



# An Investigation of World Language Teaching Methodologies and Language Usage in the Classroom

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## Introduction

Language usage is a controversial topic in the field of Spanish education. Spanish language teachers have a wide range of beliefs about how and when to use English versus Spanish in the classroom. This study sought to answer several questions: Who are the Spanish teachers in Wisconsin? When do Spanish teachers switch from Spanish to English? Why do they decide to do so?

## Method

- Surveys were sent to three CESA districts: CESA 2 (n=62), CESA 10 (n=25), and CESA 11 (n=19) for a total of 106 respondents
- CESA 10 participants were invited to participate in an interview with the research student and were asked to be observed in the classroom
- Five CESA 10 teachers were interviewed and observed in the classroom

## Works Cited

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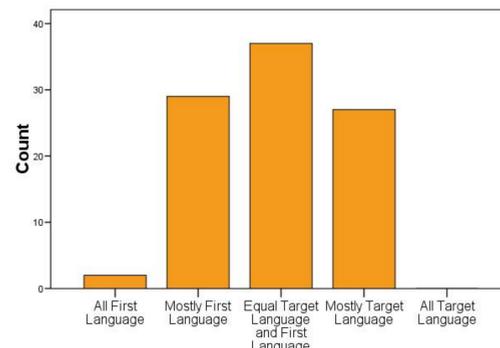
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## Average Wisconsin Spanish Teacher

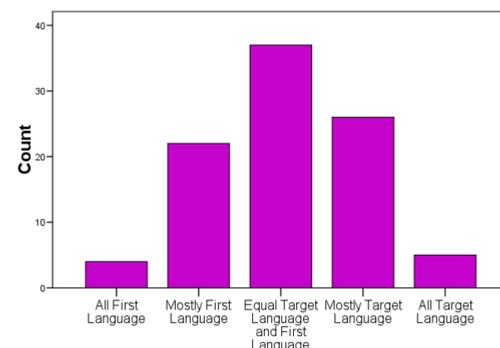
(average taken from survey n=106)

- 9-10 total years teaching
- 20-25 students per class
- Two teachers total in their school
- Suburban or rural school location
- Has a major in Spanish
- Certified in Wisconsin
- Native English speaker
- Speaks Spanish in the classroom 60-70% of the time

## In What Contexts Do Spanish Teachers Switch to English?



Which language should be used to teach grammar? (n=95)



Which language should be used to teach culture? (n=94)

## Teachers' Reasoning (taken from survey)

"I feel that some things, especially complex grammar structures, sometimes need to be explained in [English], to avoid intense confusion and frustration on the part of the students, who may 'shut down' if they get too frustrated, and then they don't learn anything."

-Teacher 11, CESA 10

"Occasionally, such as when I explain cultural customs, I explain in English and we often engage in a conversation about the differences in customs...[English] helps to teach/understand aspects such as tolerance of differences and engage in conversations together."

-Teacher 26, CESA 11

"Many times, especially with grammar, I have to teach the English grammar before they can understand the grammar of the target language."

-Teacher 22, CESA 10

## Implications of Research

- Findings suggest that most Spanish teachers find it acceptable to use English while teaching grammar and culture
- Many teachers cite students' poor English grammar education as their rationale for explaining Spanish grammar in English

## Future Research

This research project primarily focused on the relationship between content and language usage. Future research could investigate other factors that teachers consider when making language usage decisions, such as classroom size, program funding, and class management issues.

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