

Mixed methods in linguistics

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Roadmap

1. What is linguistics?
2. Ethnography as qualitative method for linguistics research
3. Lina's Ph.D dissertation study
4. Zentella (1990) on mixed methods for codeswitching
5. Mixed methods for current and future sign language linguistics research?

What is linguistics?

Let's look at a few linguistics departments

- Gallaudet University: <https://gallaudet.edu/linguistics/>
- The University of Texas at Austin: <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/linguistics/>
- University of California, Santa Barbara: <https://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/>

Ethnography as qualitative method for linguistics research

“An in-depth analysis of a speech community’s use of language in context can only be captured by participating in the life of the community and gathering natural speech from a wide variety of speech events and across a range of settings and speakers.” (Zentella, 1990: 79)

Note: we can replace “speech” with “language” and “speakers” with “signers” or “users”

Ethnography allows a researcher to observe and document language use in different contexts by different users:

- Language use: daily conversations, ritual language, narratives...
- Users: children, parents, elders...
- Interactive patterns: dyadic, polyadic...
- Spaces: home, streets, classrooms, stores...



A few photos from my ethnographic fieldwork (2014-2015) in an indigenous community in Oaxaca, Mexico

My Ph.D dissertation

- Ph.D dissertation was the documentation & description of five families and their signing practices (“making hands”) in an indigenous community in Oaxaca, Mexico
- Focus was on how deaf and hearing children *became* signers through daily interaction with their families
- Ethnographic fieldwork for one year, 2014-2015 (with follow-up trips in 2018, 2019, and 2022)
 - Weekly visits, video-recordings, photos, field notes, sociolinguistic interviews



A photo of me with one family from my ethnographic fieldwork (2014-2015)

Ethnographic research reveals variation in patterns of sign language use among families:

- Family structure
- Strong gender roles
- Familial attitudes and ideologies about spoken and signed language development
- Language socialization of deaf and hearing children
- Effort and willingness to make sense of communication



A few photos of one family from my ethnographic fieldwork (2014-2015)

My Ph.D study did not use any quantitative methods for my study:

- Difficult to quantify communicative input for comparing families
 - Transcribing and sampling issues
- Difficult to quantify child-directed input
 - AFAIK this has not been done for any child sign language research
- Difficult to compare elicited data among families
 - Eliciting data as a culturally unfamiliar activity
 - Eliciting data not representative of spontaneous language use

Zentella (1990)

- Dr. Ana Celia Zentella is a U.S. linguist and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Ethnic Studies at University of California, San Diego. Check out this website: <https://ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu/people/zentella.html>
- Zentella (1990) is an old but classic paper that explicitly discusses the integration of mixed methods – qualitative and quantitative – in a bilingual code-switching study taken from a larger ethnographic study

Zentella (1990)

- A “mixed methods” study (ethnography & quantification) of codeswitching in a bilingual Spanish-English community of Puerto Rican children and their families in East Harlem or “El Barrio” (New York)
- Zentella spent two years in East Harlem and observing language use among 34 children aged 5-12
 - 5 children and their families were observed in-depth
- The mixed methods were used to answer more questions about codeswitching and to corroborate some ethnographic observations



Major ethnographic findings

1. Community values both English and Spanish in all aspects of community life
2. English is the predominant language of children
3. Children learn to engage with codeswitching by age 5+
4. Language choice is influenced by:
 - Physical features: Spanish for Latinos and English for others
 - Gender: Spanish for woman and English for men
 - Age: Spanish for babies and the elderly, English for others

Major quantitative findings

100 hours of natural conversation in 34 children

5 children's 1658 switches coded for different variables and statistically analyzed for χ^2 tests in ... SPSS

Results were interpreted in context of ethnographic findings

1. Codeswitching occurs most at home and on the streets; see Table 1
2. Codeswitching occurs more *within* sentence boundaries than across sentence boundaries; see Table 2
3. Children codeswitch more in narratives and casual conversations; see Table 3

TABLE 1. Switches per Hour in Community Settings

	Switches/Hours	Switches per Hour
Bodega	30/6	5.5
Playground	33/6	5.5
Home	239/20	12.0
Street	<u>1383/71</u>	19.5
Totals	1685/103	

TABLE 2. Grammatical Constituents Switched in Community Settings

	Bodega (%)	Playground (%)	Home (%)	Street (%)
Full Sentence	20	26	27	22
Object Noun	17	13	12	13
Independent Clause – Conjunction	13	19	9	13
Object Noun Phrase	7	3	8	6
Independent Clause + Conjunction	0	0	3	6
Subordinate Clause + Conjunction	7	3	3	4
Prepositional Phrase	3	0	3	3
Adverb	7	3	5	3
Filler	3	3	2	3
Subordinate Clause – Conjunction	0	0	4	2
Adverbial Phrase	3	3	2	2
Adjective	3	3	2	3
Imperative	0	0	.8	2
Verb Phrase	3	6	2	2
Tags	3	3	1	2
Others ^a	6	15.3	14.8	15.2
Total (N)	(30)	(33)	(239)	(1383) = 1685

^a Includes coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, verbs, subject pronoun/noun/noun phrase, relative clause, exclamations, predicate adjective, adjectival phrases, determiners, prepositions, miscellaneous.

TABLE 3. Code Switches in Speaking Styles by Five Speakers

Style	Paca	Linda	Maria	Sara	Eli	Total N/ Hours of Recording [Estimated]	Switches per hour
1. Casual Conversation	256	386	524	116	54	1336/70	19.1
2. Games	6	0	2	8	— ^a	16/10	1.6
3. Narratives	6	34	79	32	91	242/9	26.9
4. Buying	0	0	9	—	—	9/7	1.3
5. Language/Lessons	12	—	10	24	—	46/3	15.3
6. Taping/Interviewing	0	4	5	11	0	20/2	10.0
7. Jokes	—	—	—	14	0	14/1	14.0
8. Egocentric Speech	<u>1</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2/1</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Total N	281	424	630	205	145	1685/103	

^a — = Style not recorded.

Mixed methods for current and future
sign language linguistics research?

Especially if translanguaging is
involved?

