

Ida Hulkko

**CHILDREN'S CODE-SWITCHING IN  
MULTILINGUAL FAMILY SETTINGS**  
based on parents' reports and testimonials

# ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to examine how code-switching occurs in children's communication in multilingual family settings. This thesis aims to provide an overview about the types of code-switching that children use and about the distribution of the different varieties. Research material has been collected from various online platforms regarding multilingualism and multilingual families. I have categorized and further analyzed direct quotes from children's communication as they have been reported by the parents. In addition to the quotes, the data set includes parents' testimonials and experiences about their children's code-switching. In the analysis of the data, I will use François Grosjean's theory of language modes and his linguistic interferences to categorize the different instances of code-switching.

Out of 34 cases of the collected samples of children's communications, 82% of the code-switching occurred mid-sentence, intra-sententially. 44% of the code-switches were lexical interferences and 11 out of 15 cases included switches in nouns or noun phrases. The second largest category was the combination of lexical and syntactic interferences that covered 29% of the cases. Other instances of code-switching included emphasis (6%), simplification (18%) and person-language bond (3%). Parents' testimonials complemented these findings.

In the future this study could be taken further by comparing the findings to adults' code-switching or having a control group of bilinguals that have acquired languages later and that aren't necessarily fluent in both languages.

Keywords: code-switching, children's code-switching, multilingual communication, multilinguality

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

Hulkko, Ida: Children's code-switching in multilingual family settings

Kandidaatintutkielma

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Tämän kandidaatintyön aiheena on monikielisten lasten koodinvaihto (eng. code-switching) perheen sisäisessä kommunikaatiossa. Työn tarkoituksena on tarkastella sitä, minkälaisilla tavoilla koodinvaihto ilmenee lasten kommunikaatiossa sekä minkä tyyppistä koodinvaihtoa lapset harjoittavat eniten. Tutkimusmateriaali on kerätty internetin eri monikielisyyttä käsitteleviltä keskustelupalstoilta, joilla vanhemmat ovat vapaasti päässeet jakamaan omia kokemuksiaan monikielisyydestä perheen sisällä. Olen luonut erilliset alakategoriat koodinvaihdon ilmenemismuotoihin liittyen hyödyntämällä François Grosjeanin teoriaa kielten oppimisesta sekä interferenssistä. Olen analysoinut vanhempien raportoimat lasten suorat lainaukset sekä jaotellut ne kategorioittain koodinvaihdon lajin mukaisesti. Suorien lainausten lisäksi vanhemmat ovat kertoneet omin sanoin kokemuksiaan lasten monikielisestä kehityksestä ja päivittäisestä kommunikaatiosta.

Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että 34:stä lasten suorasta lainauksesta 82 % koodinvaihdosta tapahtui kesken lauseen. 44 % lainauksista oli niin kutsuttuja sanastollisia interferenssejä, joissa koodinvaihto liittyi substantiiveihin sekä niiden käyttöön lauseessa. Seuraavaksi suurin lasten käyttämä koodinvaihdon kategoria oli yhdistelmä sanastollista sekä lauseoppiin vaikuttavaa interferenssiä, jota esiintyi 29 % lasten lainauksista. Muita lasten lainauksista löydettyjä koodinvaihdon kategorioita olivat painotus (eng. Emphasis) (6 %), yksinkertaistaminen (eng. Simplification) (18 %) sekä henkilö-kieli-sidos (eng. person-language bond) (3 %).

Tätä kandidaatintyötä voisi laajentaa tulevaisuudessa vertailemalla lasten tuloksia aikuisten vastaavaan koodinvaihtoon tai tekemällä vertailututkimuksen, jossa verrokkiryhmänä voisi toimia myöhemmällä iällä kieliä oppineita lapsia.

Avainsanat: koodinvaihto, lasten koodinvaihto, lasten monikielisuus, monikielinen kommunikaatio

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin Originality Check -ohjelmalla.

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# 1 Introduction

Linguists view code-switching as an index of bilingual or multilingual proficiency while “it is most commonly perceived by the general public as indicative of language degeneration” (Bullock et al. 2009,1). Multilingual children in many cases have a longer starting period for active verbal interaction which has been thought to indicate a slower linguistic development rate (McCabe 2014). However, according to the newest studies, language development might seem slower in the first 3 years, but it quickly catches and surpasses the linguistic development of monolingual children later in terms of phonological, grammatical and vocabulary development (ibid.). This is also confirmed by studies of Carhill et al. (2008) which confirm that possible code-switching and simultaneous language learning does not indicate slower or inferior development of verbal communication.

Code-switching, being a central part of multilingual discourse, should be studied further, in order to get a fuller understanding of multilingual communication. This bachelor’s thesis will review children’s code-switching from the point of view of the parents. The data has been collected from discussions in various social media platforms about multilingualism and code-switching. The data includes direct quotes from the children and also parents’ reports of their own experiences and testimonials about the phenomena. I will utilize Francois Grosjean’s (2010) Theory of language modes and his categorization of interferences in order to identify and analyze the diverse use of code-switching. The goal of the thesis is to find out what type of code-switching seems to be the most common in children’s communication and how often the different interferences of the used languages occur compared to each other.

There seems to be a social stigma for the slow language acquisition of multilingual language learners that is caused by misinformation and misunderstanding of the multilingual learning process (Cantone 2007, 54). By studying multilingual communications and bilingual language mixing, this stigma could be acknowledged better in educational contexts and further reduced. Personally, the topic of code-switching is part of my daily interactions and influences my identity as a language speaker.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. After the introduction, I will briefly introduce some of the theories about code-switching and language learning that I have used as the framework

in my analysis. In the third section, I will go through the data collection and further explain how I have used Grosjean's theory of language modes and interferences in my analysis. The results will be covered in the fourth chapter of this thesis and in the final chapter I will describe my own conclusions and suggestions for further research that could be implemented in regards of code-switching.

## **2 Code-switching**

In the communicative perspective, humans interact with each other through various codes. All language speakers have varieties of different codes that they can use, depending on their own intentions, the conversational setting, and the speech participants (Bullock et al. 2009, 2). Monolinguals can acquire different varieties of a specific language in a similar way that bi- and multilinguals have many languages to draw linguistic repertoire from (ibid.). Linguistic codes have communicative intentions that are dependent on the linguistic-discursive interpretation of those codes (Auer 1998, 30). Due to the dynamic features of language, speakers can exploit this possibility to alternate between codes during conversation (Ngyen 2015). This ability to "alternate between languages in an unchanged setting, often within the same utterance" is called code-switching (Bullock et al. 2009, 1). In some cases, monolinguals also have the chance to shift between different registers and dialects of one language, but this phenomenon is referred to as style shifting and it is therefore regarded as a separate phenomenon to multilingual code-switching, discussed here (ibid). Code-shifting can be used in conversation to fill linguistic gaps, express ethnic identity or to achieve certain discursive aims, just to name a few (Bullock et al. 2009, 1).

Code-switching has been researched from different points of view: linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic perspectives. Francois Grosjean sees code-switching from a psycholinguistic perspective, where the bilingual speaker must make a decision during the discourse about the used language (Grosjean 2008, 38). The decision is mostly unconscious and includes which languages and to what extent to use in a certain situation (ibid.). Grosjean argues that speakers have different levels of language activation, depending on the discourse context. Bilinguals will have both languages activated if speaking to another bilingual whereas during a monolingual conversation the other language will be more dormant. According to his language mode theory, code-switching is the result of multiple languages activating and therefore mixing together (ibid.).

In a monolingual context, “language mixing will be seen as target-deviant” (Cantone 2009, 56) whereas in a bilingual context code-switching can be regarded as completely normal. Grosjean notes that based on the language mode -theory, the way bi- and multilinguals process their languages, separately or together, is heavily affected by the context and the language skills of the other speakers (Grosjean 2008, 39). Therefore, bilinguals will most commonly be in monolingual mode when interacting with monolinguals since they can’t use their other language. In this situation they “deactivate” their other language. However, Grosjean points out that when interacting with a speaker who knows the other language but might not be as proficient, the speaker will be able to partly activate the other language (ibid.). Code-switching is more likely to occur during the bilingual mode, in situations where the speaker is aware of the other speaker’s language skills and can have both of their languages in the active language mode (Grosjean 2008, 43).

As this thesis focuses on the reported cases in multilingual families, Grosjean’s theory of bilingual modes can be applied to the usage of code-switching. The language mode acts as a continuum, where the activation level can switch from low to high and it is also connected to the changes in register and speech style depending on the context and interlocutors (Grosjean 2008, 43). In the following sections, I will discuss the different types of linguistic code-switching and how it occurs in multilingual speech.

## 2.1 Types of code-switching

### 2.1.1 Intra-sentential code-switching

Code-switching can occur within an utterance, intra-sententially. In this case the speaker mixes words from other languages in the same sentence (Kaushanskaya 2019). According to sociolinguist Peter Muysken, intra-sentential switches can be in the forms of 1) insertion, 2) alternation or 3) congruent lexicalization (Muysken 2000, 3).

- 1) **Insertion or lexical interference:** The speaker inserts lexical items from one language into the structure from another language (Bullock et al. 2009, 3). In this thesis, Grosjean’s subcategory of lexical interference will be used to indicate this kind of insertion of lexical items.

Example: I can’t find my läppäri anywhere. [läppäri=laptop]

- 2) **Alternation:** In this type of code-switch, the speaker alternates between the structures of at least two languages. Usually in alternation, the two languages remain separated in

the sentence level: a sentence might start in one language and end in another. This is not like in insertion, where only some words or phrases might be replaced in other language. (Bullock et al. 2009, 3). According to Grosjean's psycholinguistic perspective of code-switching, this thesis will treat alternation as a form of lexical interference.

Example: And I told her, että en pääse mukaan reissuun. [And I told her that I wouldn't be able to come to the trip]

- 3) **Congruent lexicalization:** When the two languages that are being used, share a common grammatical structure, it is possible to fill the sentence with lexical elements from either language (Bullock et al. 2009, 3). Congruent lexicalization is treated as a combination of lexical and syntactic interference in this thesis, since it is possible to use lexical items from one language in a grammatical structure of another.

Example: Voisitko helpiä tän asian kanssa? [Could you help me with this thing?]

### **2.1.2 Inter-sentential code-switching**

Inter-sentential code-switching occurs when lexical items of another language are switched at clause boundaries. Due to the production of full clauses, inter-sentential switching requires a high level of multilingual proficiency, similar to intra-sentential switching (Bullock et al. 2009, 3). Some authors use the term code-mixing in intra-sentential phenomena (Muysken 2000, 4). In this thesis, inter-sentential code-switching includes both lexical and syntactic interference (Grosjean 2010). Due to the natural emphasis that the code-switch at clause boundaries gives to the utterance, the sociolinguistic aspect of this type of code-switch is closely connected to the analysis.

### **2.1.3 Tag-switching or extra-sentential code-switching**

A speaker can insert a formulaic expression from another language into an utterance in another language. This code-switching is called tag-switching, and it can occur among multilinguals also with limited language proficiency (Bullock et al. 2009, 4). One example of this is quite commonly used "you know?" tag-switch that can be added to the end of a sentence of any language as a filler, for emphasis or as a hesitation marker, for example. (Merriam-Webster, "you know").



## 2.2 Children's language learning and code-switching

According to François Grosjean, children's language acquisition for multiple languages can happen simultaneously or one after another. In many cases, children learn two or more languages at the same time very early on through their family setting. Simultaneous language learning can be based on the One-Person-One-Language -method (OPOL) where, for example, one language is spoken by the mother and the other by the father of the child (Bretteny & de Klerk 1995). This learning process can also be practiced in cases, where the family speaks one language and the other is spoken in larger quantities by a caretaker or nanny (Grosjean 2010, 163). However, many children learn languages in a successive manner. After acquiring the mother tongue at home, the child will later continue to learn other languages at school or in the outside community. In most reported cases, the bilingual child will be dominant in the language that is favored by their environment. However, according to Grosjean, the shift in dominance can be very rapid if the main language changes. He points out that multilingual language development deepens through socializing with peers and because of persistent input of the language used in school (Grosjean 2010, 163).

Grosjean's previously mentioned Theory of language modes can also be applied to multilingual children. During the language learning process, multilingual children develop the sociolinguistic competence to know which language to use with whom and in what situations (Bullock et al. 2009, 4). Since children have not developed the necessary pragmatic and grammatical skills to have a deepened understanding of conscious grammatical code-switching, Peter Muysken introduced code-mixing as an umbrella term. Muysken broadened the term of code-mixing to refer "to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence" instead of the "rapid succession of several languages in a single speech event" that code-switching can be reserved to (Muysken 2000, 1). According to Muysken, code-switching as a term can be seen as too narrow and less neutral since it relates more to alternational type of mixing of languages. In this thesis however, I will continue to use the term code-switching and further specify the different ways languages are mixed in children's speech.

## 2.2.1 Linguistic interference

In bilingual settings, Grosjean talks about language dominance. For most bilingual children, the stronger language tends to influence the weaker language (Grosjean 2010, 192). This can especially be seen in children that have learned languages through successive language learning. When compared to younger bilingual children with a background in simultaneous language learning, fewer words are acquired, and less grammatical rules are inferred (ibid.) The first language is always present in the learning process, and it has the effect of transferring as interferences into the other language. Interference can, for example, be seen in a multi- or bilingual's "foreign accent" either permanently or in certain cases of pronunciation. It can also be noticed in wrong stress placement on a word or with the intonation of speaker's stronger language. Below are four instances of linguistic interferences that will be applied to the analysis of code-switching in this thesis as mentioned earlier.

### A. Lexical interference

Lexical interference resembles lexical borrowing, where the speaker takes words from a secondary language (secondary meaning the one not used at that instance) and inserts it to the primary language (primary meaning the language that the speaker is at that time and place dominantly using). A speaker can involuntarily import the form and meaning of a certain word into a sentence structure of another language (Grosjean 2010, 70). For example, a speaker switching the Finnish lexeme "puuro" in the English utterance displays code-switching through lexical interference. Therefore, lexical interference can be seen in intra-sentential code-switching as including words from the other language in the sentence structure, either purposely but most often without the speaker being aware of it happening (ibid.).

(1): I want to eat *puuro* for breakfast [puuro= oatmeal].

### B. Interferences at the level of syntax

In multilingual communication, instances where the speaker uses the "word-order pattern of one language in the other" by, for example, inserting determiners where they aren't needed or by using the wrong preposition, are called syntactic interferences. For example, speaker's grammatical knowledge in English can be translated into a Finnish utterance. Preposition "in" usually corresponds to the -ssa,-

ssä -inflection in Finnish and in some instances English grammar can affect the usage of those inflections, creating an ungrammatical sentence in Finnish.

(2): Minä asun Tampereessa [I live in Tampere].

### **C. Other deviations: Overgeneralization, simplification, and emphasis**

In the next cases of other deviations, I will use separate subcategories of overgeneralization, simplification, and emphasis to clarify and specify the types of interferences. Overgeneralization can occur in bilingual speech when a speaker is “taking irregular verbs and treating them as if they were regular” (Grosjean 2010, 69). Deviations that occur as “dropping pluralization and tense markers” are simplifications since the speaker can be “omitting function words and simplifying the syntax” (Grosjean 2010, 69). Other cases of simplification strategies in children’s language include simplifying pronunciation. Cases where children delete certain sounds, assimilate words and change phonetic elements are part of simplification (Oller 1973). In cases of emphasis, especially younger children tend to use code-switching to attract or retain attention (Grosjean 2010, 196).

#### **2.2.2 Person-language bond**

The formation of a person-language bond is very common for bilingual children: “In the eyes of the child, a person is associated with one particular language” (Grosjean 2010, 183). Due to the person-language bond, children tend to combine certain languages with certain people and avoid mixing languages completely. This bond can be a result from parental intervention, or it can occur naturally as a way of “facilitating the simultaneous acquisition of two languages” (Bretteny & de Klerk 1995). In the studies of Bretteny & de Klerk, code-switching occurred more in cases where the child was trying to maintain the person-language bond. If the child perceived that a “wrong” language was being used during the interaction, they started their response with the language that was being used and quickly switched to the “right” language after. Therefore, code-switching is separate from the person-language bond in the sense that children learn quickly to what extent code-switching is permissible in an interaction. However, in this thesis we will use person-language bond as one of the subcategories for the interpretation of the code-switch.

### 3. Data and method

The data for this thesis has been purposely collected from various internet sources. By collecting the data from “naturally” occurred conversations and reports online, the results are unaffected by possible preconceived ideas of the parents regarding the research. Through this method of data retrieval, the subject pool for the study is also more diverse and the data collection was not limited by the physical locations of the participants nor the slowness of filling separate questionnaires.

The data consists of quotes and examples of children’s communication collected from blogs and social media posts about multilingual code-switching. The quotes and examples have been directly taken from parents’ reports and testimonials. The data includes various language pairs and the findings in the thesis do not take into account variability in code-switching between languages. The data was collected from three social media sources: Blogit.fi, Reddit and Facebook. For the initial data collection, I searched for Finnish blogs from the website Blogit.fi (<https://www.blogit.fi/>) with the search word “lasten kaksikielisyyss” [children’s bilinguality]. The data was collected from blogs, where parents shared their own experiences about their bi- and multilingual communication within their family. In this thesis, parents’ reported examples of code-switching and language mixing reflect how code-switching occurs within the family settings. Therefore, the data was collected from direct quotes that were mentioned in the posts. For further data retrieval, I used the social media platforms, Reddit and Facebook. In Reddit, the data has been collected from subreddit r/multilingualparenting, under the post “code-switching/language mixing at home” (accessed 11/2023). The rest of the data was collected from the comment sections of public Facebook forums, called “Bilingual/Multilingual Kids & Families” and “Raising Bilingual kids and Little Global Citizens” (accessed 11/2023). The data was retrieved throughout the Facebook group posts and comment sections that were posted before 12/2023, regarding code-switching and mixing of languages.

For the analysis of the data, I have categorized the quotes based on their type of code-switching: intra-sentential, inter-sentential or tag-switching. The data set includes the used language pair, English translation of the quote, possible reported age of the child and the categorization of the code-switch in the sentence. In the analysis I looked at the distribution of the three categories of code-switching. With each of the represented categories, I analyzed the usage of the code-switch and complemented the findings with the testimonials given by the

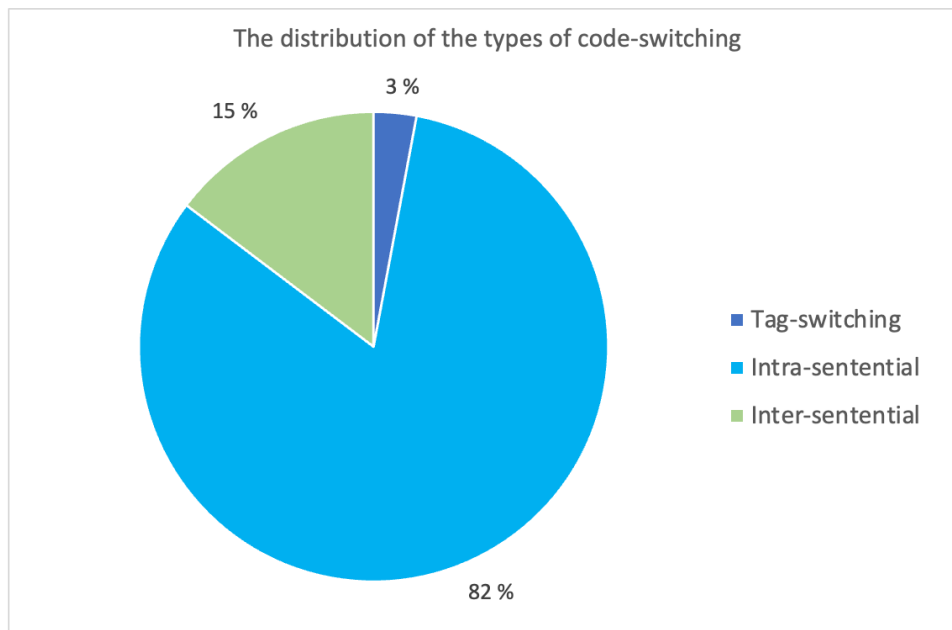
parents about the phenomena. I used Grosjean's subcategories for linguistic interferences as the base for the analysis. In addition, I created a separate category for the combination of both, lexical and syntactic interference. Due to the diversity of the collected examples, there were instances where the children had used lexical interference by taking lexemes from the secondary language and conjugated them according to the grammatic rules of the primary language of the utterance. In these cases, the children were mostly using lexical interference while conforming with the grammatical context of the used language.

The direct quotes were analyzed by using the linguistic concepts of syntax and semantics while discussing how the children have taken advantage of their linguistic fluidity. The subcategories for the interpreted use of code-switch are as follows: lexical interference, syntactic interference, combination of lexical and syntactic interference, person-language bond, overgeneralization, emphasis, and simplification. In the analysis, I have included the original quote from the collected data and my own English translation of the quote in square brackets [].

## **4. Analysis of the reported cases of code-switching**

### **4.1 Distribution**

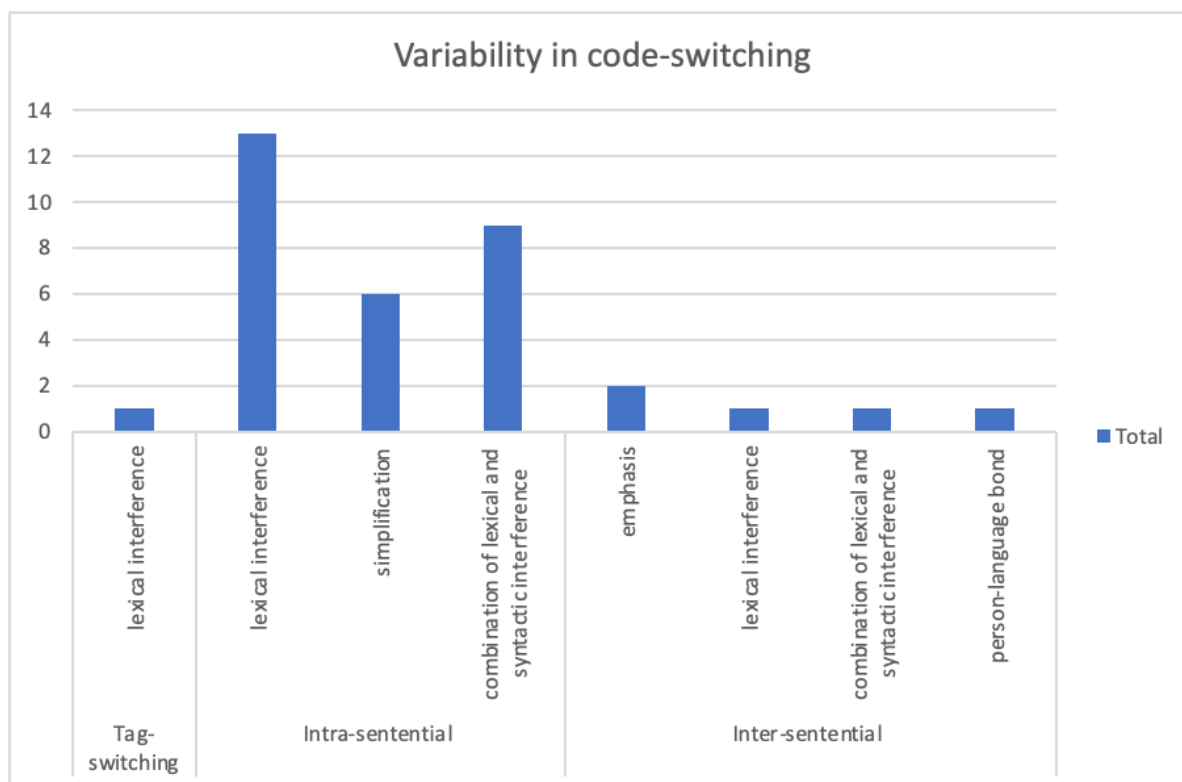
All of the direct quotations were categorized based on the type of code-switching and the used interference. The totals of the different categories can be seen in Table 1, in the appendices. Figure 1. shows the distribution of the three different instances of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential and tag-switching in percentages, as it is presented in Table 1. In the complete data set, there were 14 different languages present. The languages formed various language pairs but most dominantly either Finnish or English was the other language of the language pair. As seen from the chart, intra-sentential code-switching appears to be the most dominant form of code-switching in the collected cases with a 82% share of all of the direct quotes. Only 18% of the quotes provided by the parents included tag-switching and inter-sentential switching.



**Figure 1. The percentages of the different types of code-switching**

#### **4.2 Variability in the usage of code-switching**

The collected examples were categorized based on the syntactic and lexical changes in the sentences. As presented also in Table 1, the categories are based on Grosjean’s categorization of linguistic interferences and previously mentioned subcategories for the interpretation of the use of code-switch: lexical interference, syntactic interference, combination of lexical and syntactic interference, overgeneralization, simplification, emphasis and person-language bond. By looking into the variability in the code-switches, we can see how code-switching appears in these examples of children’s language use. Below is the analysis of the usage of code-switching with direct quotes from the data.



**Figure 2. Variability in code-switching**

#### 4.2.1 Lexical interference

Simple lexical interferences cover 44% of all of the reported code-switches. The most dominant were code-switches regarding noun phrases or nouns. Out of 15 instances of simple lexical interferences, only 4 cases of code-switches were other than noun phrase related.

In the example: “Äiti katso, tuolla on iso akka” [Mom look, there is a big woman], the child has used Italian word “akka” [letter H] instead of the Finnish substitute. The lexical interference causes the sentence to completely change its meaning, since the lexeme “akka” in Finnish relates to an older woman (Kielitoimiston sanakirja, “akka”. n.d.).

Parents reported cases where their children’s lexical interference in their code-switching has been highly word related. One of the parents mentioned that their child is “always using the Mandarin word for “dog” or “spicy” for example”, regardless of the linguistic context. This shows language related conformity in regards of certain lexemes. This kind of language conformity can also be seen in the case of specific lexical domains: “mamá ¿dónde está el petit sac del goûter?”. According to the parent here, their children “always mixed languages

in sentences when referring to school matters [they] would use French words (...), but the rest of the sentence would be in Spanish” as in this example above.

#### **4.2.2. Syntactic interference and the combination of lexical and syntactic interference**

The data set does not include any direct quotes indicating the usage of only syntactic interference. However, according to the parents’ reports, syntactic interferences are quite common in their daily interaction:

(1) “My 4-year-old often borrows from English (his strongest language) but uses the grammatical structure of German which he consistently speaks with me”.

(2) “English is my daughter's stronger language, but she tends to put adjectives after nouns like they do in Spanish”.

The results presented above in the chart show a high percentage of the combination of lexical and syntactic interferences. 29% of the examples show the usage of both, lexical and syntactic interference in the code-switch. “Both my girls 8 and 4 stick an -ing on end of french verbs when speaking english with me. Or sometimes english verbs with a -er ending”.

Mixing the grammatical rules and syntax of the spoken languages with the lexical knowledge results to combinations such as “Summerina ei ikinä rägne” [During summers it never rains]. In the example above the speaker has taken English lexeme “summer” and conjugated it according to the Finnish grammar rules. They have also code-switched the verb to the Swedish lexeme “rägne” [to rain]. Another instance of similar syntactical transformation is “Mitä tässä oikein miinitään?” [What does this mean?], where the speaker has “created” a new word by taking the English verb “mean” and conjugated it into Finnish. Based on the data, it can be noted that the multilingual children in these cases take advantage of their linguistic fluidity by combining and developing their syntactic and semantic knowledge of the languages further. Therefore, the data also conforms with Grosjean’s thoughts about language dominance, where the stronger language affects the weaker in terms of grammar.

#### **4.2.3 Person-language bond**

In the example, “ Äiti haluaisin ostaa (...) quel nuovo giocattolo che ho visto in televisione, papa me lo compri? “[Mom I'd like to buy (...) that new toy I saw on television, Dad, will you buy it for me?], the child shows awareness of the linguistic situation and uses the One-Person-



One-Language approach by code-switching within the sentence when shifting the person, they are talking to. In this case the child uses Finnish for their mother and mid-sentence code-switches into Italian to indicate a shift in the interlocutor and therefore respecting the person-language bond. This finding lines up with the reported experiences of one parent, who wrote about her 2.5-year-old son's code-switching: "He easily switches languages so if it's a conversation between him, me and dad, he will speak English to dad then next sentence will be French with me". Another parent also wrote about her son's code-switching: "He would do things like saying water in 2 different languages depending on who he was speaking to, or sometimes start a word on one language and switch to another on between, or say the article on Spanish and the noun in German". As described in the parents' testimonials, children seem to be very aware of the linguistic situation and unspoken norms that have formed around bilingual interactions in their family. While person-language bond appeared in only 3% of the cases in the data set, it can be noted that children slowly develop the socio-linguistic understanding of what language they should speak to whom: "Spanish with grandparents, mixed with in-laws. Kids tend to use English with friends, unless the friends only speak Spanish".

#### **4.2.4 Simplification**

In the sentence "takaa kutitaa" [My back is itchy], we can see that the code-switch is based on the simplification of the lexeme "takaa" [back]. The speaker is taking advantage of the multiple meanings of the word in Finnish language, such as behind, back, backside and support (Kielikeskus, "takaa"). It can be noted that there is a possibility the speaker cannot remember the more suitable lexeme "selkä" and therefore takes advantage of the multiple interpretations of the lexeme to get their point across.

Other cases of simplification relate to the pronunciation of words. In a few of the reported cases, children have assimilated words from the two used languages into a "new" word. "Ami ami" and "kimm her" are examples of this kind of assimilation. According to the parents' reports, in the first instance the child has combined the English word "come" with the corresponding Spanish word "veni" and therefore created an easier to pronounce correspondent. The same logic has been used in the latter case, where German "komm hier" and English "come here" have assimilated into "kimm her".

#### 4.2.5 Emphasis

“!Stop it! I really mean it! LO-PE-TA!” shows the aspect of emphasis in the code-switch. The speaker changes from English to Finnish to put more emphasis on the command in the end of the sentence (LOPETA!). In another example, “Fi eisiau bwyta rhywbeth! I’m so hungry. Nyt heti!” [I want to eat something. I’m so hungry. Now!], the speaker is code-switching between Welsh, English and Finnish languages to emphasize the meaning of their words. Both examples belong to the category of inter-sentential code-switching, and we can therefore conclude that in this data set, emphasis is only used in children’s code-switching in inter-sentential environments. Only 6% of the reported cases show children using code-switching for emphasis. It can be concluded that based on this data set, code-switching for emphasis only occurs rarely in children’s speech.

### 5. Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to get a better understanding on how code-switching occurs in children’s speech. Based on the analysis, children mostly used code-switching intra-sententially, that being 82% of all reported cases. 44% of code-switching was shown through lexical interferences. Nouns and noun phrases can be easily switched without having to change the syntax of the sentence, which is most likely the reason for the high percentage of lexical interferences in the data set. The results confirmed my initial assumptions and thoughts about code-switching occurring dominantly intra-sententially and being noun based due to the versatility in the usage of nouns within a sentence structure. However, it was surprising to see that results showed a larger variety of different instances where children tend to code-switch: for emphasis, for simplification or based on the person-language bond. In my opinion, the data shows that multilingual children are more linguistically versatile and flexible in their communication than maybe expected. Based on the parents’ testimonials and reports, it was clear that children’s code-switching is a natural part of the every-day-communication in multilingual families. Another thing I found surprising was how language dominance could also be seen through the ways children code-switched: by combining lexical and syntactic interferences in order to create their “own” grammar. Children’s imagination and cleverness to formulate sentences and produce “new” words by taking advantage of the knowledge of two or more languages proved to be more convenient in the context they were uttered than a complication for communication, in my opinion.

In this thesis, I decided to limit the data collection to online sources only. I found this method of data retrieval to be the most convenient and best option due to the length constraints of the thesis. For future reference, I think that a questionnaire-based data retrieval would be more beneficial for deeper analysis of children's code-switching. For this thesis, I decided to make minor modifications to Grosjean's categorization for the linguistic interferences to clarify the different instances of code-switching in my analysis. Through the analysis presented in this thesis, we can see the versatility of children's code-switching while getting a decent overall understanding of the distribution between different types of code-switches. In my possible master's thesis, I would do a deeper statistical analysis of the distribution and variability of the occurring code-switching while combining the contextual analysis and the aspect of intention into the study. In addition, it would be extremely interesting to see how the data in this thesis would compare to a similar data set acquired from the parents of the children.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1. code-switching in direct quotations

**Appendix 1: Table 1. code-switching in direct quotations**

Type of code-switching	Lexical interference	Simplification	Combination of lexical and syntactic interferences	Emphasis	Person-language bond	Total
Tag-switching	1	-	-	-	-	1
Intra-sentential	13	6	9	-	-	28
Inter-sentential	1	-	1	2	1	5