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## **Code-Switching in the Hispanic Community of Bloomington, Illinois: A Case Study**

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Oral Presentation 4.2

**CODE-SWITCHING IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY OF  
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS: A CASE STUDY**

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One aspect of sociolinguistics that has become more prevalent in recent years is code-switching. Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon where bilingual speakers switch between both languages throughout a conversation, whether it be with words or whole phrases. Despite common assumptions, this lexical switching is due not to a lack of knowledge of one particular language. It instead proves to be a resource for bilingual speakers to better express their ideas. Such a study is important in the U.S. today, with the large influx of Hispanics settling in various parts of the country. Their usage of Spanish has been heavily influenced by their English-speaking surroundings. This is particularly evident in adolescents. Hispanic adolescents living in the U.S. often speak Spanish with their parents in their home setting and English with their peers in their school setting. They often code-switch in their daily conversations.

The purpose of this case study is to provide a descriptive view of one Mexican adolescent's code-switching patterns in various conversational settings. Several questions surrounding the principal informant's code-switching are considered, such as the base language in which each conversation takes place, the relationship the speaker has with the interlocutor and the reason for code-switching in each instance. Finally, this adolescent's attitude about belonging to a Hispanic culture and speaking the Spanish language also becomes a factor in this study. Language is directly related to one's notion of self-identity. Code-switching may therefore be a manifestation of the informant's concept of being Hispanic in U.S. society.