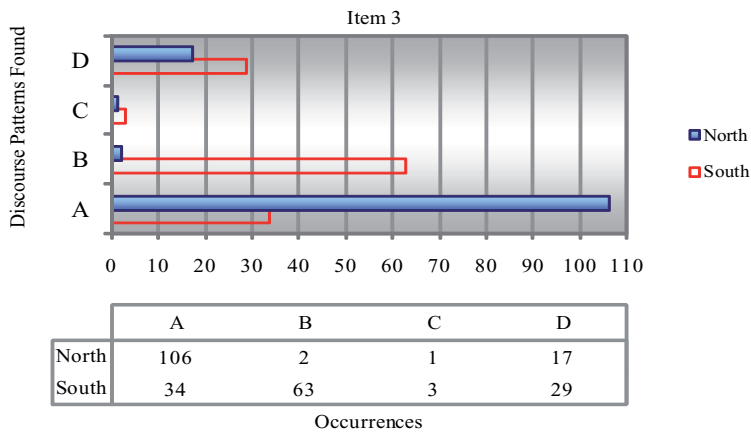


Figure 3. Are the students who code switch successful academically? Explain.

Note. A=Yes, they are; B=No, they are never successful; C=I do not know; D= Some students are academically successful.

Figure 3 shows that 26% (n=34) out of n=129 participants from the South schools reported that those students who code switch are academically successful as opposed to 84% (n=106) out of the n=126 participants from the North schools. Another significant difference is shown in comparing 50% (n=63) out of the n=129 participants from the South schools who considered that those students who code switch are never successful academically compared to only 2% (n=2) out of n=126

participants from the North schools. Data also shows that 2% (n=3) out of n=129 participants from the South schools reported that they did not know whether or not students who code switch are successful academically compared to 1% (n=1) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Finally, 22% (n=29) out of n=129 participants from the South schools mentioned that only some students who code switch are academically successful as opposed to 13% (n=17) out of n=126 participants from the North schools.

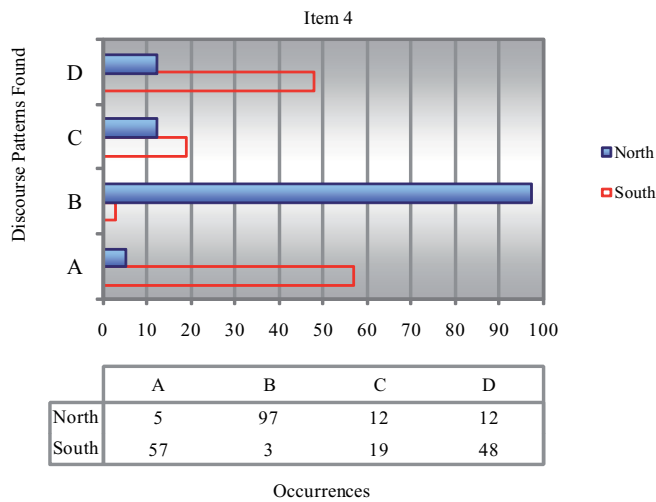


Figure 4. Do students who code switch communicate effectively with others? For example, the student who code switches is able to carry on a conversation in an academic setting as well as in an informal setting. Explain.

Note. A=No, students who code switch are unable to use language properly; B=Yes, students who code-switch communicate effectively; C=Sometimes, it depends on the students' language proficiency in both languages; D= My students never code switch.

Figure 4 shows that 45% (n=57) out of n=127 participants from the South schools reported that their students who code switch cannot communicate effectively compared to 4% (n=5) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data shows that 15% (n=19) out of n=127 participants from the South schools indicated that it all depends on their students' proficiency in both languages compared to 10% (n=12) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Moreover, 76% (n=97) out

of n=126 participants in the North schools indicated that their students who code switch communicate effectively compared to 2% (n=3) out of the n=127 participants from the South schools. Finally, 38% (n=48) out of n=127 participants from the South schools indicated that they students never code switch as opposed to 10% (n=12) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Results in this item show that the participants from the South schools considered code-switching as a linguistic limitation that prevents their students from communicating effectively with others and carry out a conversation in an academic setting as well as in an informal setting.

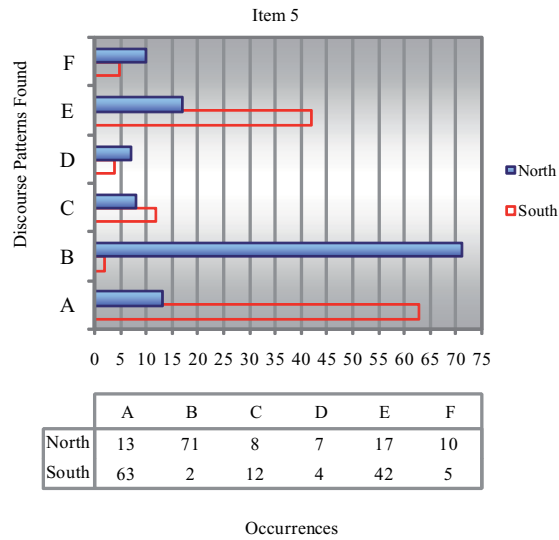


Figure 5. Is code-switching an advantage or a disadvantage? Explain.

Note. A=It is a disadvantage; it hinders communication and academic achievement; B=It is an advantage that helps students to communicate; C=It helps children transition from L1 to L2; D=Both, it is an advantage and a disadvantage; E=Disadvantage, it is a linguistic limitation; F=I do not know.

Figure 5 shows that 49% (n=63) out of n=128 participants from the South schools considered code-switching as a disadvantage that hinders communication and academic achievement if never treated as opposed to 10% (n=13) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. While 2% (n=2) out of n=128 participants from the South schools reported that code-

switching represents an advantage for students to communicate compared to 56% (n=71) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Finally, 33% (n=42) out of n=128 participants from the South schools considered code-switching as a linguistic limitation compared to 13% (n=17) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data shows a clear difference between 49% of the participants from the South schools who considered code-switching as a disadvantage that hinders communication and academic achievement if never treated; and 56% of the participants from the North schools who reported that code-switching represents an advantage for students to communicate with others. Again, there is evidence the South schools participants disagree with the use of code-switching since it represents a disadvantage for their students' academic performance.

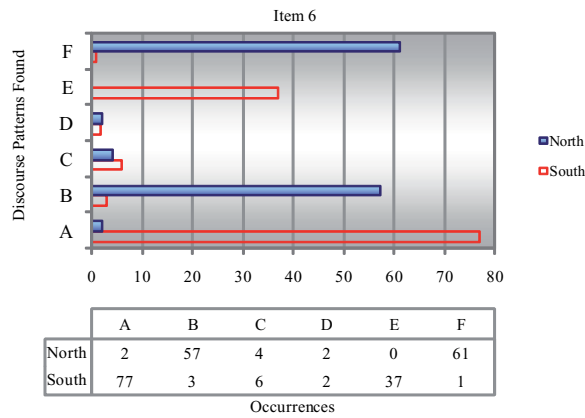


Figure 6. Do you see code-switching as a limitation (hinders communication and/or learning) or as a speaking style? Explain:

Note. A=It holds students back from becoming fluent English speakers; B=It is a culturally embedded speaking style; C=Both, a limitation and a speaking style; D=I do not know; E=Neither a limitation nor a speaking style; F=It is a linguistic and a communicative strategy.

Figure 6 shows that 61% (n=77) out of n=126 participants from the South schools indicated that code-switching holds students back from becoming fluent English speakers as opposed to 1% (n=2) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. In addition, 45% (n=57) out of n=126 participants from the North schools reported that code-switching is a culturally embedded speaking style compared to 2% (n=3) out of n=126

participants from the South schools. Data shows that 1% (n=1) out of n=126 participants from the South schools considered code-switching as a communicative strategy compared to 48% (n=61) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. 61% of the participants from the South schools considered code-switching as a deviant linguistic feature that holds students back while 48% of the participants from the North schools described code-switching as a communicative strategy. These results demonstrate a clear difference between the North and South school participants' view regarding whether or not code-switching represents a deviant linguistic form.

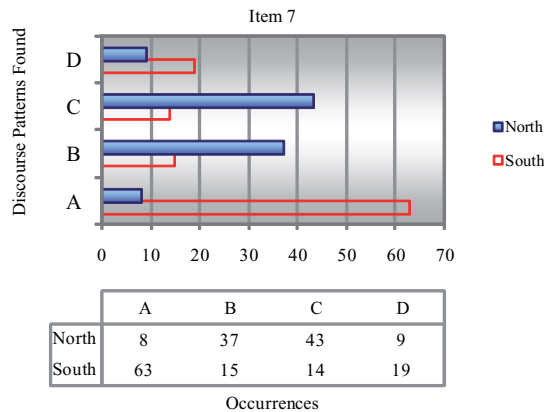


Figure 7. Do you think that code-switching should be allowed in schools? If so, under what conditions? If not, explain why not. Explain.

Note. A=No, teachers should “model” the correct way of speaking; B=It should be allowed as part of the students’ linguistic development; C=It should be allowed to help students transition from their L1 to L2; D=I do not know.

Figure 7 shows that 50% (n=63) out of n=126 participants from the South schools indicated that teachers should “model” the correct way of speaking as opposed to 6% (n=8) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. In addition, 29% (n=37) out of n=126 participants from the North schools reported that code-switching should be allowed as part of the students’ linguistic development compared to 12% (n=15) out of n=126 participants from the South schools. Data also indicates that 34% (n=43) out of n=126 participants from the North schools considered that

code-switching should be allowed to help students transition from L1 to L2 compared to 11% (n=14) out of n=126 participants from the South schools. While a significant number of participants in the South schools do not accept code-switching as a linguistic strategy that their students use for communication purposes, the participants from the North schools emphasized using it to help students have a smooth transition from L1 to L2.

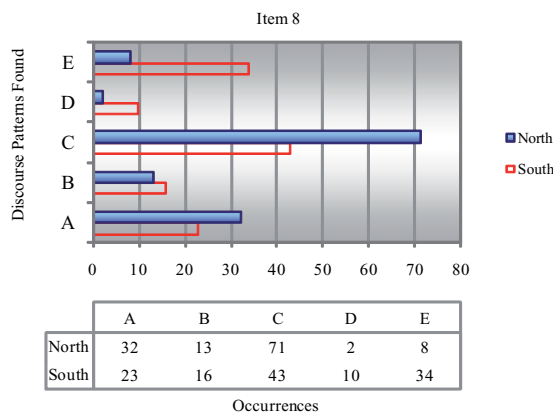


Figure 8. Do you attempt to eliminate code-switching in the classroom? What type of strategies do you use? Explain.

Note. A= Modeling (paraphrasing); B=Repeating (expanding and proving examples with correct forms of language); C=Redirecting language to English only; D=Giving instructions in either language; E=Describing what they want to say in English (using pictures, etc.).

Figure 8 illustrates that 18% (n=23) out of n=126 participants of the South schools use modeling as opposed to 25% (n=32) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. In addition, 34% (n=43) out of n=126 participants from the South schools redirect language to English only compared to 56% (n=71) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data indicates that 27% (n=34) out of n=126 participants from the South schools ask their students to describe (or draw) what they try to say in English as opposed to 6% (n=8) out of the n=126 participants from the North schools. The majority of the participants agreed on using re-directing to English-Only as the type of approach they use in their classrooms to readdress their students when they use code-switching.

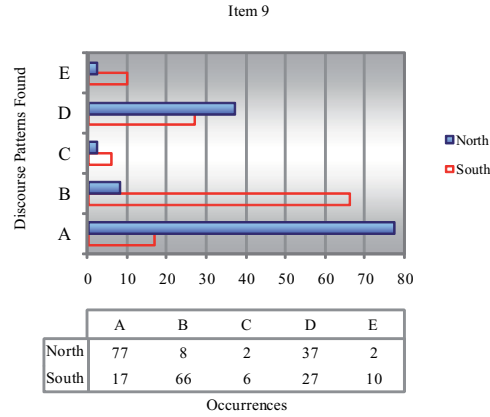


Figure 9. Do you tolerate or promote code-switching in your classroom? Is code-switching tolerated or promoted at your school? Explain.

Note. A=I tolerate code-switching because it is part of my students' language development; B=I neither tolerate nor promote it in my classroom; C=It is hard to control; it greatly depends on the students' linguistic choice; D=I tolerate it but I never promote it; E=Students who code switch do not talk to each other in my classroom.

Figure 9 shows that only 13% (n=17) out of n=126 participants from the South schools tolerate code-switching as part of their students' language development compared to 61% (n=77) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. While 52% (n=66) out of n=126 participants from the South schools neither tolerate nor promote code-switching as opposed to 6% (n=8) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data indicates that 21% (n=27) out of n=126 participants from the South schools tolerate but never promote code-switching compared to 29% (n=37) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. It was found that 61% of the participants in the North schools indicated to tolerate code-switching because it is part of their students' language development; while the majority of participants from the South schools (52% out of n=126) neither tolerate nor promote its use. Again, data shows that participants from the South schools seemed to be against the use of code-switching.



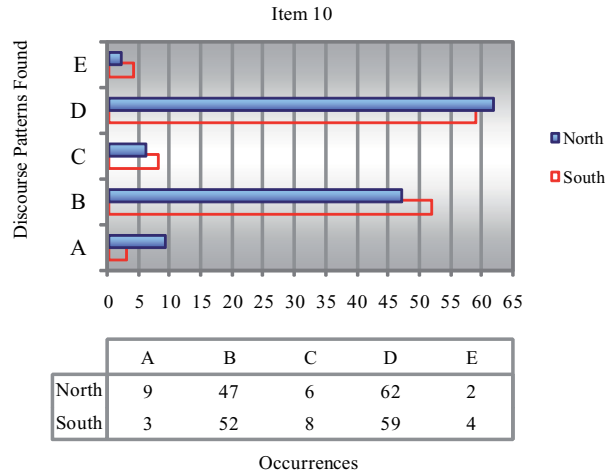


Figure 10. Do other teachers in the school tolerate or promote code-switching? Does your school district tolerate or promote code-switching? Explain.

Note. A=Some teachers do it due to their lack of linguistic skills; B=I do not know; C=The district tolerates it but they do not promote it; D=The school district neither tolerate it nor promote it; E=Yes, code-switching is tolerated.

Figure 10 illustrates that 41% (n=52) out of n=126 participants from the South schools do not know whether or not other teachers tolerate or promote code-switching compared to 37% (n=47) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data shows that 46% (n=59) out of n=126 participants from the South schools stated that the school district neither tolerate nor promotes code-switching as opposed to 49% (n=62) out of n=126 participants from the North schools. Data revealed that 46% of the participants from the South schools and 49% of the participants from the North schools agreed on accepting the fact that the school district neither tolerate it nor promote the use of code-switching. Consequently, findings obtained in both parts of the study reflect that code-switching is not part of the school district's agenda.

### RESULTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE DATA

The researcher selected the type of research—exploratory (open-ended) survey to conduct this study. The variables taken into account in the data base

were those linguistic patterns that were classified together within groups of “subjects” or “themes.” In conveying the interpretations of the participants’ responses, the researcher found it necessary to select, edit or transpose material. Always, however, the researcher tried to reproduce faithfully many of the interviews. In the following table some of the teachers’ responses are presented to illustrate the results presented above. These responses were randomly selected out of the corpus obtained in the study.

Table 1. Some Teachers’ Responses

Item description	Participants’ Responses
1. Do you feel that code-switching interferes with learning? If so, how does it interfere? Explain.	<p>A: The person will never learn the correct language techniques. Also, it makes him/her sound very unprofessional.</p> <p>B: It produces language barriers that interfere with the understanding of concepts.</p> <p>C: Students might not get the full understanding of lesson.</p> <p>D: Students become confused and make-up words to hit the language. They create a new language neither English nor Spanish but both.</p> <p>E: Yes, I do. Because then children will know certain words in English and certain in Spanish and this prohibits them from being completely fluent in any language.</p>
2. Does code-switching affect learning in students? Does code-switching hold students back or interfere with learning concepts? Explain.	<p>A: As a teacher I have noticed on one of my students that code-switching is obstructing his learning because he is learning to read but at home he does not have a strong foundation in one particular language.</p> <p>B: Yes it does. I just remind them all English or all Spanish.</p> <p>C: It could affect learning if the student never tries to find the correct way to say that word or phrase in the language he/she is using to express himself/herself.</p> <p>D: I can see its advantages in the lower grades, but as students get older code-switching becomes a sign of weakness and is less appropriate.</p> <p>E: Code-switching affects learning in a very negative way. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade unless a student is a monolingual the student expected to read, comprehend, analyze, and respond in English. The Spanish doesn’t help. It only confuses a child mostly when it comes to writing.</p>
3. Are the students who code switch successful academically? Explain.	<p>A: In writing, they are not. Grammar mechanics is missing.</p> <p>B: Some succeed and learn. Others are in a state of confusion for a period of time and then eventually catch on.</p> <p>C: They are LEP (Limited English Proficient) – stronger in L1.</p> <p>D: Some students are successful others are not.</p> <p>E: As far as communication, I see no problem, but I have the students put this communication down in writing, especially grammar wise, and it is a complete disaster! I’ve taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade 10 years out of 11 years, and every year I see their writing getting worse and worse, so obviously, something is not “connecting” in the lower grades with the teaching of writing skills.</p>

<p>4. Do students who code-switch communicate effectively with others? For example, the student who code switches is able to carry on a conversation in an academic setting as well as in an informal setting. Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: They communicate better in informal settings.</i>  <i>B: Sometimes. The students who do most of the code-switching seem to have a harder time holding ac academic conversation.</i>  <i>C: It really depends on the student. Some students are highly effective communicative with others and some are not. It also depends on the family environment.</i>  <i>D: They could probably have a conversation with friends or at home but not in an academic setting.</i>  <i>E: The students I teach cannot express themselves effectively in any language.</i></p>
<p>5. Is code-switching an advantage or disadvantage? Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: Code-switching allows the child to communicate. During the course of a child's academic career teachers should provide students with necessary vocabulary in order to lessen code-switching.</i>  <i>B: It doesn't limit communication if you are trying to improve your English and using it only to help, however, when we begin to rely on it, sounds unprofessional.</i>  <i>C: It is an advantage to practice both languages yet disadvantage to successfully dominate both languages.</i>  <i>D: It can be a disadvantage when a person cannot communicate effectively and there is a need to use both languages at the time.</i>  <i>E: It may be a disadvantage if they move up north (States)</i></p>
<p>6. Do you see code-switching as a limitation (hinders communication and/or learning) or as a speaking style? Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: I think that bothers some people.</i>  <i>B: It is a limitation. Speakers will not be able to speak with fluency and will not be able to master the second language.</i>  <i>C: For now my students are so little. Maybe later, when they gained a better development of one language, code-switching will not be an obstacle, but a speaking style.</i>  <i>D: Limitation- It interferes with speaking fluently. Speaking style- It sounds unbalanced when speaking two languages.</i>  <i>E: As a result of it students do not learn how to speak fluently in either language.</i></p>

<p>7. Do you think that code-switching should be allowed in schools? If so, under what conditions? If not, explain why not. Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: Not from teachers. For students it can be acceptable to a limit.                  B: The child should be taught correct English usage.                  C: I am not sure because if it is allowed as a directive by the schools then the possibility may occur that it can get out of hand and really hurt the student more than help.                  D: Teachers should model for students the correct way of communicating in both languages.                  E: Only with recent immigrants.</i></p>
<p>8. Do you attempt to eliminate code-switching in the classroom? What type of strategies do you use? Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: I tell students that they need to speak in one language or another and not both because it might confuse them when they are reading or writing.                  B: Redirect to English-only.                  C: I have a reward system for those who do not code-switch at the end of the day.                  D: I do attempt to eliminate code-switching in the classroom.                  E: It is not used in my classroom. My English speakers are to speak only English and my Spanish speakers have to express themselves in Spanish.</i></p>
<p>9. Do you tolerate or promote code-switching in your classroom? Is code-switching tolerated or promoted at your school? Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: Code-switching is not tolerated or promoted in school but it is done in the classroom when it is necessary.                  B: I have never brought it up to my students                  C: It is not tolerated in school.                  D: I do not feel that “tolerate” is the appropriate term. I accept code-switching as part of the learning environment but I do not promote it.                  E: We have to tolerate it but we do not promote it.</i></p>
<p>10. Do other teachers in the school tolerate or promote code-switching? Does your school district tolerate or promote code-switching? Explain.</p>	<p><i>A: It is tolerated but it is not promoted for the sake of the students and parents                  B: Redirect language – Academic wise                  C: This topic is not discussed school-wide. I have also never been told of a district policy for code-switching.                  D: At our school, I know that many teachers do not tolerate code-switching. Many teachers, as well as myself, even self-directed other students from other classrooms anywhere on campus. As a school district, I do not know.                  E: Other teachers do. They are doing it. I believe it is because they themselves do not know the correct English Language.</i></p>

The findings in Table 1 revealed some negative teachers’ attitudes and beliefs towards code-switching. This seems to reinforce the ideology that code-switching is a negative consequence of bilingualism or bilingual

programs. To conclude, this qualitative study attempted to go beyond a syntactical, semantic or morphological type of discourse analysis. The main objective of this study consisted on having a reflection on the power of language-in-action some practitioners use in education, and how educators transmit the English-Only language policy through their classroom discourse practices.

#### **OVERALL FINDINGS**

- First, teachers' negative attitudes (implicit and explicit) not only have an academic impact on minority children but they also have dramatic consequences in their lives producing a denial value to immigrant children achieved largely by the different social stereotypes.
- Second, derogatory expressions and thoughts provide the appearance of a logical rationale for dismissing immigrant children's linguistic, social and cultural background completely.
- Third, by institutionalizing a negative array of social mirroring against minorities, there will be no room for academic success. Furthermore, negative attitudes are grounded on many teachers' and administrators' low expectations.
- Fourth, it was found that there is more resistance towards code-switching expressed by the majority of teachers from the South side of the region than those teachers from the North side of the region. According to the geographical data collected, a significant number of teachers from the North schools have more contact with people with different ethnicities. In contrast, teachers from the South schools work daily with a representative Spanish-speaking community. Geographically speaking, the teachers from the South schools have a larger concentration of Hispanics in their classrooms. Needless to say, these teachers have higher political pressure to transition their students from their mother tongue to the target language as fast as they can. The accountability era is forcing teachers to transition students from L1 to L2 at a fast rate. Consequently, the academic cost minority students pay is too high.

- While in some parts of the world and in some cases code-switching is the exception, in many bilingual communities it is and is often seen as the norm. It seems that wherever code-switching is accepted as a norm it is perceived as uneventful, and it is readily acknowledged by the speakers in the community. Undoubtedly, code-switching behaviors do make an impact on the perceptions of community members and educators.
- Traditionally, the attitudes and beliefs that educators working with bilingual students have towards code-switching is usually that it is a random process that could be explained by first language interference and the inability to separate languages to carry on a so-called “meaningful conversation.” What is imperative to this study is that the participants hold this traditional view of code-switching. Many educators do not accept the notion that code-switching serves important communicative and cognitive functions because it is in direct conflict with normative or conventional forms and attitudes about what “good language” is, thus it is neither appreciated nor supported.

Future research may be able to firmly establish that code-switching could represent a pre-phase of language loss if it is not treated or analyzed effectively in education. The most striking evidence in favor of this assumption is the consistent lack of awareness of code-switching as a linguistic pre-condition to language loss, and the emphasis on eliminating it.

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