



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

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## Introduction

Researchers Hlas and Hellenbrand completed a study a year ago that answered these questions: Who are the Spanish teachers in Wisconsin? When do Spanish teachers switch from Spanish to English? Why do they decide to do so? The previous study focused primarily on the relationship between content and language usage in the classroom. The current study further explored factors that contribute to code-switching in the classroom.

## 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 teachers were observed in the classroom, and six were interviewed
- After transcribing the observations and interviews, researchers read over the data and formed 15 categories that reasoned why teachers switch to English (See Table 1)
- Together, researchers coded two classroom observations and two interviews. When it was calculated that error was less than 1%, the student researcher coded the rest of the interviews and observations and the explanatory survey responses.
- Student researcher calculated the frequency of each code-switching category (See Table 1)

## Works Cited

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Rolin-lanziti, J., & Brownlie, S. (2002). Teacher use of learners' native language in the foreign language classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58, 402-26.

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## Why do Teachers switch to English?

Code-switching Reasoning Categories Including Definitions (Table 1)

Rank	Category	Definition	Frequency
1	Grammar Explanation	Clarification of grammar topic	149
2	Student Feedback	Prompting students, verifying responses, providing reinforcement	113
3	Activity/Instructions Explanation	Explaining directions for an activity or game	77
4	Vocabulary Explanation	Explanation of Spanish words, parallel translations of phrases	60
5	Classroom Management-Discipline	Keeping the class in order	55
6	Student Connection	Making a personal connection with the student	49
7	Student Anxiety/Frustration	Fear of making students anxious/dislike Spanish	34
8	Classroom Management- Flow	Transitions and keeping class moving	33
9	Time Saver	Teacher uses less time by switching to English	31
10	Culture Explanation	Clarification/Exploration of Culture topic	28
11	Comprehension Check	Checking for students' understanding	19
12	Student Motivation	Students aren't motivated to be learning in Spanish	13
13	Fear of losing program	Teacher is afraid that program will be dropped if Spanish is used	11
14	Teacher competency	Teacher doesn't feel proficient enough in Spanish to use it	7
15	Exhaustion	Teacher's energy level too low to use Spanish	6

## Ambiguity

Although grammar was the most cited reason for switching to English, the study showed that there is still much disagreement among teachers if it is acceptable to switch to English for this reason. The example below demonstrates this:

Teacher: Hay dos tipos de verbos: verbos transitivos y verbos intransitivos. Cuando usa un verbo transitivo, puede usar un objeto directo. ¿Todos recuerdan qué es un verbo transitivo? ¿Qué es? (There are two types of verbs: transitive verbs and intransitive verbs. When one uses a transitive verb, one can use a direct object. Does everyone remember what a transitive verb is? What is it?)

(Class is silent)

Teacher: Pues, es... es un verbo that does something directly to something else. Por ejemplo...to eat. You eat a sandwich, correct? Comes un sándwich. The sandwich is a direct object, objeto directo.

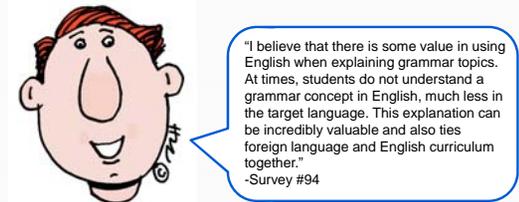
Do you think this was an acceptable time to use English?

39.6% YES  
39.6% NO  
20.8% No response  
(n=84)

## Comparison to Other Research

After analyzing 6 other studies (see Works Cited), researchers found 14 of their 15 categories represented across other studies. One category, "Fear of Losing Program", was not represented in previous research. Since the subjects observed in the other studies were either college professors or student teachers, versus the K-12 teachers utilized in this study, it is possible that losing their program was not a concern nor a reason to code-switch.

## Voices from the Study



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