

Mexican-American Students' Perceptions of Linguistic and Cultural Aspects in *Under the Mesquite*



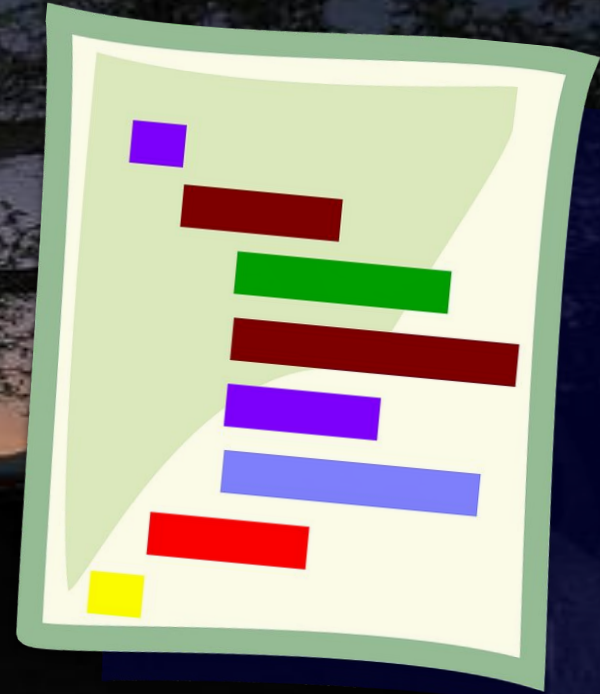
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Under the Mesquite (2011) summary

- **Empowering story**
 - family bonds
 - the strength of a mujer navigating her education
- **Authentic immigrant experience**
- **Crossing borders**
- **Trying to assimilate to a new country/ culture**

Outline

- **Objectives**
- **Previous studies**
- **Methodology**
- **Analysis (results)**
- **Discussion**
- **Conclusions**
- **Limitations**
- **Future investigations**



source: Google images

Objetivos:

Objectives of the study:

- The perception of Mexican students on code switching used in the *book Under the Mesquite (UTM, 2011)* by **Guadalupe Garcia McCall**
- Study the evolution of student's perception throughout a class about **UTM**

Research question:

- ¿What are the perceptions of high school students in Salinas, California, in an additional program for Latinos/as about the maintenance of Spanish and its culture, code change and identity?



Source: Pixabay

Previous studies: bilingualism in California



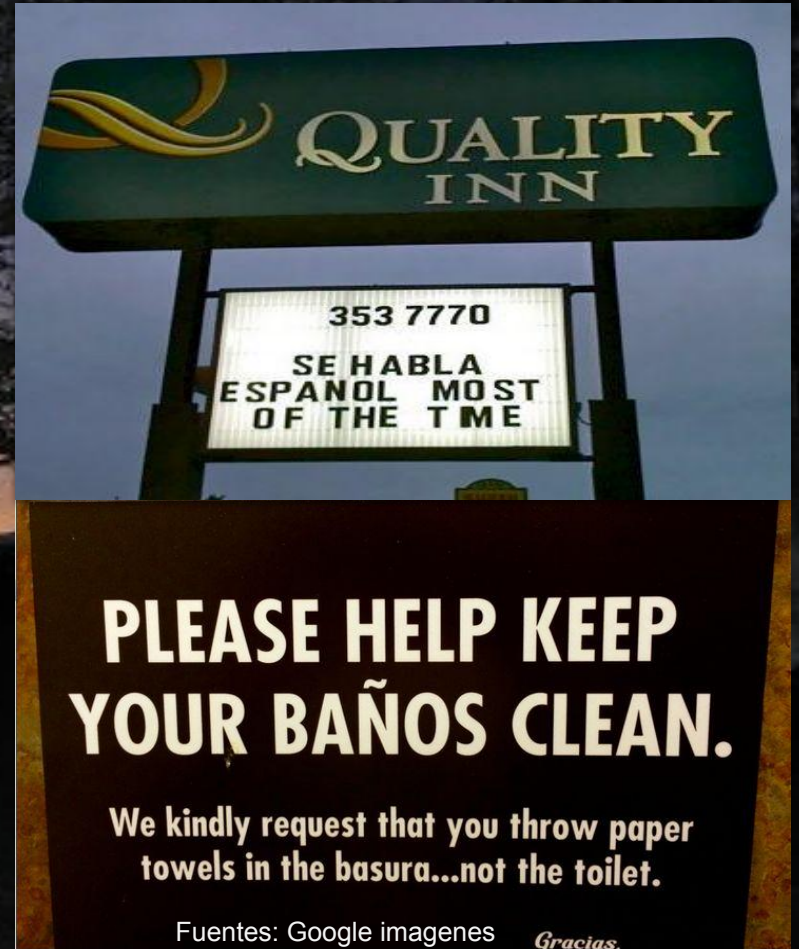
- **Proposition 227, 1998**
 - “English only” - Ron Unz (Monzó, 2010)
 - No more bilingual schools (Monzó, 2010)
 - parents against Prop. 227 (Monzó, 2010)

Previous studies: bilingualism in California cont.

- **Problems of the eradication of bilingual education**
 - **Students question their identity (McCartney, 2012)**
 - **An increase of school dropouts (Lee, 2006)**
 - **Students stories are ignored by educators (Bernal, 1998)**

Previous studies: El cambio de código

- Common in bilingual speakers (Azevedo, 2008)
- Mixture of two languages (Azevedo, 2008)
- Speakers mix the languages in the same sentence (Azevedo, 2008)



Institutional profile



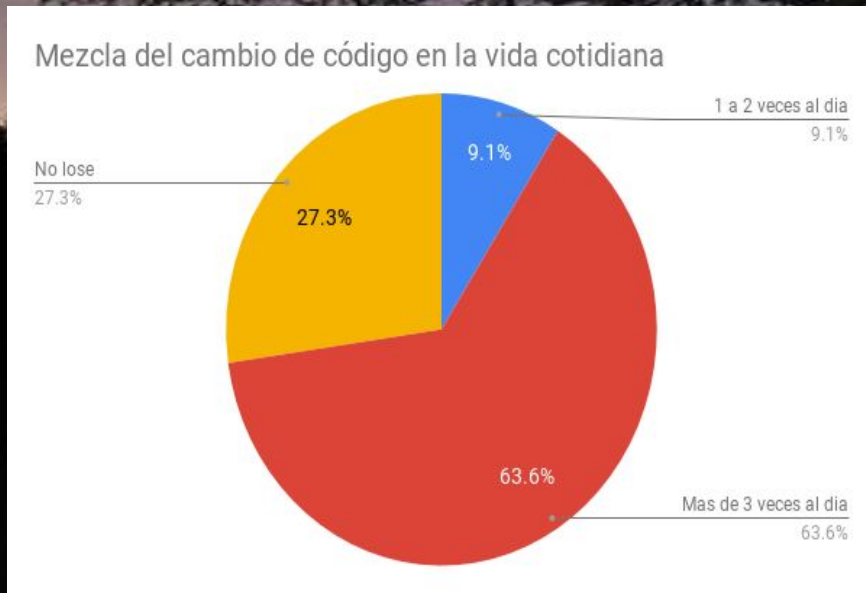
- **High School in Salinas, California**
- **Percentage of Latino Students 47.17% obtaining high school diploma (world population review, 2019)**
- **Spanish Language is common in Salinas, CA.**
- **Salinas has 77.2% Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019)**

Methodology and participants

- Methodology:
 - Teaching *UTM* (2011) to 17 Mexican & Mexican-American students \ul> - the teaching lasted 6 weeks, 3 hrs. per class
- Evolution of perceptions on code switching used in the book
- Survey: 20 questions and reflections



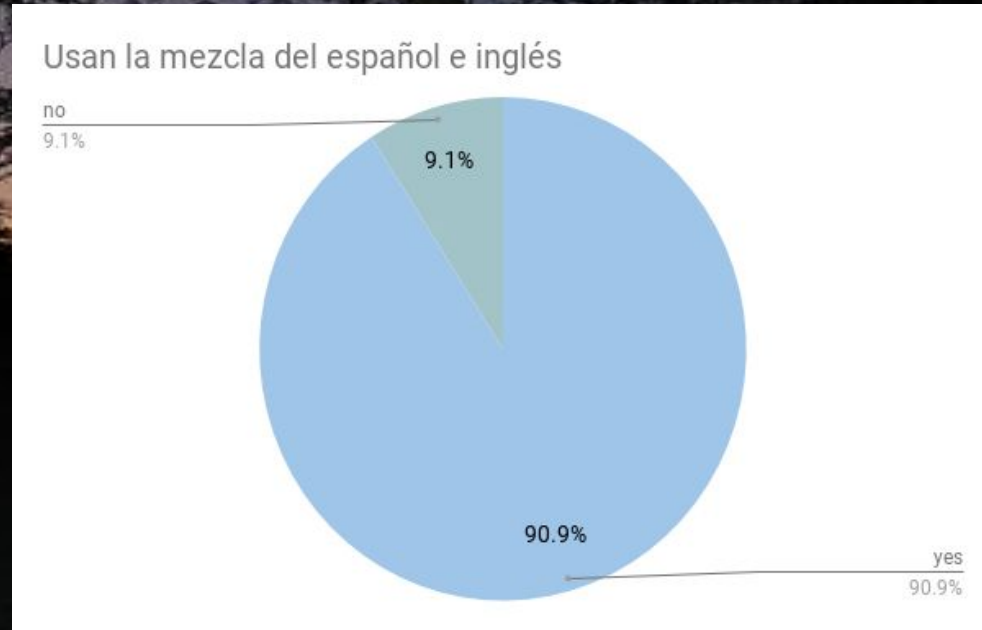
Quantitative analysis: perceptions on code switching



- **72.7% participants notice code switching (Survey, 2019)**
- **the same percentage say they identify with code switching (Survey, 2019)**
- **27.3% say they don't know if they notice it (survey, 2019)**

Quantitative analysis Cont.: perceptions on code switching

- **90.9% of participants stated they use code switching in their life (Survey, 2019)**



Quantitative analysis Cont.: perceptions on code switching

- One participant against code switching:
 - “I do not like it because it does not sound accurate in the sentence” (Survey,2019)
 - “I am bilingual but I do not mix Spanish and English” (Survey, 2019)

Qualitative analysis : perceptions on code switching

Perceptions before reading the book:

- “I feel normal when people use both languages because I do too” (encuesta, 2019)
- “When I hear people... use English and Spanish... it triggers a kind of code switch... like ok, so this is how this person likes to communicate” (encuesta, 2019)

Qualitative analysis: perceptions on code switching

Perceptions after reading the book:

- “It makes me feel comfortable, and I can understand it”
(Survey, 2019)
- “I feel like I can relate to it by reading commonly used Spanish words” (Survey, 2019)
- “I’m happy being able to to switch between languages, I understand it better” (Survey, 2019)

Code switching as a tool to understand literature

- “[books such as *UTM*] make me feel like I do belong and that school is for me” (survey, 2019)
- “This book helps me because it ties in culture into the academic work that students do, the story told if relatable and applicable” (Survey, 2019)
- “the mixture of languages in the book help me to learn my mexican history and vocabulary in english” (Survey, 2019)

Discussion:

- Books like *UTM* which use code switching, help students to connect to their cultural heritage (Campbell, 2012).
- Through code switching students incorporate both cultures, languages and identities in their education (Ladson-Billings, 1995)

Conclusions:

- **The participants:**
 - **identified with code switching**
 - **stated they use the concept**
 - **assimilated to books such as *UTM***
 - **identified with the cultural heritage portrayed by the book**
 - **concluded that books which use code switching will help them in their education.**

Limitations:

- **The study**
 - **focused on female students only**
 - **Only one book was analysed**
 - **Code switching was the only aspect researched**
 - **The survey focused on perceptions on code switching only**

Future investigations:

- **Include questions in the survey regarding code switching when conversing with professors**
- **Use segments of other books such as *UTM* to see different examples of context**
- **Interview professors & parents on their perspective on code switching**
- **Interview spanish speakers, who only speak Spanish to see what they think on the concept**

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A large, gnarled tree with a thick trunk and spreading branches is silhouetted against a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The tree's branches are intricate and spread across the upper half of the frame. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Thank you