



Dean's Undergraduate Research Fellows Fall 2005

Title: **Implementing Code-Switching in the Classroom**
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Description of Project:

It is very important for children to begin to learn a second language in the early years of elementary school. Studies show that it is easier for a child to learn a second language early on than it is in middle or high school.

Code-switching is the alternation between two codes, i.e. languages and/or dialects, between people who share those particular codes. Choices about how code switching manifests itself are determined by a number of social and linguistic factors.

Code-switching is a natural feature of multilinguals and is very typical in immigrant populations, and situations where languages come into contact.

Given that it is a phenomena sparked by languages in contact, code switching may have implications in the classroom, i.e. in learner environments for both learners of foreign-domestic languages and domestic-ESL learners. For this project a review of the code-switching literature will be conducted. Articles will be reviewed in terms of: 1) the purpose of the article, 2) a brief overview of the article's content, 3) the nature of the article (theoretical? practical?), 4) the article's contribution (what does it contribute to the instructor's/ learner's knowledge?), 5) what questions or comments the article raises , and 5) how the article might/might have consequences for the classroom. Reviews must be 2-3 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with a copy of the article submitted to the professor. One article will be reviewed per week.

The literature review will set the stage for future investigation at Daemen College and will result in a proposal for the student-researcher to focus on a specific aspect of code switching, to be determined.

Definition of code-switching
from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code-switching>)

Code-switching is a term in [linguistics](#) referring to alternation between one or more [languages](#), [dialects](#), or [language registers](#) in the course of [discourse](#) between people who have more than one language in common. Sometimes the switch lasts only for a few sentences, or even for a single phrase.

The switch is commonly made according to the subject of discourse, but may be for a variety of other reasons such as the mood of the speaker (for example, a person might swear only in French).

Code-switching often occurs in [bilingual](#) communities or families. For example, a family that has recently [immigrated](#) to a country where a different language is spoken may switch back and forth between that language and their [mother tongue](#), while they are learning the new language. Also, in communities as, for example, the [United States](#) with a large number of [Spanish](#) speakers, a sentence might have a mixture of Spanish and [English](#) words known as "[Spanglish](#)" (a similar situation can occur in communities in [Canada](#) with both [Francophone](#) and [Anglophone](#) populations). Another example of this phenomenon is the mixing of [Japanese](#) and [English](#) by Western-educated [Japanese](#) and half-Japanese children, most notably those living in bilingual environments (e.g., attending [International schools](#) in [Japan](#)).

In countries such as [India](#), where English is a [lingua franca](#), educated people whose first language is a language other than English but who are also somewhat fluent in English often employ code-switching by inserting English words, phrases or sentences into their conversations. Examples of this type of code-switching can be seen in many [Bollywood](#) films.

Code-switching also occurs within a particular language. For instance, a person would likely not use the same words or phrases when speaking to a superior (e.g. an elder, teacher, advisor or supervisor) as they would use when speaking to their friends in an informal atmosphere. Another example is [African American Vernacular English](#) among [African-Americans](#).

Code switching is distinct from [pidgin](#), in which features of two languages are combined. Code-switching is also different from (but is often accompanied by) spontaneous [borrowing](#) of words from another language, sometimes outfitted with the [inflections](#) of the host language, sometimes not.

Code-switching within a sentence tends to occur more often at points where the [syntaxes](#) of the two languages align; thus it is uncommon to switch from [English](#) to [French](#) after an [adjective](#) and before a [noun](#), because a French noun normally "expects" its adjectives to follow it. The same is true for switching from French to English after a noun and before an adjective. Code-switching between a subject and its verb is much more likely, because both English and French normally place the subject before the verb.