

A Dissertation

Entitled

Sequential Bilingualism: The Impact of Code Switching

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Research in Social Psychology

Abstract

This paper focuses on the code switching of an English learner. A study was conducted on a six year old child from Poland. The data of the speech was primarily collected, consisting of transcript series, from which 14 excerpts were selected. The transcripts were initially analyzed with the use of a computer program with special focus on the mean length of utterance on the part of the learner, including the production of longer utterances over period of 15 months. The hypothesis of the study is that the overall linguistic output of the child will increase, and that he would decide to interact with other people in the English language more efficiently and frequently with time. On top of using a computer software program, data was also examined closely in order to identify whether the code switching of the learner can turn out to be a result of over application of grammar and lexicon of the Polish language. The results of the findings supported largely this hypothesis, thus suggesting that the internal language that is dominant on the child was most likely Polish but he has often employed code switching for conversation.

Chapter One

Introduction

Bilingualism has once been considered as an obstacle to the development of a child. It is one subject that is under research during the last few decades, which came as a result of a change in the approach on bilingual instruction (Marin & Charles, 2005). Evidence has also significantly suggested that the advantages of raising a bilingual child may offset the costs involved. At the same time, early acquisition of dual languages may also stimulate both the cognitive and linguistic growth of the child (Marker & Myers, 1993).

Among the most researched issues that are related to the aspect on bilingualism is code mixing or code switching. The tendency to easily switch between languages in just one conversation (Hagg, 2007) is especially characterized by the evident borrowing of phrases, words, as well as other morphological elements in between the languages.

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Code switching may prove to be inefficient as cognitive approach since it requires that a person needs to go back and forth in using two lexico-grammatical units.

Discussion

To some extent, different studies provide support to the claim that sentence comprehension, for instance, often takes longer when sentences have words coming from more than a single language, in contrast to just one language. On top of that, tasks which include naming pictures among bilingual participants often allow the individuals involved to select words coming from either language. As a result, naming may take longer if the individual switch language as compared to using just one language.

Despite the evident drawbacks, code switching among bilinguals happen frequently and in a very natural, yet controlled setting, most especially when they are provided with the choice to do so. Either these bilinguals may not foresee the potential costs involved in code switching, or that all of the advantages of code switching simply outnumbers the costs involved, most particularly when listing delays that are linked to switching. Since code switching requires following rules while preserving the grammar of two languages, it can also improve mutual comprehension in between bilinguals.

References

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