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Iranian bilinguals' reverse code-switching: an implicit quest for power?

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Positioned within the discipline of sociocultural linguistics, this study redefines the concept of code-switching (CS) by focusing on switches to L2 within one's mainstream speech in L1-a phenomenon called reverse code-switching (RCS). It further studies the role that age, educational background, second language proficiency (SLP), and familiarity with second language culture (FSLC) factors play on these perceptions. Applying a mixed-method approach, a researcher-made instrument was validated through Rasch modeling and exploratory factorial analyses, and the results were computed through a multivariate regression. The older and less educated the audiences, the more they labeled RCS as a symbolic resource. The younger generation and the more educated considered it more as a metaphorical switch. Socially negative attitudes were negatively correlated with SLP, but statistically unaffected by FSLC. The study concludes with a discussion of the results and a body of implications for future research.

Keywords: reverse code-switching (RCS); symbolic capital; metaphorical (or conventional) switching; situational switching; strategic competence

1. Introduction

Code-switching (henceforth CS) is generally defined as the mixing of words, phrases, and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems (Bhatia 1992). And reverse code-switching[1] (henceforth RCS) is switching to the target language while speaking in one's mother tongue (Van Der Meij and Zhao 2010).

CSs occur both consciously and unconsciously in the speech of bilinguals (Auer 1991, 1995, 1998, 1999; Legenhausen 1991; Myers-Scotton 2002). They often do not merely fill a knowledge or linguistic gap, but rather are multifunctional in nature and carry social, interpersonal, and affective meanings (Nikula 2007): They signal the process of identity construction among immigrant groups (De Fina 2007). In a similar vein, RCS from one's mother tongue to L2 might also serve a number of functions carrying a range of meanings and thus be interpreted differently by different individuals. Van Der Meij and Zhao (2010) hold that when individuals reverse switch from Chinese (L1) to English (L2), "this behavior can be perceived as some kind of showing off, or as an attempt to be identified with the elite class and also with modernism"; it can convey an impression of having a good education and of being familiar with Western culture (407). Heredia and Altarriba (2001), however, introduce a different interpretation for RCS practices; they claim that frequent exposure to

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some words as well as a high fluency in one's L2 can both lead to RCS, in that the speaker finds switching to L2 as an easier and faster technique to retrieve the word.

The problem with RCS, however, is that few studies have investigated the different functions that it might serve and the various interpretations that it can encourage in society. This study is one of the earliest attempts which seeks to focus on RCS cases. In what follows, initially the concept of CS will be defined and some linguistic and ideological motivations for such occurrences suggested by the previous research will be outlined. Later, a new division of CS only peripherally and sporadically pointed out in some studies is acknowledged and described. Two competing views toward the occurrence of CS will be applied with RCS: strategic competence view (RCS as a metaphorical switch) and symbolic capital view (RCS as situationally motivated). Section 2 reports on the construction and validation procedure of a checklist for the competing models. Finally, the results of the administration of the checklist to elicit public view toward RCS cases will be presented and accounted for in Sections 3–5.

1.1   CS: some definitions

In linguistics, CS is the concurrent use of more than one language, or language variety, for symbolic, strategic, or communicative purposes by bilinguals. Gumperz (1982) defines CS as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (59). A search of the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database in 2012 shows more than 2000 articles on the subject published in virtually every branch of linguistics including formal linguistics, anthropology, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, philosophy, etc.

CS is an inseparable item of bilingualism. Multilinguals sometimes use elements of multiple languages in conversing with one another. Harding and Riley (1986) argue that,

> The bilingual child's development is very similar to that of the monolingual child's, the only difference being that the bilingual has the extra task of distinguishing between the two languages. Directly related to this task are two skills or activities which monolinguals, by definition, can never perform: these are code-switching and translation (57)

In an attempt to define CS for sociocultural analyses, sociolinguistic and ethnographic researchers (e.g., Gumperz 1964, 1982; Auer 1984; Heller 1988; Myers-Scotton 1993; Jacobson 1997) have recognized that it is,

> ... an alternation in the form of communication that signals a context in which the linguistic contribution can be understood. The "context" so signaled may be very local (such as the end of a turn at talk), very general (such as positioning vis-à-vis some macro-sociological category), or anywhere in between. (Nilep 2006, 17)

Therefore, it is important to recognize that CS is accomplished by respondents in a particular interaction, and it is not necessarily possible to spell out the meaning of particular CS behavior *a priori*; their meaning emerges from the interaction.

1.2   Possible explanations for CS

What follows is a brief survey of works on the topic of CS within sociocultural linguistics.

Albakry and Hancock (2008), Bamiro (1997), D'Souza (1991), Szymaniak (2002), and Zabus (1991) are among the studies that suggest that CS in such contexts is a

discourse strategy used for the purpose of literary or bilingual creativity. It is meant to represent different aspects of the linguistic and cultural norms of the community of mother tongue to express their multicultural experiences: CS is a means by which postcolonial writers "are able to preserve their cultural identity and capture its flavor while at the same time writing about it in the dominant language" (Albakry and Hancock 2008, 233).

To De Fina (2007) and Lo (1999), CS is a contextualization cue signaling the process of identity construction among immigrant groups. De Fina considers these code-switches as "symbolic resources they use to index ethnicity in specific contexts" (381). Similarly, for Bailey (2002), Dominican Americans who defined their ethnic affiliation as non-White tended to index their identity by shifting to uses of nonstandard Dominican Spanish, Caribbean Spanish, African American Vernacular English, and other nonstandard English varieties" (cited in Nilep 2006, 13–14).

According to Heller (1988, 1992), CS is a political strategy that Anglophones in Quebec tended to use to lay claim to an Anglophone identity. Drawing upon Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) concept of *symbolic capital*,[2] she argued that dominant groups in society relied on norms of language choice (i.e., standard variety) to maintain symbolic domination, whereas subordinate groups used CS to resist or redefine the value of symbolic resources in the linguistic marketplace.

Auer (1984), who analyzed the speech of the Italian migrant children in Germany, suggested that CS was not essentially semantic in nature but rather was embedded in the successive development of the conversation, say, to maintain the language of the previous turn. To Auer, therefore, CS is more of a discourse (or communication) strategy rather than one of a simplistic compensatory nature. According to Heredia and Altarriba (2001), one of the most frequent explanations of why bilinguals code-switch is that they do it to compensate for lack of language proficiency; the argument is that they code-switch because they do not know either language completely.

Another plausible explanation for why people code-switch is in order to be better understood. Some ideas are better communicated in one language than another. For example, words that have no direct equivalents in either language (Noraishah 2003) or that imply a combination of meanings in either of the two languages rather than a single one (Heredia and Altarriba 2001) are more likely to lend themselves to CS simply because it is a word that is embedded in one's linguistic brain more than anything learned later (Niederhäusern and Zanotti 2009).

Research has established other interactional functions served by language alteration: CS may enhance turn selection (Li 1998; Cromdal 2001), soften refusals (Bani-Shoraka 2005; Li 2005), accomplish repair (Auer 1995; Sebba and Wooten 1998), or mark dispreferred responses (Bani-Shoraka 2005). In addition to these interactional functions, empirical studies have examined how switches in language variety make particular elements of situation, speaker identities, or background relevant to ongoing talk (e.g., Li 1998; Gafaranga 2001).

Heredia and Altarriba (2001) suggested that language accessibility may be the key factor in CS. Bilinguals switch languages whenever a word in a base language is not currently accessible. Noraishah (2003), for instance, showed that CS functioned as a discourse strategy that came in the form of reiteration. In his study CS was viewed positively by the undergraduates as a discourse strategy that could improve the quality of communication and not as a damaging catalyst to either language. Nikula (2007) studied CS of English and Finnish in content-based classrooms in Finland and found that the students in content-based classrooms in Finland claimed ownership of English by the way they confidently used it throughout the

lessons and also by the way they creatively used it as a resource for the construction of classroom activities. "Students' CS practices are another indication that they ascribe to an identity as users rather than as learners of English" (221).

Although CS has been proven as a norm in bilingual communities, there are still negative attitudes toward it in many contexts (Gumperz 1982; Duran 1994). It is viewed as a symbol of arrogance suggesting that one is not being loyal and patriotic to the mother tongue or the national or official language. This is the view held not only by the public community but also by most sociolinguists and linguists to date (Noraishah 2003). Hence, those who commit the act of switching are perceived as rejecting their ethnicity. Furthermore, their proficiency in one of the languages is assumed to be deficient, and CS is viewed as an attempt to fill this gap caused by their handicap in a language (Huerta 1978).

The above CS studies, as a sample of rather countless number of similar studies, have one point in common: they all suggest the *multifunctionality* of CS. According to Jørgensen (2005), multilinguals can use words and phrases from other varieties in everyday discourse to supplement their vocabulary, to achieve certain communicative effects, or for other purposes. Further descriptive studies and efforts, therefore, are needed to address this multifunctionality (Van Der Meij and Zhao 2010).

1.3   What is RCS?

One important shortcoming of most models and general accounts of bilingualism is that they rely on the assumption that the bilingual's first language has special status. Some models (e.g., Kroll and Stewart 1994) depict the first-language lexicon as bigger and containing more information than the second-language lexicon. As a consequence, the first language is always accessed faster and is always the primary language. Given this argument, one would expect that CS would take place only when the bilingual is speaking the second language. This would be because of their limited knowledge of their second language. Although this may be the case for beginning bilinguals, research establishes that Spanish–English bilinguals in south Texas report more English interference when they communicate in Spanish, and little or no interference from Spanish when they communicate in English (Heredia and Altarriba 2001); or in the case of Chinese teachers it very frequently occurs that they reverse switch to English while speaking Chinese (Van Der Meij and Zhao 2010). Van Der Meij and Zhao report that,

> An interesting phenomenon emerged in our analyses of the long switches in which we discovered reverse language use. While speaking Chinese, teachers were found to regularly switch to the T[arget] L[anguage], switches that invariably consisted of only one or two words in English…. Although short in duration, the presence of these reverse switches is nevertheless notable. Just as in regular short switches to Chinese, their mean frequency is rather high. (403–404)

Heredia and Altarriba (2001) report that in a recent study, Spanish–English bilinguals listened to English sentences and their Spanish translations; immediately after the critical word (e.g., "war" or "guerra") in each sentence, the respondents named a visually presented English or Spanish target word that was either related ("peace," "paz") or unrelated ("light," "luz") to the critical word. The results showed that "bilinguals were faster to name English target words while listening to Spanish sentences than to name

Spanish words while listening to English sentences" (167). Also, when listening to English sentences, bilinguals retrieved English words faster than Spanish words, as expected. In fact, respondents were generally faster to retrieve English than Spanish words – even when listening to Spanish sentences.

> These results suggest a reliance on the second language rather than the first language. How can these results be explained? We suggest that after a certain level of fluency and frequency of use is attained in a second language, a language shift occurs and the second language behaves as if it were the bilingual's first language. In other words, the second language becomes more readily accessible than the first language, and the bilingual comes to rely more on it. (Heredia and Altarriba 2001, 167)

Other studies have had similar findings (e.g., Altarriba 1992, 2000; Heredia 1997), lending support for this interpretation. Heredia and Altarriba (2001) suggest that one possibility could be that it is due to frequency of language usage. That is, regardless of which language a bilingual learned first, perhaps the more active (dominant) language determines which lexicon is accessed faster (Heredia 1997). Heredia and Altarriba posit that, in the case of Spanish–English bilinguals in the United States, although their first language is Spanish, they obtain most of their formal education in English. Likewise, many of their everyday interactions involve English. As a result, the words and concepts of English become more readily accessible than the words and concepts of Spanish. "An implication of this interpretation is that during early stages of bilingualism, when bilinguals tend to rely more on their first language, their CS would mostly involve intrusions from their first language as they communicate in their second language" (167). However, as the second language becomes the dominant language, their CS would tend to consist of intrusions from the second language as they communicate in their first language. In short, they suggest that *language dominance* plays an important role in how bilinguals access their two languages. We argue that bilingual lexical representation is not a static but a dynamic representational system in which the first language can fall in strength, while the second language becomes the dominant language.

Another reason for RCS is the failure to retrieve the correct word, a phenomenon that is classically called tip-of-the-tongue, in which people are sometimes unable to remember information that they know. Here the reason for RCS is not that one does not know the correct word but that they do not use this word frequently. Thus, in this case RCS "may be a problem of retrieval affected by a combination of closely related factors such as language use and word frequency" (Heredia and Altarriba 2001, 165).

Furthermore, Nikula attributes RCS to the co-availability of resources that carry social, interpersonal, and affective meanings (2007). For example, when teachers in Van Der Meij and Zhao (2010) study reverse switch from Chinese (L1) to English (L2),

> This behavior can be perceived as some kind of showing off, identifying the speaker with the elite class and also with modernism. Reverse code-switching can convey an impression of having a good education and of being familiar with Western culture. (407)

Rampton notes that "this kind of switching, in which there is a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries, raises issues of social legitimacy that respondents need to negotiate" (1995, 280).

1.4   *Current study*

To date, a significant amount of research has investigated CS phenomenon from linguistic, anthropological, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic perspectives inter alia (e.g., Pfaff 1979; Poplack 1980; Joshi 1985; Di Sciullo and Williams 1987; Azuma 1991; Brice and Anderson 1999; MacSwann 2000; Kabuto 2010). Few of these studies, however, have addressed "basic questions of *why* switching occurs" (Nilep 2006, 2). Moreover, most models and accounts of bilingualism in general and CS in particular have failed to take into account that bilinguals frequently reverse switch from their L1 to their L2 while speaking in their mother tongue. Few, studies have dealt with RCS and its sociocultural implications; some studies (e.g., Heredia 1997; Heredia and Altarriba 2001; Nikula 2007) have only peripherally pointed out to the phenomenon.

The current study, therefore, adopts a critical perspective toward RCS, looking at the social and cultural functions of reverse switches from Persian (L1) to English (L2) among Iranian bilinguals. The purpose of the present research is three-fold: first, I intend to validate the checklist which is the first measure ever developed on attitudes toward RCS and to extract underlying factors; second, Iranians' perceptions (socially neutral or negative) about such switches are elicited through the validated checklist and an open-ended question following it; and third, the possible role of such individual differences as age, education, language proficiency, and cultural awareness on these perceptions were investigated. The following questions defined the present research:

- Does *The Beliefs about Reverse Code-Switching Inventory* (TBRCSI) have psycho-metric properties? (Validation stage)
- Does the age factor predict perceptions toward RCS from Persian (L1) to English (L2)?
- Does educational background (EB) predict perceptions toward RCS?
- Does second language proficiency (SLP) level predict perceptions toward RCS?
- Does familiarity with the second language culture (FSLC) predict perceptions toward RCS?

In keeping with a body of research that has applied checklists and questionnaires to investigate public perceptions and attitudes toward different aspects of language use in society (e.g., Bourhis 1983; Flowerdew, Li, and Miller 1998; Hoover 1978), teachers' CS in English as foreign language/ English as second language classrooms (e.g., Crawford 2004; Horasan 2014; Liu et al. 2004; Jingxia 2010), EFL students' CS (e.g., Bista 2010; Durano 2009), and CS in daily cross-cultural communications (e.g., Genesee 1982; Luna and Peracchio 2005; Montes-Alcala 2000), this study applied a descriptive survey design to answer the above questions. In fact, according to De Fina (2007), these sorts of questions can be best answered via questionnaires and inventories.

2.   Method

2.1   *Definitions*

In this study, no distinctions were made between the terms *beliefs, perceptions, ideas, views*, and *attitudes* all referring to the different opinions people held about a sociolingual phenomenon. Moreover, the terms *checklist, inventory, questionnaire*, and *scale* were used interchangeably, to refer to a set of statements or questions with a multiple Likert categories used to elicit responses.

Table 1. The demographic composition of the participants.

Factors	Categories	Frequency	Min	Max	Mean	Total
Gender	Male	195				416
	Female	221				
Age			17	73	39	416
EB	P.U.	49				416
	B.A./B.S.	157				
	M.A./M.S.	123				
	Ph.D.	87				
SLP	No English	56				409
	Elementary	210				
	Intermediate	116				
	Advanced	27				
FSLC	Slightly	310				405
	Moderately	82				
	Strongly	13				

Notes: P.U. = pre-university, B.A./B.S. = bachelor's degree, M.A./M.S. = master's degree, Ph.D. = doctor of philosophy.

2.2 Sample and setting

A sample of 416 males and females in three cities of Iran, namely Tehran, Mashhad, and Kerman, took part in the study. The respondents were of different age brackets since they were randomly selected from different settings including schools, universities campuses, state and nonprofit institutions and organizations, as well as public places. Their personal data including gender, age, academic degree, experience in living and/or traveling abroad and length of stay, formal English instruction and level of language proficiency were elicited by the demographic questions preceding the main items. Academic degree that represented their EB ranged from pre-university to Ph.D., their SLP varied from no English to advanced level, and their FSLC, which was reflected in their experiences or lengths of visiting/living abroad, ranged from slightly to strongly. Table 1 displays the composition of the sample.

2.3 Instrumentation and procedure

2.3.1 Construction

Development of a Persian 32-item checklist called *The Beliefs about Reverse Code-Switching Inventory* was motivated by two general views that defined the present study: RCS to English (L2) within a stream of speech with Persian interlocutors (a) is a kind of compensatory strategy employed when the speaker fails to remember the Persian equivalent or (b) represents the speaker's attempt to be considered as professional and competent and is a sign of gaining prestige and social power. The items were in the form of statements classified on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (100%), to agree (75%), undecided (50%), disagree (25%), and strongly disagree (0%). An attempt was made to cover within the 32 items the full range of possible social and functional sources of RCS from Persian to English. The translated version of some of the statements used in TBRCSI is reproduced below.

(a) People tend to reverse switch to L2
  – when they do not remember the appropriate word in their mother tongue.
  – when dealing with interlocutors of lower educational or social status.
  – when addressing their peers in their discourse community.
  – because of their frequent exposures to the L2 equivalents.
  – to show that they are familiar with the western culture or are associated with the elite class.
(b) RCS is a(n)
  – means of suggesting that the speaker has a good education.
  – sign of prestige and modernism.
  – negative technique that the speaker uses to show off.
  – positive communication strategy used to convey the meaning best.
  – inevitable compensatory strategy which the speaker uses for the communication to flow.
  – useful technique which helps the listener learn new words.
(c) You view the person who reverse switch to L2 as
  – wanting to show off.
  – tending to downgrade or discourage you.
  – competent and socially and/or educationally more powerful.
  – resorting to a language strategy to better communicate the meaning.

TBRCSI concluded with an open-ended question that inquired into other possible sources and causes of RCS not included in the questionnaire.

3.   Results

3.1   Research question 1: validation of TBRCSI

In order to analyze the items, Andrich's (1978) Rasch measurement model (RMM), as implemented in WINSTEPS version 3.66, was used. RMM is increasingly used in social and behavioral sciences to develop measures for the key constructs included in different theories of human behavior. The main application of this model is for constructing the items unbiased by and independent of the sample from which the data have been collected. Such calibration allows test developers and instructors to create better instruments in terms of optimizing the number of items, eliminating the overlapping items, and determining the adequacy of the categories on a Likert scale. The number of categories should be neither too small nor too large; they must be large enough both to cover a wide range of options and avoid data loss and to be distinguishable from other categories (Engelhard 2012; Pishghadam and Ghahari 2012a; Randy 2002). In this model, initially item clusters are created according to the educational theory and then, on the basis of conceptual coherence as well as the statistical fit of the group of items, the model determines which items to keep in the final measure. Provided that there are not strong conceptual reasons, items with high misfit statistics are eliminated (Randy 2002).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a data reduction technique used to identify whether the observed variables can be reduced to fewer latent variables that account for the pattern of correlations among them. EFA, therefore, was further employed (a) to

recheck the RMM results and (b) to provide a factorial structure for the scale through principal components analysis (Hays 1994; Pedhazur 1997; Stevens 2002).

RMM: The analysis of the 32 items yielded an item separation index of 1.84 with an item reliability of 0.73, and a person separation index of 2.97 with a person reliability of 0.76. Item measures ranged from −0.59 to 1.9 logits, and the root mean square error (RMSE) was 0.19 for items and 0.27 for persons, suggesting an accurate measurement. Five items, however, did not fit the model since they were either redundant, that is, mean squares (MNSQ) smaller than 0.6) (Items 7 and 21) or degrading the analysis, that is, MNSQ higher than 1.4 (Items 18, 19, and 30). According to Linacre (2009), the former set (items with MNSQ smaller than 0.6) need to be revised while the latter set (MNSQ higher than 1.4) should be removed in order to improve the unidimensionality of the scale. In this study, however, all the five such misfit items were removed since they were very close in content to other remaining items. Moreover, the rating scale categories were appropriate since category measures and observed averages increased in accord with category values and the thresholds and the MNSQ indices fell into their acceptable range of 1.4 to 5 and 0.6 to 1.4, respectively. Therefore, Rasch model yielded a 27-item TBRCSI with responses being distributed along a 5-point Likert scale.

EFA: Using Cronbach alpha, the reliability of TBRCSI was estimated to be 0.79, which suggested a satisfactorily reliable scale. While principal component analysis (PCA) extracted five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 which accounted for 82% of the variance, the Scree Test indicated that a two-factor solution provided a more suitable grouping of the items. According to the results of Varimax with Kaiser normalization (VKN), the first factor included 13 items with loadings varying from 0.401 to 0.532 and the second one consisted of the remaining 14 items with loadings ranging from 0.515 to 0.592. Given the nature of the items in each set and motivated by the objective of the study, the first factor was labeled as *socially value-laden* (or *negative attitudes*) and the second one as *socially value neutral* (or *positive attitudes*).

3.2   Research questions 2–5: interrelationships among demographics and NARCS

In order to explore questions 2–5, the Pearson product–moment correlation[3] was applied. It revealed that negative attitudes toward RCS (NARCS) were positively correlated with age, negatively related to EB and SLP factors, and statistically uncorrelated with FSLC (see Table 2).

In order to determine how much of the variability in the dependent variable (NARCS) could be explained by the independent ones, regression analysis was run. As shown in Table 3, it revealed that 78% of the variation in negative perceptions toward RCS could be accounted for by demographics ($R^2 = 0.787$).

Table 2.   Correlations between demographics and NARCS.

Demographics	R
Age	0.573*
EB	−0.642*
SLP	−0.596*
FSLC	0.352

Note: *$p < 0.05$.

Table 3.   Summary of regression results for demographics and NARCS.

| Model | Standardized Coefficients | | Significance | R^2 | Standard error of the estimate |
	Beta	t			
1 (Constant)		7.55	0.010*	0.787	14.79607
Age	−0.201	−2.01	0.032*		
EB					
SLP					
FSLC	0.178	3.06	−0.040*		
	−0.102	−1.89	−0.049*		
	0.013	0.802	0.631		

Note: *$p < 0.05$.

The statistical analysis showed that education had the greatest power in predicting NARCS ($t = 3.06$, $p < 0.05$) with age and SLP also being significant predictors of the negative perceptions ($p < 0.05$). FSLC, however, was a factor not significantly determining the participants' negative attitudes ($t = 0.80$, $p > 0.05$).

4.   Discussion

Interestingly enough, most studies conducted on CS have addressed alteration from L2 to L1. The current study dealt with a reverse phenomenon from a sociocultural perspective investigating the attitudes people hold toward RCS from Persian (L1) to English (L2). In fact the study sought to determine whether RCS is viewed as a situational switching (as termed by Blom and Gumperz 1972), conveying a social and interpersonal meaning, or as a metaphorical switching unaffected by social considerations.

4.1   Age and EB

The results seem to indicate that EB and age factors affect the attitudes toward RCS. Lending support, therefore, to Auer's (1991, 1995, 1998, 1999) and Myers-Scotton's (2002) studies such that it was revealed that CS occurs both consciously and unconsciously in the speech of bilinguals. Younger respondents as well as those of higher EB view RCS positively as a result of frequent exposure to the switched term, of a failure to retrieve its equivalent in one's mother tongue, or as a way of facilitating spontaneous language use. The same view does not seem to be held by those who are older and less educated. To them, RCS is more a functional strategy than a compensatory one; it carries for them some social and interpersonal meaning: Reverse switchers are perceived as showing off and attempting to be considered as competent. This piece of evidence, therefore, corroborates the claims about CS made by Heller (1992), Nikula (2007), De Fina (2007), and about RCS by Van Der Meij and Zhao (2010). In this sense, therefore, RCS is a symbolic capital (to use Bourdieu's term); it is among the symbolic resources they use, on the basis of honor, prestige or recognition, to be identified with the elite class and also with modernism. To those who are older and the less educated, RCS conveys the impression of having a good education and an inclination toward western culture.

As Nilep (2006) puts it, CS to one's native language may serve any of a number of functions in a particular interaction. However, according to Brice and Anderson (1999), it is commonly judged as being motivated by either of the following reasons:

(1) Flow of communication: a strategy suggested by Faltis (1989) focused on the use of CS and code-mixing to facilitate the flow of communication.
(2) Spontaneous language use: a way of facilitating spontaneous language use.
(3) Native language appreciation: an implicit appreciation of the one's language and culture.

The results of the current study support Brice and Anderson's claim in that they revealed the younger and the more educated the audience, the more they attribute the use of RCS to the first two reasons above, say, flow of communication and spontaneous language use. Older and less-educated native speakers, however, impute it more to the foreign (or second) language appreciation. When one reverse switches to their foreign (or second) language, no longer does it seem easy for them to view it as a communication strategy to fill a linguistic gap.

The results of the current study were supported by the answers the respondents provided to the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. A good number of those less educated expressed the view that their first language was degraded by switching to English (or any other foreign language). They called the behavior as "language abuse/ misuse" with the potential of making Persian lose its legitimacy and genuineness through such misuses. Some believed that Persian language is rich enough to allow its users to proceed monolingually within a stream of speech. Some went as far as to condemn the behavior and regard it as a safe-threatening act aimed at belittling the audience. Others responded that it resulted in communication breakdown and comprehension problems.

Such responses were significantly rare among the educated. They suggested that these occasions are the result of forgetting the Persian word, or more importantly, of dealing frequently with the English equivalents and, therefore, using them subconsciously in normal speech for communication to flow. Examples were provided by some of these respondents of working frequently with computer (and internet) and thereby using such jargons as *e-mail, toolbar, Microsoft, motherboard* in Persian speech. Still others provided examples of the technical terms in their own academic disciplines.

The difference lies in the degree of consciousness involved in the switching: the less educated as well as those who are older primarily considered it as a conscious and intentional act to display their prestige or put on a high social status; while the youth and a great majority of those more highly educated viewed it as a natural and normal language behavior motivated by the frequency of exposure and/or finding the English equivalents coming in more handy.

4.2   SLP and FSLC

In the current study, the higher the level of SLP, the more positively RCS was viewed. Respondents who were well or highly competent in English and thereby had more experience in its use tended to attribute RCS occasions to the frequent exposures with the switched word. This is absolutely congruent to what Heredia and Altarriba (2001), Altarriba (1992, 2000), Heredia (1997) claim; according to them, "after a certain level of fluency and frequency of use is attained in a second language, a language shift occurs and the second language behaves as if it were the bilingual's first language" (Heredia and Altarriba 2001, 167).

In other words, L2 becomes more readily accessible than the first language, and the bilingual comes to rely more on it. Similarly, in response to the open-ended question most proficient respondents have argued against the view that RCS is socially offensive or an

implication of alleged socioeducational prestige. They regard RCS simply as a communicative strategy used where one cannot retrieve the appropriate L1 word or phrase or when one finds the L2 word or phrase more to-the-point and closer to the intended meaning. To them, RCS is a value-neutral survival or clarification strategy. On the other hand, both the statistical analysis and the answers provided to the open-ended question, which followed the TBRCSI's items, showed that many respondents with little or no L2 proficiency expressed their negative evaluations of RCS by attributing it to the speaker's tendency to look socially or academically prestigious. Just as the claim De Fina (2007) made for CS, a number of respondents in this study considered RCS among the symbolic resources speakers use to index their competence and social class.

Another finding was that there was no significant relationship between negative attitudes toward RCS and FSLC. A number of factors could have contributed to their insignificant relationship. One is the length of stay. In this study, respondents had quite casually visited or lived abroad for some weeks: It is quite likely, then, that the period is not enough for one to be familiar with or experience a foreign culture in a real sense. This length of stay might have only given them the opportunity to visit a culture rather than become acquainted with and adapt to it.

Another potential factor is the country where the respondents have travelled to or lived. According to the Hofstede' taxonomy, world countries are quite distinct in terms of four cultural dimensions, that is power distance, individualism, gender bias, and uncertainty avoidance (1984, 2001). In this view, Asian and Latin American countries bear roughly similar cultural dimensions, which are quite distinctive from those of European and North American countries. Living in or becoming familiarized, for example, with an Arab country could result in very different experiences from those in European countries. Such a discrepancy is very likely to have affected the findings of the current study. Those with the experience of living in Arab countries, like UAE or Syria, could hold different attitudes about RCS to English from those who spent time in Western countries. An intriguing area for further research, therefore, is to take this into account and investigate if dwelling in different countries with different cultural dimensions can bring about different attitudes toward RCS.

5. Conclusion

This study was one of the first attempts to introduce RCS and scrutinize the social consequences it brings about in the Iranian society. Speakers may be labeled as attempting to claim a higher status or look more competent if they (in)advertently shift or switch to their L2 by adopting a certain word or phrase during their L1 speech. This attitude clearly holds true in Iran; RCS is not a value neutral phenomenon for all Iranians. Age, education, and level of L2 ability of listeners do affect their interpretations and judgments of the phenomenon. In a sense, to an Iranian of middle age (or older), who is less educated, and with limited English proficiency, reverse switches of their interlocutors signal the process of identity construction and are among the symbolic resources they use to associate themselves with a culture that they assume is of a higher status (De Fina 2007). This could be considered, in Kachru's terms, as a manifestation of the outer circle's willingness to attach themselves to the inner circle society (1997, as cited in Kachru and Smith 2008) or, in Said's (1993) words, as one of the ideological consequences of the spread of English worldwide (i.e., English as a lingua franca) with native English-speaking community dominating the periphery nations and the periphery nations appreciating this domination as evidencing their inferiority (Pishghadam and Ghahari 2012b). At the other end of the

spectrum, however, lie Canale and Swain (1981) and Bachman's (1990) *communicative competence (CC)* and, similarly, Giles and Ogay's (2007) *communication accommodation theory* that legitimize whatever verbal and nonverbal devices are applicable to a speaker for the productive communication of information. Among the building blocks of CC theory is *strategic competence* that enables the speaker to use a variety of compensatory and avoidance strategies to make up for the missing knowledge. RCS, then, can be considered simply as a linguistic compensatory strategy, indicating co-availability of resources. To a younger, more educated, and more proficient Iranian generation, individuals who regularly deal with or are exposed to a number of technical or conversational terms, jargon or expressions in an L2 are expected to find them handier and use them more readily when need be; use of these lexical terms is perceived as being less a sign of power or prestige, and more of a convenient linguistic substitution. Just like language learners, then, whose developing and incomplete interlangauge systems require them to resort to these strategies "when linguistic shortcomings make it impossible for them to communicate their intended meanings in the preferred manner" (Poulisse 1990, 192–193), an individual competent, fully or otherwise, in a foreign language might view an L2 word or expression as "an alternative or possibly more precise means of expression . . . to meet task demands" (Bialystok 1990, 138). It is obviously difficult to draw far-reaching conclusions about the attitudes toward RCS on the basis of a small number of respondents. Overall, however, the findings give reason to believe that RCS is, at least partly, used as an element of symbolic capital, as a means to claim power and prestige, and to articulate a dual cultural identity.

Acknowledgment

Notes

1. In some studies, CS is used to refer to both the phenomena. But as the focus of this study was on switches to L2 during one's L1 mainstream speech, it was inevitable to draw a distinction between the two by borrowing Van Der Meij and Zhao's (2010) term, that is, RCS.
2. The resources available to an individual on the basis of honor, prestige or recognition, and functions as an authoritative embodiment of cultural value.
3. Since a linear correlation between each pair of variables was intended, the sample was randomly selected and large enough (larger than 100), and in each set at least one variable (i.e., NARCS) was an interval scale, Pearson formula was preferred over Spearman (Farhady, Jafarpur, and Birjandi 2006; Pallant 2007).

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Appendix

ضمن تشکر صمیمانه از همکاری شما در این طرح خواهشمند است به سوالات زیر صادقانه و به دقت پاسخ دهید. بدیهی است طرح مذبور یک مطالعه آماری بوده و هیچ پاسخ درست و نادرستی وجود ندارد. لذا صرفا دقت و صداقت پاسخهای شما مد نظر بوده و نسبت به پاسخهای شما به هیچ عنوان قضاوتی صورت نمی گیرد.

با سپاس فراوان
گروه زبان انگلیسی

جنسیت:
مرد ☐   زن ☐

سن: _____

شهر محل تولد: _____

شهری که بیشتر عمر خود را در آن زندگی کرده اید: _____

زبان مادری:
فارسی ☐   انگلیسی ☐   عربی ☐   ترکی ☐

زبان خارجی:
انگلیسی ☐   فارسی ☐   فرانسه ☐   ترکی ☐
ایتالیایی ☐   عربی ☐   آلمانی ☐   روسی ☐

آیا تحصیلات دانشگاهی دارید؟
بله ☐   خیر ☐

اگر بله چه رشته تحصیلی:
فنی و مهندسی ☐   علوم پایه ☐   علوم انسانی ☐   پزشکی ☐

اگر بله چه مقطع تحصیلی:
لیسانس ☐   فوق لیسانس یا دکترای حرفه ای ☐   دکترای تخصصی ☐

آیا تا به حال در کشور خارجی زندگی یا سفر کرده اید:
بله ☐   خیر ☐

اگر بله چه مدت؟ _____

اگر بله چه کشوری؟ _____

آیا تا به حال در موسسات و کلاسهای آزاد آموزش زبان شرکت کرده اید؟
بله ☐   خیر ☐

اگر بله تا چه سطحی؟
مقدماتی ☐   متوسط ☐   پیشرفته ☐

بسیار کم ٪٠	کم ٪۲۵	بی نظر ٪۵۰	زیاد ٪۷۵	بسیار زیاد ٪۱۰۰	
					۱- میزان تسلّط شما در زبان خارجی در چه حد است؟
					۲- آیا به زبان خارجی خود علاقه‌مندید؟
					۳- آیا به سفر و یا اقامت در کشورهای خارجی علاقه‌مندید؟
					۴- به طور متوسط چه میزان در طول روز با زبان خارجی خود سر و کار دارید؟
					۵- آیا تا به حال در حین صحبت به زبان اول واژگانی از زبان خارجی خود به کار برده‌اید؟
					۶- آیا در اجتماعات غیررسمی (مثلا در جمع دوستان) از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۷- آیا در اجتماعات رسمی (مثلا در محل کار و یا با افراد ناآشنا) از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۸- آیا در صحبت‌های روزانه (مثلا با اعضای خانواده) از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟

خیر ٪۰	به ندرت ٪۲۵	بی نظر ٪۵۰	غالبا" ٪۷۵	بلی ٪۱۰۰	
					۹- آیا از واژگان زبان خارجی وقتی استفاده کرده‌اید که واژه بهتری در زبان اول خود نیافته‌اید؟
					۱۰- آیا از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید تا فرد مهمی به نظر برسید؟
					۱۱- آیا بیشتر در ارتباط با افراد بالاتر از خود از نظر سطح تحصیلی- اجتماعی از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۱۲- آیا بیشتر در ارتباط با افراد هم سن خود از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۱۳- آیا بیشتر در ارتباط با افراد هم مرتبه‌ی خود از نظر سطح تحصیلی- اجتماعی از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟

خیر	به ندرت	بی نظر	غالباً	بلی	
					۱۴– آیا اگر احساس کنید مخاطب شما را دستکم گرفته است بیشتر تمایل دارید از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کنید؟
					۱۵– آیا برای خودنمایی و مطرح کردن خود از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۱۶– آیا برای تحت تأثیر قرار دادن مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کرده‌اید؟
					۱۷– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند تصور می‌کنید معادل آن را در زبان اول به خاطر نیاورده است؟
					۱۸– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند نزد شما فرد مهمی به نظر می‌رسد؟
					۱۹– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند نزد شما با معلومات‌تر به نظر می‌رسد؟
					۲۰– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند نزد شما خودنما به نظر می‌رسد؟
					۲۱– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند باعث تضعیف روحیه شما می‌شود؟
					۲۲– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند احساس می‌کنید او خود را از نظر سطح علمی – اجتماعی از شما برتر می‌بیند؟
					۲۳– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند احساس می‌کنید از نظر علمی – اجتماعی از شما برتر است؟
خیر ٪۰	به ندرت ٪۲۵	بی نظر ٪۵۰	غالباً ٪۷۵	بلی ٪۱۰۰	
					۲۴– آیا وقتی مخاطب از واژگان ناآشنای زبان خارجی حین صحبت استفاده می‌کند معنای آن را از وی می‌پرسید؟
					۲۵– آیا اگر مخاطب چندین بار از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کند باعث تضعیف روحیه شما می‌شود؟
					۲۶– آیا وقتی مخاطب چندین بار از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده کند نزد شما خودنما به نظر می‌رسد؟

					۲۷- آیا وقتی مخاطب چندین بار از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند تصور می‌کنید معادل آن را در زبان اول به خاطر نیاورده است؟
					۲۸- آیا وقتی مخاطب چندین بار از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند نزد شما فرد مهمی به نظر می‌رسد؟
					۲۹- آیا اگر فردی که از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند از نظر تحصیلی – اجتماعی از شما بالاتر باشد (بطور مثال، رئیس، استاد، مقام بالای اداری) احساس می‌کنید خود را از شما برتر می‌بیند؟
					۳۰- آیا اگر فردی که از واژگان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌کند از نظر تحصیلی – اجتماعی هم مرتبه با شما باشد (بطور مثال، دوست یا همکار) احساس می کنید خود را از شما برتر می‌بیند؟
					۳۱- آیا به طور کلّی به کارگیری واژگان زبان خارجی حین صحبت کردن را از دیدگاه اجتماعی منفی تلقی می‌کنید؟
					۳۲- آیا به طور کلّی بکارگیری واژگان زبان خارجی را وسیله‌ای برای ابراز قدرت و موقعیت تلقی می‌کنید؟

چنانچه در مورد استفاده از واژگان زبان خارجی حین صحبت دیدگاه دیگری دارید خواهشمند است ذکر نمایید ....