MACQUARIE University

ISB

'Yo sé español, mom'
Children's reactions to parents' discourse strategies in bilingual parent-child conversations

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Overarching Question

How do families who speak a minoritized language at home support their child's bilingual development during the transition to school in early childhood?

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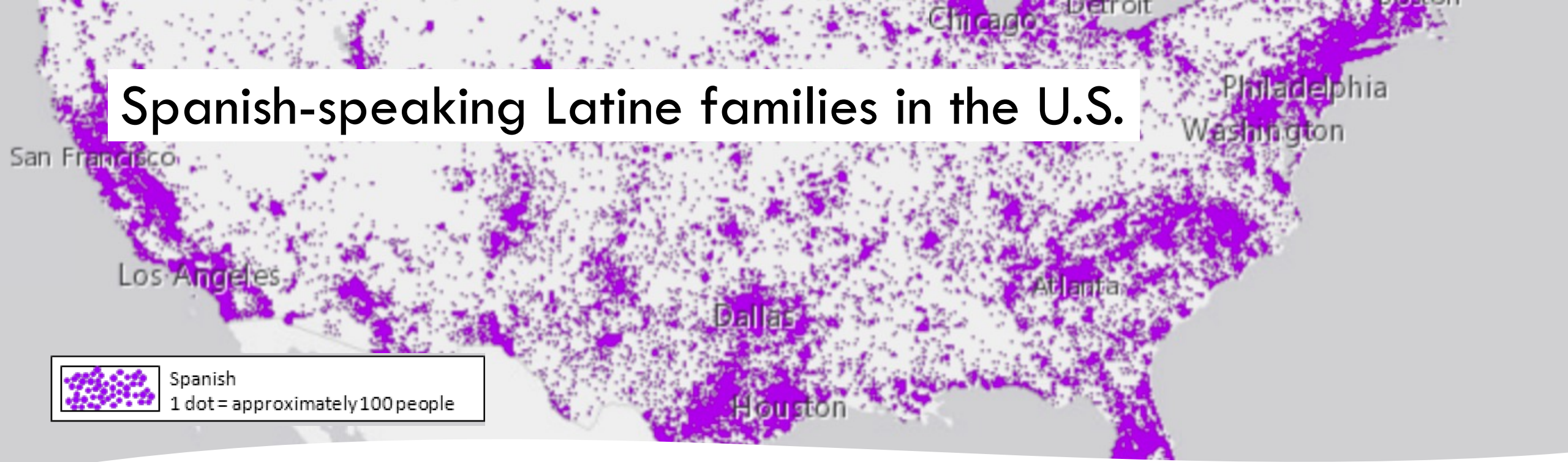
Spanish-speaking Latine families in the U.S.



- Tend to highly value their child's bilingualism in Spanish and English
- Often have questions about how to sustain their child's Spanish development after starting school in English

A common dilemma:
How to respond to their child's code-switching (CS) to English in Spanish-language conversations

Kaveh & Sandoval, 2020; Luo et al., 2021; Pease-Alvarez, 2002; Ronderos et al., 2021; Surrain, 2021; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

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Parental Discourse Strategies

Table 11.1 Parents' discourse strategies (Döpke, 1992; Lanza, 2004)

Type of strategy	Context	Constraint
Instruction to translate	Monolingual	High
Minimal grasp	↕	↕
Expressed guess		
Adult repetition		
Move-on		
Code-switching	Bilingual	Low

(Nakamura, 2018)

- **Bilingual family interaction model** (BIFIM): Strategies that negotiate a **monolingual context** are needed to **socialize active use of the non-societal language** (De Houwer & Nakamura, 2022; Döpke, 1992; Juan-Garau & Pérez-Vidal, 2001; Lanza, 1997, 2004; Misihina-Mori, 2011)
- Some studies found that **explicit, high-constraint strategies did not consistently elicit use of the non-societal language** (Deuchar & Muntz, 2003; Nakamura, 2017; Nicoladis & Genesee, 1998)

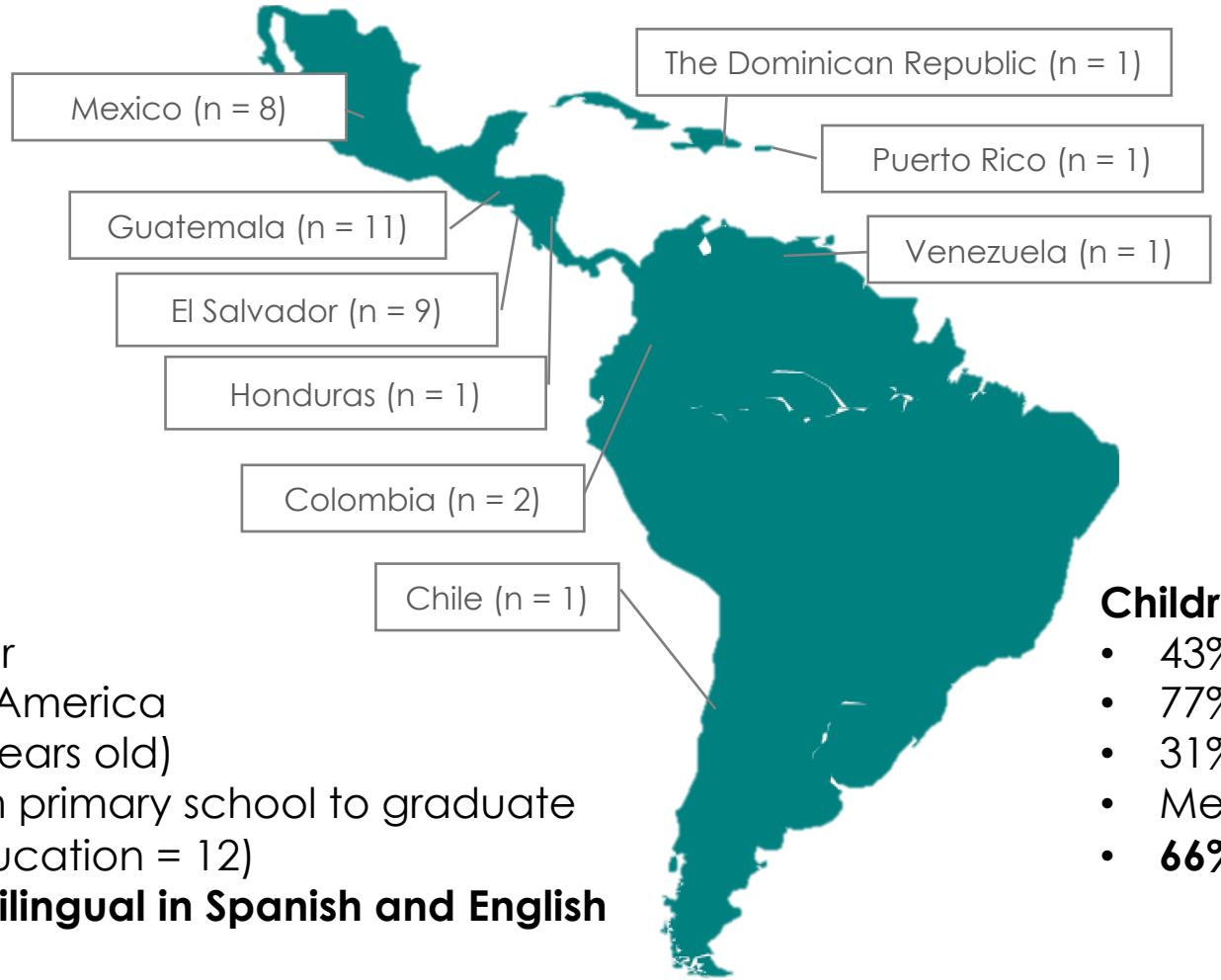
The Current Study

- Describes discourse strategies used by **Spanish-speaking parents in the U.S**. with their 3-5 year old children before and after starting preschool in English
- Examines relation between parent responses to child CS and subsequent child reactions using **Sequential Analysis** (Bakeman & Quera, 2011)
- **Sequential Analysis:** Probability that a given event (e.g. parent response) is followed by a target event (e.g. child reaction)

Research Questions

1. What **types of CS** do children produce, how do **parents respond** to these CS, and how do **children react** to parent responses?
2. Are there associations between **child CS and parent responses**, and between **parent responses and child reactions**?
3. Are child **CS**, **parent responses**, **child reactions**, and the associations between them stable over time?

Method: 35 Spanish-speaking parent-child dyads in the Boston area



Parents

- 34 mothers and 1 father
- Immigrated from Latin America (*M* age of arrival = 25 years old)
- Education ranged from primary school to graduate degree (*M* years of education = 12)
- **31% self-identified as bilingual in Spanish and English**

Children

- 43% female
- 77% born in U.S.
- 31% oldest or only child
- Mean age = 46 months at Time 1
- **66% Spanish strongest language**

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Method: Study Design and Procedures

Summer 2019

Time 1
(*n*=35, in person)

Spring 2020

Time 2
(*n*=32, online)

Summer - Fall 2021

Time 3
(*n*=24, online)

Home Visit Procedure

1. **Parent-child interaction** (3 bags task)

2. **Child Spanish expressive vocabulary** (CELF-P2)

3. **Parent questionnaire**

Language beliefs, policies and practices

4. **Child English expressive vocabulary** (CELF-P2)

- Transcribed using CHAT (MacWhinney, 2000)
- Time 1 and 2 transcripts coded for sequences (Child CS -> Parent response -> Child reaction)
- 855 coded sequences (333 from Time 1, 522 from Time 2), from 27 dyads (M=32, 3-110 per dyad)
- Sequential analysis with GSEQ software (Bakeman & Quera, 2011)

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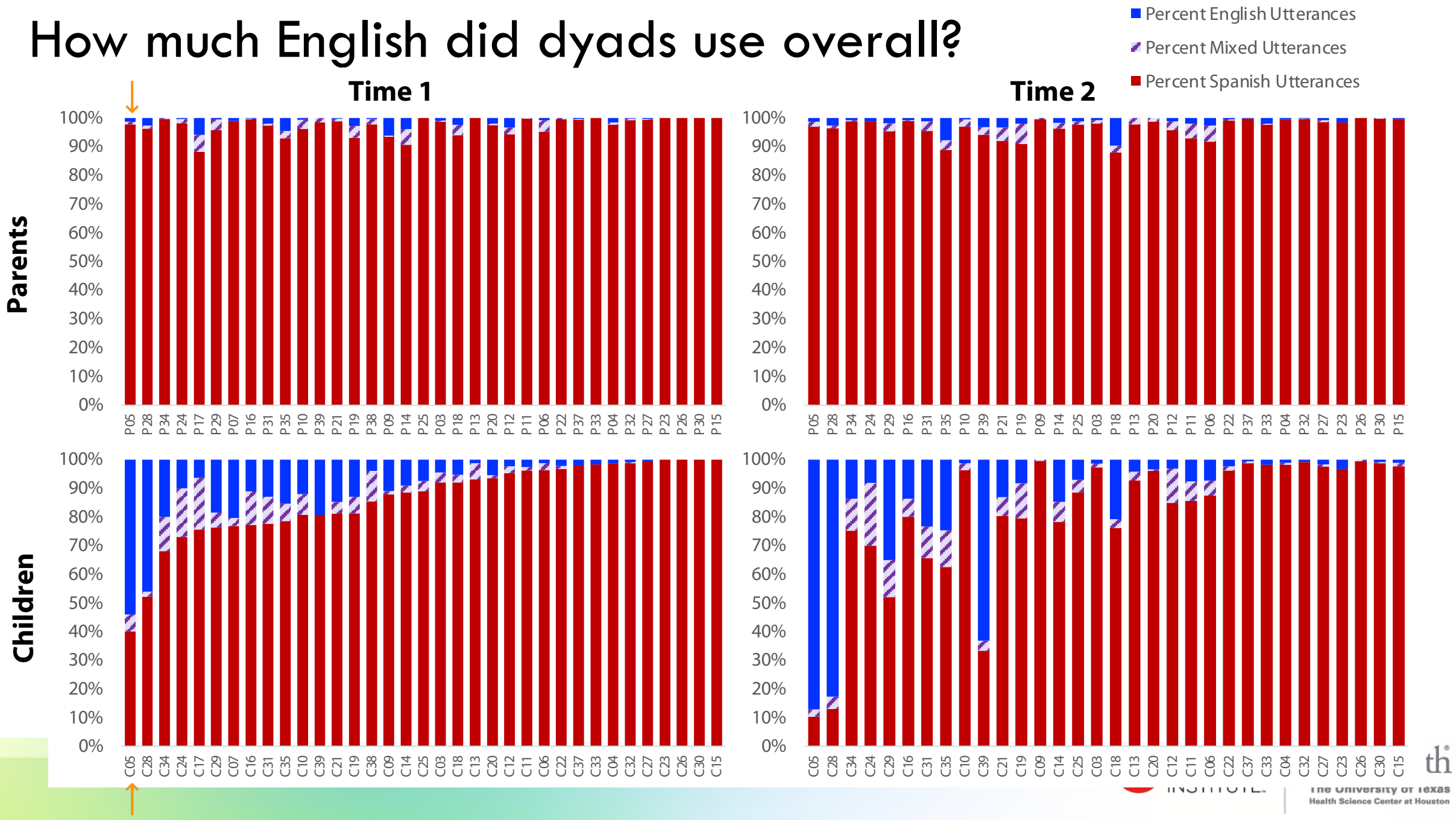
How much English did dyads use overall?

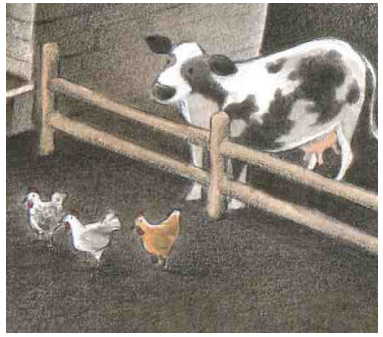


Have you ever spoken in Spanish to your child and had your child respond in English?

- 80% said yes, this happens at least some of the time
- When asked how they responded, 73.33% gave answers like these:

Digo 'qué dijiste? Dime en español.'
I say 'what did you say? Tell me in Spanish.'

Si le entiendo, le respondo. Si no le entiendo, pido que me lo repita en español.
If I understand her, I answer her. If I don't understand her, I ask her to repeat it in Spanish.



Child: Estos, estos, chickens.

Parent: Chicken, pollitos, ajá.

Child: Pollitos.

Child initiates CS to English

Between-utterance CS

Within-utterance CS

Unclear CS

Parent responds

Requests Spanish Translation

Provides Spanish Model

Moves on in Spanish

English Repetition

Moves on in English

Vague/ backchannel

Child reacts to parent response

Produces Spanish Translation

Switches to Spanish

Continues using English

Language-neutral agreement

"I don't know"

RQ1

What **types of CS** do children produce,
how do **parents respond** to these CS, and
how do **children react** to parent responses?

What types of CS to English do children produce?

Code	Example	Frequency	Proportion
Between-Utterance CS	PAR: ¿la cama va en la cocina o dónde? [the bed goes in the kitchen or where?] **CHI: in the bedroom!**	544	64%
Within-Utterance CS	**CHI: es un puzzle.** [it's a puzzle]	280	33%
Unclear CS	**CHI: wow, we xxx.**	31	4%
	Total	855	100%

How do parents respond to children's CS to English?

Code	Example	Frequency	Proportion
Moves on in Spanish	CHI: ella dijo quiero más food. [she said I want more food] **PAR: ¿quiere más?** [she wants more?]	571	48%
Vague/Backchannel	PAR: es una almohadita. [It's a little pillow.] CHI: bed. **PAR: mhm, yeah.**	230	19%
Provides Spanish Model	CHI: a giraffe! **PAR: mm, una jirafa.**	217	18%
English Repetition	CHI: el sink! **PAR: ¿oh éste es el sink?**	119	10%
Moves on in English	CHI: aquí dice el farmer y el clown. **PAR: who's the clown?**	29	2%
Requests Spanish Translation	CHI: oh, orange ! **PAR: ¿qué color es en español?**	25	2%
	Total	1191[1]	100%

[1] The number of parent responses exceeds number of child initial CS because it includes parent responses to the child continuing to use English or signal that they don't know how to respond within a sequence

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How do children react to parent responses?

Code	Example	Frequency	Proportion
Continues using English	CHI: running. PAR: allí están corriendo. [they're running there] **CHI: exercise.**	361	48%
Switches to Spanish	CHI: a tree PAR: una tree. **CHI: una casa!** [a house!]	250	33%
Language-neutral agreement	CHI: ¿es un girl? PAR: es una mujer. [it's a woman.] **CHI: mhm.**	83	11%
Produces Spanish Translation	CHI: cow. PAR: vaca. **CHI: vaca.**	49	6%
"I don't know"	CHI: clown. PAR: ¿cómo se llama? [what is it called?] **CHI: mm +... yo no sé.** [I don't know]	16	2%
	Total	759	100%

RQ1 Summary

- 64% between-utterance switches

- *Moves on in Spanish* most used (48%)
- *Requests Spanish Translation* rarely used (2%)

- *Continues using English* most used (48%)
- *Produces Spanish Translation* rarely used (6%)

RQ2

Are there associations between
child CS and **parent responses**,
and between
parent responses and **child reactions**?

Do parents respond differently to different CS types?

Given Events: Child CS	**Target Events: Parent Responses**					
	Requests Spanish Translation	Provides Spanish Model	Moves on in Spanish	English Repetition	Moves on in English	Vague/ Backchannel
Between-Utterance CS						
Within-Utterance CS						
Unclear CS						

No – not statistically different from chance

Note: χ^2 (df) = 13.53(10), p =.19

Do children react differently to different parent responses?

Target Events: Child Reactions (adjusted residual Z-scores)

Given Events: Parent Responses	Produces Spanish Translation	Switches to Spanish	Continues in English	Language-Neutral Agreement	"I don't know"
Requests Spanish Translation	**3.02****	**-2.97****	-1.25	-1.03	**11.46****
Provides Spanish Model	**13.22****	-1.73	**-5.36****	0.97	-0.46
Moves on in Spanish	**-6.82****	**4.66****	-1.44	1.45	-1.76
English Repetition	**-2.20***	1.91	-0.90	0.41	-0.25
Moves on in English	-1.28	**-2.52***	**3.84****	-1.03	-0.69
Vague/ Backchannel	**-3.45****	**-3.23***	**6.64****	**-2.20***	-1.86

Note: $X^2(df) = 383.74(20)$, $p < .01$
*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$; ***$p<.001$

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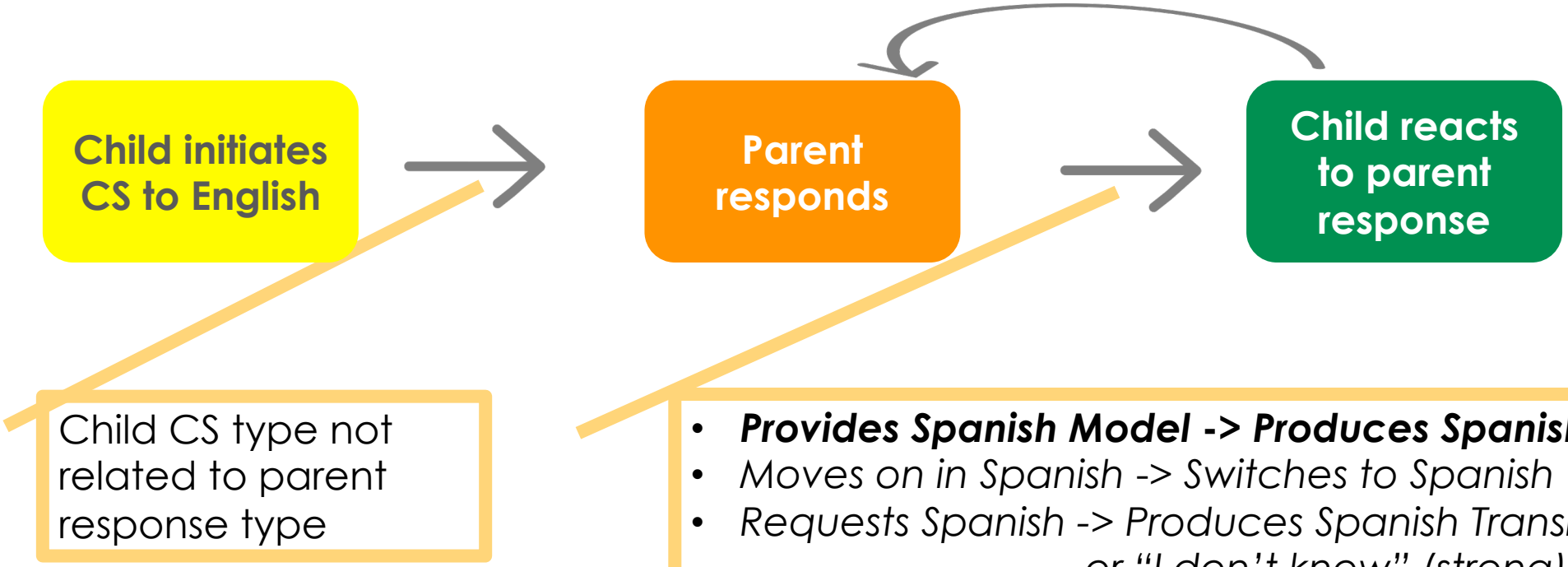
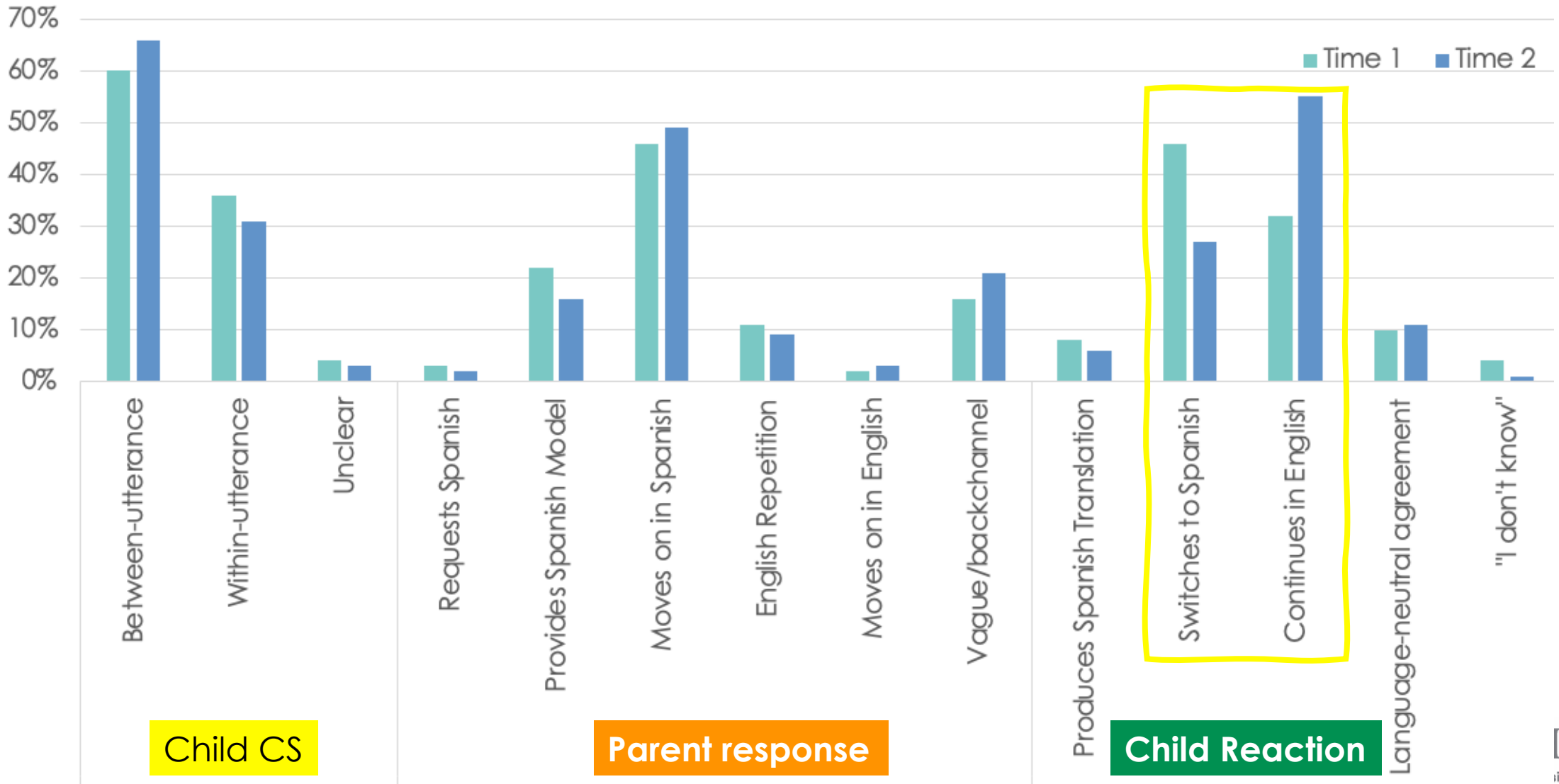
RQ2 Summary


Child initiates CS to English
Parent responds
Child reacts to parent response
Child CS type not related to parent response type
• ***Provides Spanish Model -> Produces Spanish Translation***
• *Moves on in Spanish -> Switches to Spanish*
• *Requests Spanish -> Produces Spanish Translation (weak) or "I don't know" (strong)*

RQ3

Are **child CS**, **parent responses**, **child reactions**, and the associations between them stable over time?

Relative frequency of each code at time 1 & time 2



Parent response - child reaction associations at time 1 & time 2

Target Events: Child Reactions (adjusted residual Z-scores)

Given Events: Parent Responses	Produces Spanish Translation		Switches to Spanish	
	T1	**T2**	**T1**	**T2**
Requests Spanish Translation				
Provides Spanish Model				
Moves on in Spanish				

Parent response - child reaction associations at time 1 & time 2

Target Events: Child Reactions (adjusted residual Z-scores)

Given Events: Parent Responses	Produces Spanish Translation		Switches to Spanish	
	T1	**T2**	**T1**	**T2**
Requests Spanish Translation	1.11	**3.11****	**-2.71****	**-2.04***
Provides Spanish Model	**7.43****	**10.86****	**-2.11***	-1.01
Moves on in Spanish	**-4.53****	**-5.14****	**4.26****	**2.68****

RQ3 Summary

Children continued using English more, and switched to Spanish less at Time 2

Requests Spanish -> Produces Spanish Translation ONLY significant at Time 2

Discussion

- As in previous studies (Deutchar & Muntz 2003; Juan-Garau & Pérez-Vidal, 2001; Quay 2012; Takeuchi, 2000)
  - *Move On* strategy was most frequently observed
  - Strategies requesting target language were rare
  - In contrast with parents' self-reports
- Sequential analysis results suggests that for this population
  - **Providing Spanish model** elicits child production of the target Spanish word(s)
  - **Moving on in Spanish** may help encourage child switch back to Spanish
  - **Requesting Spanish translation** less effective, especially for younger children
- Many parents
  - Seemed reluctant to use explicit, high-constraint strategies
  - Subtler ways to model Spanish while maintaining "smooth interactions" (Quay, 2012)
  - Focus on meaning/harmony over form?

Kiara, age 4;9

*PAR: y éste libro lo escribió Marla Frazee.
[and this book was written by Marla Frazee.]

*CHI: es un **girl?** [is it a girl?]

*PAR: es una **mujer.** [it's a woman.]

*CHI: mhm.

*PAR: mira, está el granjero. ¿Y qué está haciendo el granjero? [Look, the farmer is here. What is the farmer doing?]

*CHI: está agarrando la... [He's picking up the...]

*PAR: la paja. [the hay.]

*CHI: la paja de la comida de los **horsies.**
[The hay for the food for the horsies.]

*PAR: de los **caballitos.** [of the little horses.]

*CHI: mhm.

*PAR: ajá.

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Questions?
¿Preguntas?

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