

An analysis of code-switching in bimodal bilinguals (*Brazilian Sign Language and Portuguese*)

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Abstract

An interesting linguistic phenomenon that happens in the interaction among bilingual people is code-switching (emmorey et al. 2005; lillo-martin et al. 2010; odlin, 2009; williams; hammarberg, 1998). In this paper, we are investigating code-switching among oral Brazilian Portuguese and Brazilian Sign Language – Libras, in the same enunciative chain, intending to identify and analyze the use of code-switching in the speech of a child and of an adult (both hearing from deaf parents), interacting in an intermodal bilingual context, with deaf and hearing interlocutors. Code-switching in languages, in this case, occurs when a person stops to speak in Portuguese and he/she alternates to sign. The present research is an exploratory study with qualitative analysis. Our corpus is composed of nine sections of interactions in Libras and oral Brazilian Portuguese, recorded in video, part of the Bimodal Bilingual Development Project data, at UFSC. The data shows that adult and child's characteristics of code-switching seem to have similarities and differences. The adult seems to be more worried about the course of the interaction when she switches. On the other hand, the child did not seem to use code-switching for specific pragmatic reasons. In regard to the switching extension, we noticed that both the child and the adult used more than one word sentences. The role of the interlocutors seems to be decisive in the interactions investigated here – especially the ones with the adult, since the child is still acquiring awareness about the role of the interlocutor in an interaction.

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