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**Code Switching at the California Valley: A case study of bilingual  
people**

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**“Code Switching at the California Valley: A case study of bilingual people”**

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## **Abstract**

In today's globalized world, where communication transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, the phenomenon of code switching emerges as a pivotal aspect of linguistic interaction. Code switching, the seamless alternation between two or more languages or dialects within a single discourse, serves as a lens through which we can examine the intricate interplay of language, identity, and social dynamics. This abstract delves into the multifaceted dimensions of code switching, shedding light on its cognitive, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic underpinnings.

This case of study focuses on a group of people from California Valley, a multicultural city where individuals navigate multiple linguistic repertoires in their daily lives. Through a questionnaire that was applied this research delves into the motivations, contexts and social implications of code switching in this community. Through in-depth interviews and participant observations, this research explores how language choices reflect social hierarchies and group affiliations within the community. Finally, this case study offers valuable insights into the use of code switching, highlighting its role in shaping social interactions and identity construction within a multilingual context. By showing the lived experiences of individuals navigating linguistic diversity, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of language use and its implications for intergroup relations and community cohesion.

**Keywords:** code switching, bilingualism, community of practice, daily life, interculturality.

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## **Dedication**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Language has been a fundamental part for humanity not only to communicate but also to create relationships, communities and develop culture as Antrim (2021) argued “Language will always be a significant part of who we are and who we identify with culturally, ethnically and socially” (p. 3). One of the most common ways mankind has learned about other cultures is traveling. For Mexican people one of the main destinations is the USA for the distance and for the lifestyle that has a lot of influence not only in Mexico but also around the world. In the past, migration in the USA has helped the mix of different races and therefore the mix of culture, language and even the creation of new expressions. Bilingual people are a good example of how languages can be mixed. Some bilingual people choose to switch between their first mother tongue into the second language (L2) in the middle of a conversation or even in one sentence; this is known as code switching (CS). This type of alternation between languages depends sometimes on the context or the person who is speaking. Reyes (2018) points out that this occurs by election to communicate their ideas.

### 1.1 Rationale

When I was living in Los Angeles, I used to work in a restaurant and most of the people that visited the place were bilinguals and sometimes when they entered they were talking English between them but suddenly when they started to order, they talk with me in Spanish, at the beginning I believed that they switch into Spanish because maybe they thought that I did not

speak English but even when I started to answer in English, they continue talking to me in Spanish and vice versa sometimes they were talking Spanish but when they ordered, they switch in to English. With the passing of time, some of them started using “Spanglish” or choosing the language that they used with their friends or family to talk to me. This was very interesting in the way they chose the context or the person to talk with in a specific language, also in how the community communicates.

## 1.2 Establishment of the problem

In a community of immigrants like San Fernando Valley it is easy to notice how languages mainly Spanish and English are used the whole time from the bus till the work. One of the interesting things is to notice how people in the community identify the newcomers and that could be one of the main reasons why they choose a different language in which they can communicate with them and a different one with their closer people. However, it also could depend on different factors as Adizovna (2023) stated the reason to switch between languages could be “strategically” to help other people that do not dominate a language in this way they are being solidarity and also he pointed out that this could be to declare their identity (p. 549) . I started to be more aware about how one of my coworkers talked to me because he was born and raised in Los Angeles and this could help to understand how code switching is used even to be part of a community.

### 1.3 Context of the study

This research was developed in Los Angeles, CA specifically in the San Fernando Valley. This City has a population of 24.1 k according to the last census in 2021 of the U.S. Census. California is the main state with immigrants, 10.5 million and 33% of the immigrants are located in Los Angeles all this information is according to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) published in 2023. This helps to know why it is very common to meet bilingual people and to know why Spanish and English are the main languages. San Fernando Valley is divided into 34 neighborhoods, the main population is 42.6% Latin people and 41.1% white people, the other 16.3% is divided between Asian, black and others all this data was collected by the government of Los Angeles.

### 1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify how code switching is used by bilingual people in their daily life and know more about when they started to use it. Furthermore, this research is to recognize if the different contexts play an important role to make code switching happen or what are the factors that influence this type of communication.

### 1.5 Research questions

These research questions have been developed to have a line and a goal of study.

1. How does code switching help bilingual people to express their ideas better?
2. How can code switching help to create relationships among bilingual people?

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This research will help to explain how code switching can be a good strategy to take into account during English classes, to know the different topics or environment that can be apply for bilingual people, according to Park-Johnson (2020) teachers that learn English as a second language and they have been in bilingual schools or they use English more than Spanish have different performance and connection with bilingual students (p.3) . Besides this could help to identify to English teachers the way this also creates better understanding of ideas specially for bilingual students that they already follow, or they have a specific patron of code switching.

## 1.7 Conclusions

In this chapter the introduction was presented, how my interest in code switching was born. Also, the whole context in which this research was carried on and how bilingualism plays an important role in the community of Los Angeles. The research questions were presented and how this study will help English teachers to try new tools and strategies to help their students to acquire the language. The next chapters will explore more about different definitions of important researchers that will help to understand code switching, followed by the methodology, the instrument to collect data, the results of the research and finally the main conclusions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter will explore some definitions that surround code switching such as bilingualism, second language acquisition and more. This will help in the development of a better understanding about the whole context and the important role that each one of these concepts and definitions plays along the study.

#### 2.1 Second language acquisition

Nowadays, it is common that since primary school kids are exposed to English through songs, videos and social media, this is one of the main factors that could help to develop a second language (L2). Even one of the main purposes for secondary school is that students can acquire a basic level of English when they finalize the grade but how and what is the second language acquisition?

According to Hummel (2021) the second language acquisition as the name says is when a person starts learning another language right after a first language (L1) is acquired. Also, in words of Saville and Barto (2016), the process of acquiring a second language started subsequently when you finalize to acquire the first language or mother tongue as a “young child” and they added to this “Additional language is called a second language (L2)” (p. 2). Both shared similarities according to the process of acquiring a second language and they pointed out that it is necessary to finalize to acquire the first language to start with the second one.

Furthermore, Krashen (1985) cited in Yufrizal (2023) who said “language acquisition refers to the process of picking up a language.” and pointed out “Language learning is defined as “knowing the rules ”," having a conscious knowledge about grammar.” (p.4). However, there is an interesting point of view from Cook and Singleton (2014) who argued Second language learners never finish to learn the second language and they will be condemned to be learners their whole life. This is shocking because even a bilingual person has some lack of information in certain words because language is not only words. According to these authors, culture plays an important role and when people are not familiarized with the culture there are terms that cannot be understood without a context. In other words, second language acquisition is the starting process of learning another language at any time of life in addition to the first language (L1) , the one that people use predominantly in their daily life.

## 2.2 Culture in language

In the previous section, it was pointed that culture plays an important role during the acquisition of language in order to this it is necessary to be clear about what is culture, in words of Milestone and Meyer (2020) “Popular culture is an amorphous concept, which encompasses a vast range of cultural texts and practices, from cinema films to newspaper articles, from designing computer games to playing music.” (p. 2) Culture can be defined completely differently according to the science that is studying it.

Nowadays, humans have acquired terms that were created in social media or were used in video games, and this is part of the language. It is not strange that new generations that are more exposed to social media use words or expressions that it is difficult to understand for older adults.

In the same text Williams (1983) cited in Milestone & Meyer (2020) who define or separate culture in three different definitions, the first one culture is define as an “intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development” in the second one “a particular way of life of a group or historical period” and finally the third one that he argues it could be “texts and practices that produce meanings.” (p.3)

One of the important concepts that both definitions have is that culture cannot be defined as simply as it is because all the time as humanity we are developing and creating new things, words, behaviors etc. that are being added to the previous or actual culture and some others are replaced or forget it.

It is important to know how culture affects language learning and according to McKay (2003) cited in Bada and Genc (2020) who said “culture influences language teaching in two ways: linguistic and pedagogical. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because the cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials.” (p.75)

At this point, the way in which sometimes bilingual people talk or choose to switch between one language to another during their sentences can be related to how the culture influenced their language, and all this could occur unconsciously, of course it is a theory and it is necessary to understand how bilingualism occurs.

## 2.3 Bilingualism

Nowadays, it is common that people are more in contact with other languages, in Mexico as a result of the closeness with the USA, English language is the main target that students from Mexico are learning. In fact, in Mexico City there are some locations where it is easy to find that people speak English and Spanish in their daily life. This supports the idea of Hoffman (2014) when he argued that Bilingualism emerges after a contact and its permanency depends on the conditions and how the community maintains and spreads it in their context. Following the idea of Hoffman a person needs to be exposed and surrounded by the right conditions to become bilingual because only in that way, the person acquires and uses the second language.

Additionally, Uriel Weinrich (1967) cited in Cook and Singleton (2014) who said “The practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism and the person involved bilinguals” (p.34). This point of view classifies bilingualism as a choice that a person who speaks two languages has in order to communicate ideas. Meanwhile, Grosjean (2022) defined bilingual people as “those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives” (p. 10). In addition to this he also pointed out that in western societies bilingual people “only use two languages regularly, reinforcing the bi- in bilingual”. (p. 11).

There are other definitions that take into account the fluency in how a person can communicate in both languages but as Wagner et al, (2022) explained in their research “There are no consistent or objective standards that determine the point at which someone transitions into a category called “bilingual”. (parr. 2) At this point bilingualism could be defined as the use of two languages to communicate and for being considered as a bilingual person it is necessary to use these two languages in daily life.



## 2.4 Translanguaging

Bilingualism and translanguaging are very related and it is necessary to clarify the difference between one and another. In this case Williams (2000) cited in Lewis (2017) who argued that “translanguaging entails using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to augment the pupil’s ability in both languages” (p. 644) For example, some bilingual people used to change into the second language or the first one to express a better idea or when they forgot a specific word, this is a common situation about how translanguaging is applied.

In the same way Cenoz, and Gorter (2020) argued that translanguaging is a “pedagogical practice” were a person “uses the stronger language to develop the weaker one, and in this way, it implies a deep understanding of meaning and can result in increased proficiency in the two languages.” (p. 6) . Similarly to the first example when people switch languages to clarify ideas, they also used to ask about the word or the expression that they forgot, this helps to continue building vocabulary in both languages and of course helps to continue practicing.

Finally, Baker (2001) cited in Vogel and García (2017) who argued that translanguaging is how bilingual people “fluidly use their linguistic resources to make meaning and communicate” In this case the fluency it is taking into account as an important part about how translanguaging works and its important role during code switching.” (p. 4).

## 2.5 Code Switching

First of all, it is not a secret that nowadays in California, Spanish language is very common as English, this is in certain part because of all the immigration that is in constant movement. Subsequently to this there are a lot of families where the young adults or the children were born

in California, but their parents are from other countries mainly from Mexico. The mix of cultures has grown and one of the main things that you can notice is the way in how people talk. The use of code switching is very common when people are communicating, in this case the use of “Spanglish” to communicate between them is very notorious in a family conversation.

From this point and according to Bullock and Toribio (2009) they briefly describe code switching, the manner how bilingual people switch fluently between languages without problem. This way of talking is more common to see in Hispanic areas from California, mainly East Los Angeles. Adding to this Auer and Eastman (2010) said that this switching between languages is only visible for “monolingual outsiders” because for bilingual people this used to be their “natural way of speaking” (p. 85). Starting from this part, bilingual people have this option or way of talking but not all of them use code switching in a conversation even when their friends or close people do it.

On the other hand, Ariffin and Rafik-Galea (2009) affirm “Code-switching, which may be defined as the alternation between two or more languages in a speaker’s speech, occurs naturally in the scheme of bilingualism. Studies have reported that code-switching often happened subconsciously” (p. 1) This statement could answer why bilingual people that learned a second language in an older age, do not speak using code switching. To finalize they cited Wardaugh (1998) who said “people may not be aware that they have switched, or be able to report, following a conversation, which code they used for a particular topic” (p. 103). Code switching is a very interesting way of talking that bilingual people use and part of the culture that “chicano” people that live in Los Angeles are recognized for, but nowadays not only these people use this way of talking there are other communities that have acquired code switching too.

## 2.6 Communities of practice

To understand the practices about the relationship between humans and language there exists something called communities of practice and in the words of Wenger (2011) “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). He also pointed out that these kinds of groups are formed by people who share and build knowledge between them or, in their words “collective learning” (p. 2).

Additionally, Wenger talks about three important characteristics: the first one is the domain where they describe that the people that are part of these communities share something in common or their domain about a topic or a way to live is what makes them feel that they belong to that community. The second one is the community, where he briefly describes that in a community is not enough just to share the same ideas. Also, people need to interact and build knowledge with each other. And finally in the third characteristic is the practice itself, Wenger (2011) gave us an example where people that are part of the community when they make meetings unconsciously, they talk about their knowledge, and this helps the other members of the community to acquire stories and tips that they will use later. Similarly to this Choi (2020) stated the community of practice could be defined as “a group of people who share their expertise and enthusiasm about the same issues, problems, or themes and continuously interact and enhance their knowledge and expertise.” (p. 2). Furthermore, they add that “A community of practice can be further divided on the basis of the topics of interest among organizational members or management teams. Accordingly, the characteristics for a community of practice can be explained by the following aspects: goal, activity, and formation” (p. 2).

However, Burns et al., (2016) argued that “Successful communities of practice construct opportunities to learn skills and construct understanding through sustained, collaborative participation often involving discussion, peer feedback, and knowledge sharing” (p. 3) and he made an example of how a video game called “fortnite” is a clear example of a community of practice where the people share and learn their knowledge about the video game and how this involves a whole process.

To finalize, the communities of practice are constantly building, not only ideas, but also expressions and language that is important because a person is part of different communities of practice and builds even their own way to talk and express.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### 3.0 Introduction

The main intention of the research was to know when and why the people prefer to switch between Spanish and English in their daily life. In this chapter I will describe the instrument used to get the information and the participants adding to that I will provide specific data and explain how this helps to answer the research questions.

#### 3.1 Research design

For this research, it was necessary to find a method that could help to understand why the code switching is present in bilingual people life's in Los Angeles and one of the most obvious things is approach people and ask them about the way they use the language in their daily life. Qualitative research was the method that fits in this research because is necessary to analyze and known about why people choose to talk in that way and of course because this is influenced by external factor a case of study was the best way to follow all the ideas and comprehend how language is adapt and is part of their culture.

According to Creswell and Clark (2004) "Qualitative research is an inquiry approach in which the inquirer: analyzes and codes the data for description and themes, interprets the meaning of the information drawing on personal reflections and past research" (p. 6). This type of research takes into account different factors that could affect the behavior and the decision that a person could make. This Qualitative study was focused on a case study Heale, and Twycross (2018) argued "a case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of

people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units” (p. 7). This case study was decided due to the research being focused on a specific group of people in Los Angeles.

### 3.2 Approach

This research and the type in how the information was recollected was decided because it was a good way to give voice to the opinions and ideas from the participants and take advantage of this answers to analyze how the language can be influenced by the context, people and factors that create the necessity of mix languages to communicate and express their ideas. To understand in a better way, it was necessary to clarify what qualitative research is, in this case Vishnevsky and Beanlands (2004) Defined qualitative research as “a way of knowing and learning about different experiences from the perspective of the individual” (p. 234). While Ketokivi and Choi’s (2014) cited in Gammelgard (2017) when they stated, “the term qualitative in relation to research indicates an examination of concepts and their meaning and interpretations in specific contexts of enquiry” (parr. 2). In both definitions it is necessary to take into account interpretations and perspectives.

### 3.3 Method

The method selected for this research was a qualitative Case study due to is necessary to understand the context in which participants are surrounded and how this influences the language. According to Stake (2008) a “case study concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political, and other contexts.” (p.1), then, a qualitative case of study can be defined as a research whose main focus is to take into

account perspectives and conceptions that are influenced by different external factors. For this research it is also necessary to consider the context where the participants worked. Three of them work in a Mexican restaurant that is very famous in the San Fernando Valley even though it is recognized by the city council.

Something interesting about the restaurant is that most of the people that work in the restaurant are Salvadorans that recently arrived in the country. The staff is divided in 3 groups, the first one are the ones who prepare the food, they start working at 5 am in the morning and finish at 11 am. The second group is the kitchen staff, they have two shifts morning and afternoon, and it depends if someone has another job the restaurant fits the schedules, this group does not speak English, they have certain knowledge as vocabulary related with the menu and with tools from kitchen but that is it. The third group are the cashiers, for this group it is mandatory to speak English and Spanish fluently because they are the ones who are the image of the place and the ones who take care of the issues that could appear, the manager is part of this group. The customers from this restaurant are very different from what most people would think because not only Hispanic persons visit this place, in fact most of the customers were Americans and it is very common to hear *Spanglish* between the families that are there and of course the cashiers switch all the time between Spanish and English.

### 3.4 Participants

This research was about how code switching is used in different contexts and it was made during the months May-June of 2023 in Los Angeles. The participants that were chosen for this research were from San Fernando Valley in California. The reason to choose these people is because they

are bilingual and sometimes, they use Spanglish to communicate and on other occasions they switch completely into English or Spanish depending on who they were talking to.

Five people were selected for this research, four men and one woman. They were informed about the use of the data and the research, they agreed and for privacy reasons their names were changed. Most of them were in their twenties and one of them is thirty-six. All of them live in California Valley with their family, two of them borned and raised in California and the other participants arrived when they were young children or teenagers. Participant Hugo is a manager from a restaurant located in the valley. He is Mexican but he arrived in Los Angeles at 18 years old with his father and his brother since that time he grew up in the Valley. Nowadays he is 36 years old and even when his native language is Spanish due to his job he is always talking with providers, taking care of the customers and situations that are necessary being talking most part of the time in English. Participant Lu is unemployed, and he continues studying, he is 24, he was born and raised in the Valley. He is a person who is dedicated to being in church and even when his parents are Mexicans, he barely speaks Spanish in his daily life and most of the time he uses Spanglish. Participant Bernardo works in a restaurant as a cashier, and he continues studying in the University. He was born and raised in the Valley. His father is Mexican, and his mother is from Peru. He speaks Spanish and English and currently he is 22. Participant Lucio works in a grocery store, he is 25, he was born in Mexico, but he moved to the valley when he was a teenager with his family. He learned English while he was in the valley, but he uses more Spanish than English. Finally participant Katy is from El Salvador. She is 23, she moved to Los Angeles when she was teenager and immediately entered high school where she learned English. Currently is assistant manager in a restaurant and she also takes care of important issues when the manager is out or on his day off.



### 3.5 Instrument

The main instrument that was used in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in google docs, in this format it was easier to send it to the participants because due to work, they were unable to have time for a personal meeting. The questionnaire was a blend of open format questions and multiple-choice questions with the purpose to go deeper in some questions and make the others a faster selection. The questions are from what language they preferred to use in different contexts to the different opinions about the community and if they consider bilingual people and how this influence in his daily life. (See Appendix 1).

### 3.6 Data collection

It was already mentioned that for this research a questionnaire was used, this one has open questions and multiple-choice ones to recollect more information about conceptions and ideas from the participants, the whole questionnaire was in English. The way to define a questionnaire according to McLeod (2018) is known that this one is a tool that is constituted for several questions with the purpose of recollecting important information from the participants. The participants needed to provide information about their age, their language and in which context they use one language more than other and why. This is an important part to comprehend how the language is applied in their daily life. Most of the participants took more than a week to answer the questionnaire because they work during the whole day and some of them have two jobs. At the beginning participants were aware about this research and they were happy to be part of it.

### 3.7 Data analysis

During data analysis, the instrument was made in google forms and it was sent through email to the participants. They were aware about the use of the information, and they gave the permission to use it for this research. At the beginning, the first participants who received the questionnaire were the people from the restaurant because they worked in the same place as me. The other participants were contacted by social media because it was difficult to get in contact with them due to their schedule on work. The answers were separate between the open questions and the multiple option questions. These ones were categorized and classified in a table of google docs after being carefully read and analyzed. Starting with the name of the participants followed by the age and the different answers.

### 3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the context and the participants were described to have a better point of view about their answer in the questionnaire. Also, the instrument was explained and how the information gathered from it was managed. In the next chapter, the results of the study will be explained and described.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief summary of the study followed by the research questions and finally the results obtained from the questionnaire applied to the participants will be presented in different charts, graphics and figures. This visual support will help to segment the information and go deeper in what participants want to explain.

#### 4.1 Summary of the study

This study was made to know more about code switching and what are the different factors that influence bilingual people to mix languages in their daily life. In this research five people from Los Angeles were selected due to their work or the context made them switch languages between English and Spanish constantly.

#### 4.2 Research questions

The research questions for this study are the following ones:

1. How does code switching help bilingual people to express their ideas better?
2. How can code switching help to create relationships between bilingual people?

The different answers from the instrument help to solve the research questions and help me to have a broad point of view of how the participants use code switching daily.

### 4.3 Results

This section presents the different visual support with the information that was collected from the questionnaire applied followed by a description and analysis results.

#### 4.3.1 Participants and bilingualism

The chart demonstrates that participants consider themselves as a bilingual person and the reason why they consider themselves bilingual. All of them said they can speak English and Spanish. The participant Katy also gives an interesting point of view, she argues that bilingual people used to be multitasking.

**Chart 1. Participants and bilingualism**

Participants	Age	Do participant consider bilingual	Reason
Bernardo	22	yes	I was born here (Los Angeles) and my parents speak Spanish
Lu	24	yes	I can speak multiple languages proficiently
Lucio	22	yes	I speak English and Spanish
Katy	22	yes	I consider myself bilingual because I've had the opportunity to learn another language that I can handle in my daily life. Bilingual people tend to be more creative and flexible. We can be more open-minded, and we also find it easier to focus on a variety of tasks simultaneously. And being able to speak two languages helps in other ways too.

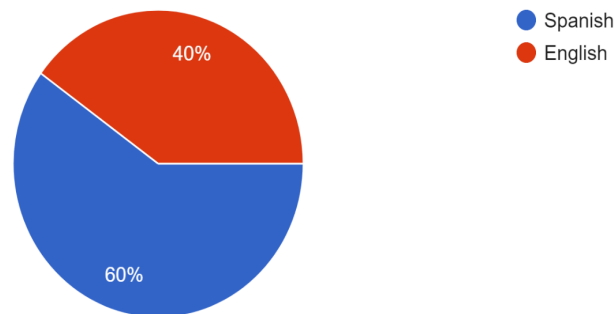
Hugo	36	yes	Because I speak Spanish and English
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#### 4.3.2 Native language

In the next graph, three out of five participants inform that their native language is Spanish, and they learned English as a L2. This left just two participants who were born and raised in California and their native language is English even though their parents are Hispanic.

**Graph 1. Native language**

What is your native language?  
5 respuestas



#### 4.3.3 Second language acquisition

In the chart below, the different participants explain when and how they acquired the second language. On one side there are the participants that emigrate to the USA and they learned it from school. This is a very contrasting view from the other two participants whose mother tongue is English because they learn Spanish from their parents since childhood and this is a very common way for parents to preserve their culture in latin communities mainly in Los Angeles.

**Chart 2. Second language Acquisition**

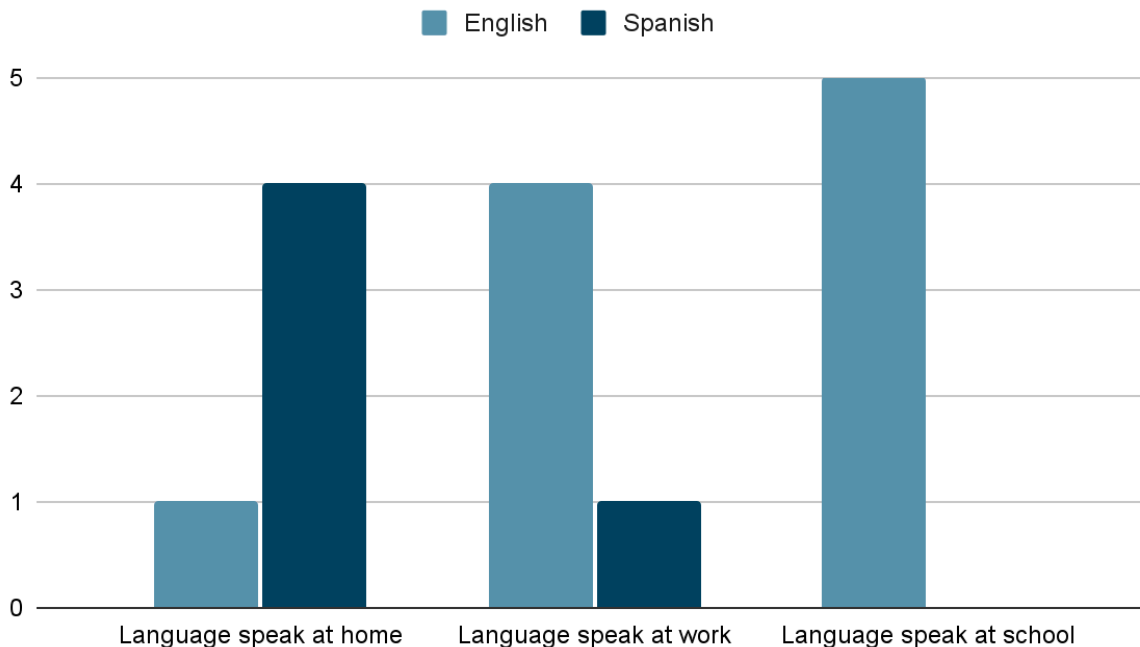
Participant	Time when L2 was acquired	How L2 was acquired
Bernardo	Since childhood	From my parents
Lu	Age 2	My mother
Lucio	When I came to USA	By studying it
Katy	When I arrived in the United States.	I went to school.
Hugo	When I move to LA, like a 18 years ago	I went to school for couple a year and then I learned more at my work and talking with my friends

#### 4.3.4 Language use in different contexts

In graph number two “language use”, it shows the language that participants use in the different context of their daily life. It is not a surprise that English is the main one for work and studies. On the other hand, Spanish is the most common one in their houses. This constant use of both languages during the day could explain how code-switching starts developing.

**Graph 2. Language Use**

Graphic 2. Language use



#### 4.3.5 Language and context

In figure number 1, the question about what language is the most used in six different contexts presents interesting data and it is easy to notice that both languages are perfectly divided for half of the contexts. English is the main one to talk about news, work and money while Spanish is the most used to talk about familiar issues, hobbies and gossip.

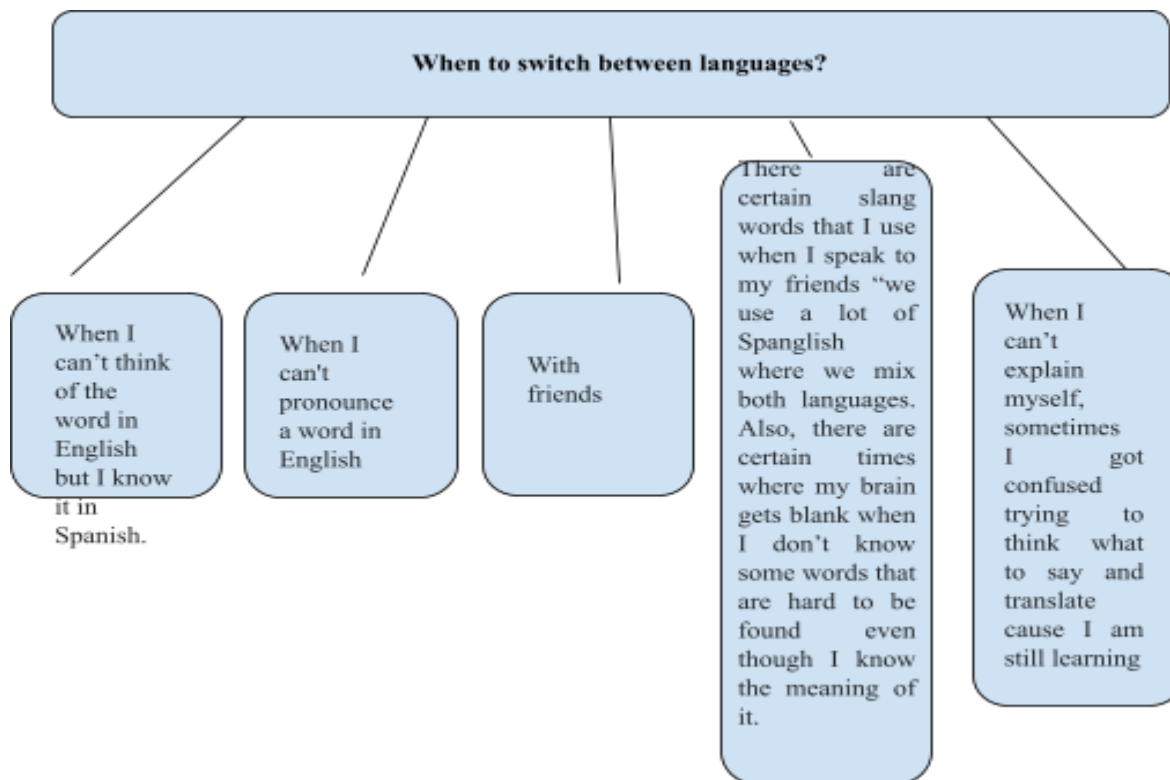
Figure 1. Language and context



#### 4.3.6 When to switch?

In figure number 2 “Code switching”, participants answer when they decide to switch between languages and three of them use this as a “strategy” when they have problems pronouncing a word or when they do not remember a word in the language that they are talking. Also, the other two participants mention they switch when they speak with friends and one of them points out that with their friend they use “Spanglish” and of course the different slang words are not only in one language, so it is necessary to be switching constantly.

Figure 2. Code switching





### 4.3.7 Community

In the chart 3, participants express their belonging to the community in the Valley but the two participants that were born and raised express that they do not feel completely part of the community. One of them expresses his accent and the other one expresses that in certain areas he does not feel welcome. On the other hand participants that emigrated feel completely part of the community even when they were not born there.

**Chart 3. Community**

Are you part of the community?	Reason
Yes	Yes and no because in some areas in the valley I feel welcome and in others I don't. It just when I am around certain demographics
Yes	Although I was born and raised in California, I still have the accent of a Spanish speaker. English may be my first language but I still need to learn how to speak it properly.
Yes	I always participate in activities
Yes	In my opinion I feel part of this community because as an English learner I can say that languages can open doors for better opportunities in daily life.
Yes	After 18 years living here of course I do

### 4.4 Discussion of results

The results obtained from the questionnaire applied to the participants show that code switching could be a strategy to communicate between bilingual people without losing fluency. This supports the idea of Auer and Eastman (2010) when they talked about the “natural way of

speaking” from bilingual people and how they can easily switch between languages without problem as Bullock and Toribio (2009) described.

Adding to this, the community of practice that I am going to call “Angelinos” (The way how people from Los Angeles refer to themselves) influence during the collective learning that in this case is the different slang that is used between bilingual teenagers and youngsters. The knowledge of two languages expands their slang and creates this sense of belonging to their community being code switching the base not only to communicate but also to create expressions and share beliefs as Wenger (2011) told previously.

There is also a part that I want to emphasize, two of the participants who learned English in school tend to commit grammatical mistakes in English when they want to express some of their ideas but when they speak they have a good fluency and rarely they have problems or a lack of vocabulary, the reason of this could be because they practice more their speaking skills than the grammar ones but following the statement of Weinrich (2014) they can continue being considered bilingual people due to they are constantly alternating languages.

#### 4.5 Conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter the information obtained through the questionnaire was presented. The different results were compared and analyzed. The different results present a better point of view about how the use of code switching is strongly influenced by different factors. At the end, the outstanding results were shown in images and tables to illustrate the different answers obtained.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### 5.0 Introduction

In this final chapter, the summary of the research will be presented, subsequently the research questions will be answered. Finally, the limitations of the study and how these ones could be considered to improve this type of studies for future references.

#### 5.1 Summary of the study

The main goal of this research was to understand what the different influencing factors in language are and if these ones foster code switching. Furthermore, how this type of communication is currently a bridge to create relationships between bilingual people. The questionnaire that was applied to the participants bring a lot of information that helped me to respond my research questions but also create more interest about how the relationships between the people in California works and it showed that language is always developing and creating different subcultures and groups where if you do not understand the expressions and the slangs it would be hardly be part or accepted in these ones.

#### 5.2 Answers to the research questions

The research questions that at the beginning guide the study were answered.

##### 5.2.1 How does code switching help bilingual people to express their ideas better?

As one of the participants expressed, switching between languages helps people to be more specific in their ideas, avoid words that are difficult to pronounce and also helps to improve fluency in a conversation.

As a bilingual person I can say that sometimes happens when you are using one language more than the other one, when you switch there are words that you remember in the language most used and is more easy to say it if the other people is also bilingual because you are not afraid that they are not going to understand but the problem is one when the other people is not bilingual because the fluency of the conversation is interrupted at least a few moments or even minutes while you tried to remember the word in the language that you are talking. As Williams (2002) said “using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to augment the pupil’s ability in both languages” (p. 644)

### 5.2.2 How can code switching help to create relationships between bilingual people?

As it was mentioned before in the context where the participants are living, English is the main language but there are still people that do not speak it at all, so it is necessary to be able to switch between languages to communicate and express themselves. Additionally, to this, between friends using slang from two different cultures makes conversations richer.

When I was working with them it was common that sometimes they used slang that I did not understand but quickly they expressed it in Spanish, and I was able to continue with the conversation. In this way they always make you feel part of the conversations even when someone is not borned and raised in California because bilingual people can understand what they are saying even if they switch continuously.

This brings one of the parts that Wenger (2011) said that communities of practice learn when they interact and share ideas, beliefs and they are always interacting and creating knowledge. This is important because for a monolingual person it would be almost impossible to be considered or invited to join this community.

### 5.3 Limitations of the study

The main situation that made this research difficult was the time. Even when I work with three of the participants in the same restaurant, we have different schedules and during work we could not do anything else that was not related to work. During their days off, they study, or they go out with their family and the other ones work in different places, they have their own social circle so it was difficult to talk with them. I would like to meet more people or at least interact more days with different social circles to know more how they create this group and what are the differences between different groups in language.

### 5.4 Directions for further research

This study could be more interactive, code switching is used in different ways and moments. Meanwhile I was focused on a group of people that I met when I was there. I missed a lot more like *Chicano people, Takuache cuh, no sabo kids*, a lot of different groups that also use the code switching in their daily lives, but they follow different rules, styles of clothing, they have their own culture and slangs that could help us to understand more about how the language is one of the main pillars from them.

I would like to know more about the different cultures and how people that are not originally from Los Angeles achieve being part of those groups. Second, I would like to learn different slangs and how this was created. Finally, among the issues that could not be answered is if the code switching follows a grammatical rule or it does not matter when they switch between languages.

## 5.5 Conclusions

This case study presented how bilingual people use code switching in their daily life being San Fernando Valley the main context, the different strategies and reasons why people used it. Also, it shows how language is a fundamental part when people create relationships and how this one could help people from other countries to be part of the community. Code switching could be used in conversations between bilingual people to reinforce the weak language and helped to express ideas more clearly making the fluency better for them. In the results, three of the participants explain that, when they have issues pronouncing or remembering the word in the language that they are talking, they switch into the other to avoid stopping or interrupting the conversation.

## 5.6 Final reflection

During the making of this research, I learned how the code switching influenced the culture inside of the United States because even if you are a bilingual person you need to understand slang, contexts and lifestyle from Los Angeles people to be considered part of the community. The communities of practice were something really amazing for me due to when I was reading

about it, I understood how these communities interact and how I am part of different communities even when I did not notice that. I would like to know more about the other groups that unfortunately I was not able to interact with because I think that could provide me with more information to explain more in depth the code switching in the different groups. Anyways, the code switching could be used as a tool to improve the language and it is something that I consider applying with my social circle that are bilinguals.

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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1 questionnaire

The questions used in the google format are below.

1. How old are you?
2. Do you consider yourself bilingual?
3. If you selected “yes” please explain why?
4. What is your native language?
5. When did you learn the second language?
6. How did you learn the second language?
7. What language do you speak at home?
8. What language do you speak at work?
9. In which language do you feel more comfortable and why?
10. What language do you speak in school?
11. In which language do you speak about:  
Work
12. In which language do you speak about:  
Hobbies
13. In which language do you speak about:  
The news
14. In which language do you speak about:  
Family issues
15. In which language do you speak about:  
Gossip

16. In which language do you speak about:

Money

17. When is it important for you to speak Spanish?

18. When is it important for you to speak English?

19. When do you change languages when you are talking?

20. Do you have a funny story to tell about changing languages?

21. In what language will you talk to your children, when you have them and why?

22. How important is it to speak English in the Valley?

23. How important is it to speak Spanish in the Valley?

24. How important is it for immigrants to speak English here in the Valley?

25. As an immigrant, how important is language in the integration in the community?

26. Do you feel part of this community?

27. Regardless of your answer please explain why?

28. Are you planning to stay here in the Valley?

29. Do you think that it is easier for you to learn other languages?

30. Regardless of your answer please explain why?

## Appendix 2 pictures of the restaurant

In this Appendix, there are some pictures of the restaurant where three of the participants used to work.

### Outside the establishment



**Inside the establishment**



