

## How Do Students Use Two Languages When Learning Mathematics? Using Two Languages during Conversations (Code-Switching)

The language ability and language choice of the person addressing a bilingual child are the most significant variables for the child's language choice. Young bilingual students (beyond age 5) speak as they are spoken to. In mathematics classrooms, children will also speak as they are spoken to, depending on the language ability and choice of the person addressing them. We cannot use someone's code-switching to reach conclusions about his or her language proficiency, ability to recall a word, knowledge of a particular technical term, mathematical reasoning, or mathematical proficiency. Research does not support a view of code-switching as a deficit itself or as a sign of deficiency in mathematical reasoning. We should not assume that bilingual students switch into their first language only because they are missing English vocabulary. Rather than viewing code-switching as a deficiency, instruction for bilingual mathematics learners should consider how this practice serves as a resource for communicating mathematically.

*Based on Using Two Languages When Learning Mathematics: How Can Research Help Us Understand Mathematics Learners Who Use Two Languages?*

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