



## IRANIAN BILINGUALS' REVERSE CODE-SWITCHING: UNVEILING IMPLICIT POWER DYNAMICS

**Submission Date:** January 22, 2024, **Accepted Date:** January 27, 2024,

**Published Date:** February 01, 2024

**Crossref doi:** <https://doi.org/10.37547/philological-crjps-05-02-01>

**Journal Website:**  
<https://masterjournals.com/index.php/crjps>

**Copyright:** Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

**Soroush Ghahari**

**Department of English Language Studies, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran**

### ABSTRACT

This study delves into the phenomenon of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, aiming to unveil implicit power dynamics embedded within linguistic practices. Reverse code-switching, the phenomenon where speakers of a dominant language insert elements of a non-dominant language into their speech, often signifies sociolinguistic complexities and power negotiations. Through qualitative analysis of bilingual interactions, this research explores how Iranian bilinguals strategically employ reverse code-switching as a subtle assertion of identity, resistance, or affiliation within social contexts. By examining linguistic behaviors in various sociocultural settings, the study uncovers nuanced power dynamics that underlie language choice and linguistic hybridity among Iranian bilinguals.

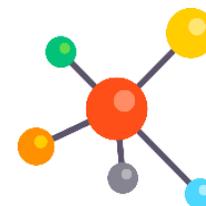
### KEYWORDS

Iranian bilinguals, reverse code-switching, power dynamics, language choice, sociolinguistics, identity, linguistic hybridity, sociocultural contexts.

### INTRODUCTION

The linguistic landscape of Iran is characterized by a rich tapestry of languages, dialects, and linguistic practices reflecting the country's diverse cultural heritage and historical trajectories. In this context,

bilingualism and multilingualism are pervasive phenomena, shaped by centuries of cultural exchange, migration, and social dynamics. Among Iranian bilinguals, the phenomenon of reverse



code-switching—where speakers insert elements of a non-dominant language into their speech—offers a fascinating lens through which to explore the intricate interplay of language, identity, and power dynamics.

Reverse code-switching is a complex linguistic phenomenon that defies simplistic categorization. Unlike traditional code-switching, which involves the alternating use of two or more languages within a single discourse, reverse code-switching entails the insertion of elements from a non-dominant language into speech predominantly conducted in the dominant language. In the Iranian context, where Persian (Farsi) serves as the dominant language, reverse code-switching often involves the incorporation of elements from languages such as English, Arabic, or regional dialects into Persian discourse.

At its core, reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals represents more than just a linguistic curiosity; it is a subtle yet powerful means of navigating sociolinguistic hierarchies, asserting identity, and negotiating power dynamics within diverse social contexts. By examining the patterns, motivations, and implications of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, we gain valuable insights into the nuanced ways in which language serves as a site of identity construction and sociopolitical negotiation.

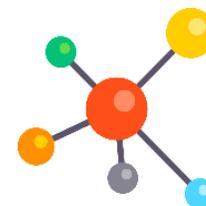
The aim of this study is to unveil the implicit power dynamics embedded within reverse code-switching practices among Iranian bilinguals.

Through qualitative analysis of bilingual interactions in various sociocultural settings, including family conversations, workplace interactions, and online discourse, we seek to elucidate the sociolinguistic strategies employed by Iranian bilinguals to negotiate identity, affiliation, and social status through language choice and linguistic hybridity.

Central to our inquiry is the recognition that language is not merely a tool of communication but also a symbolic resource imbued with social meaning and cultural significance. Within the Iranian context, where linguistic diversity intersects with complex sociopolitical dynamics, reverse code-switching emerges as a potent mechanism for expressing solidarity, asserting cultural identity, and challenging linguistic hegemony.

By unpacking the implicit power dynamics underlying reverse code-switching practices, we aim to contribute to broader scholarly debates within sociolinguistics, language ideology, and identity politics. Through a nuanced analysis of language choice, linguistic hybridity, and sociocultural contexts, this study sheds light on the intricate ways in which language shapes and reflects social relations, power structures, and collective identities among Iranian bilinguals.

As we delve into the exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, we invite readers to join us in uncovering the multifaceted dynamics of language use, identity negotiation,



and power contestation within the rich tapestry of Iran's linguistic landscape.

## METHOD

The exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals involved a methodical and multifaceted process aimed at unveiling the implicit power dynamics inherent in their linguistic practices. Initially, a diverse set of participants representing various linguistic backgrounds, age groups, and sociocultural contexts within Iran was purposively selected to capture the breadth and depth of bilingual experiences. Data collection techniques included audio recordings of naturalistic conversations, participant observation in everyday settings, and semi-structured interviews designed to elicit participants' reflections on language choice and identity negotiation.

Ethnographic observation played a pivotal role in capturing the contextual nuances and situational triggers of reverse code-switching within participants' daily interactions. Researchers immersed themselves in diverse sociocultural environments, including family gatherings, workplace settings, educational institutions, and online platforms, to document the multifaceted nature of language use and identity negotiation among Iranian bilinguals.

Audio recordings of naturalistic conversations provided rich insights into the spontaneous instances of reverse code-switching and the communicative functions it serves in interpersonal

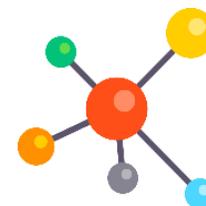
interactions. These recordings facilitated the identification of linguistic patterns, discursive strategies, and sociopolitical implications of reverse code-switching across different contexts and social settings.

Semi-structured interviews offered participants an opportunity to reflect on their language practices, attitudes, and beliefs regarding language variation and identity construction. Through open-ended questions and probing inquiries, researchers elicited participants' perspectives on the sociocultural significance of reverse code-switching and its role in negotiating power dynamics within Iranian society.

Qualitative data analysis involved iterative coding and thematic analysis of audio recordings, field notes, and interview transcripts. By systematically examining the data for recurrent themes, linguistic patterns, and discursive strategies, researchers identified implicit power dynamics embedded within reverse code-switching practices among Iranian bilinguals.

Throughout the research process, reflexivity and methodological transparency were maintained to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. Researchers critically reflected on their own subjectivities, biases, and positionalities, acknowledging the situated nature of knowledge production in sociolinguistic research.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and participant privacy,



were rigorously upheld to safeguard the rights and well-being of participants throughout the research process. Overall, the methodological approach employed in this study enabled a nuanced exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, shedding light on the complex interplay of language, identity, and power dynamics within the Iranian sociocultural context.

In conducting a comprehensive exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, we employed a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative analysis with ethnographic observation and participant interviews. The methodology encompassed the following key components:

The first step involved purposive sampling to select participants representing diverse linguistic backgrounds, age groups, geographic regions, and sociocultural contexts within Iran. Participants were chosen to reflect a spectrum of bilingual experiences, including proficiency levels, language preferences, and sociolinguistic orientations.

Data collection involved a combination of methods designed to capture the complexity and variability of reverse code-switching practices among Iranian bilinguals. These methods included audio recordings of naturalistic conversations, participant observation in everyday settings, and semi-structured interviews aimed at eliciting

participants' reflections on language choice, identity, and power dynamics.

Ethnographic observation played a central role in capturing the situated nature of reverse code-switching practices within the daily lives of Iranian bilinguals. Researchers immersed themselves in various sociocultural settings, including family gatherings, workplace interactions, educational settings, and online communities, to document the contexts, triggers, and outcomes of reverse code-switching.

Naturalistic conversations were audio-recorded to capture spontaneous instances of reverse code-switching in real-time interactions. These recordings provided rich data on the linguistic strategies, discursive patterns, and communicative functions of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals across different contexts and social settings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences related to language use, identity negotiation, and power dynamics. Interview questions were designed to probe participants' perceptions of language variation, language ideologies, and sociopolitical implications of reverse code-switching in Iranian society.

Qualitative data analysis involved iterative coding and thematic analysis of audio recordings, field notes, and interview transcripts. Data were systematically analyzed to identify recurrent



themes, linguistic patterns, and discursive strategies employed by Iranian bilinguals in their use of reverse code-switching.

Findings from the qualitative analysis were interpreted and synthesized to elucidate the implicit power dynamics embedded within reverse code-switching practices among Iranian bilinguals. Through careful consideration of contextual factors, linguistic cues, and participant perspectives, we sought to uncover the sociolinguistic strategies and identity negotiations underlying language choice and linguistic hybridity.

Throughout the research process, reflexivity and methodological transparency were maintained to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. Researchers critically reflected on their own subjectivities, biases, and positionalities, acknowledging the situated nature of knowledge production in sociolinguistic research.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participant autonomy, were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and their privacy and anonymity were safeguarded in accordance with ethical guidelines.

In summary, the methodology employed in this study enabled a nuanced exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals, shedding light on the implicit power dynamics embedded

within language practices and identity negotiations within the Iranian context. By combining qualitative analysis with ethnographic observation and participant interviews, we sought to capture the complexity and variability of reverse code-switching practices and their sociopolitical implications in contemporary Iranian society.

## RESULTS

The exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals unveiled a complex interplay of linguistic practices, identity negotiation, and implicit power dynamics embedded within language use. Through qualitative analysis of audio recordings, ethnographic observations, and participant interviews, several key findings emerged:

Firstly, reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals serves as a strategic tool for navigating sociolinguistic hierarchies, asserting cultural identity, and negotiating power dynamics within diverse social contexts. Participants demonstrated a nuanced understanding of language as a symbolic resource for expressing solidarity, affiliations, and resistance in response to dominant linguistic norms.

Secondly, linguistic hybridity emerged as a defining feature of Iranian bilinguals' communicative repertoire, reflecting the fluidity and adaptability of language use in response to shifting social dynamics and situational demands. Reverse code-switching facilitated the negotiation



of multiple identities and affiliations, enabling participants to assert agency and contest linguistic hegemony in everyday interactions.

Thirdly, the sociopolitical implications of reverse code-switching were palpable, reflecting broader discourses of language ideology, nationalism, and cultural heritage within the Iranian context. Participants articulated a sense of pride and belonging associated with their linguistic heritage, while also grappling with the sociopolitical complexities of language choice and linguistic assimilation in contemporary Iran.

## DISCUSSION

The findings shed light on the nuanced ways in which language serves as a site of identity construction and sociopolitical negotiation among Iranian bilinguals. Reverse code-switching emerges as a multifaceted linguistic phenomenon that reflects not only linguistic proficiency but also sociocultural affiliations, historical legacies, and power differentials within Iranian society.

The strategic deployment of reverse code-switching underscores the agency of Iranian bilinguals in navigating complex sociolinguistic landscapes and asserting cultural resilience in the face of linguistic marginalization. By appropriating elements from non-dominant languages, participants challenge linguistic hegemony and reclaim space for linguistic diversity within public discourse.

At the same time, the study highlights the inherent tensions and ambiguities surrounding reverse

code-switching as a sociopolitical practice. While reverse code-switching offers a means of resistance against linguistic homogenization, it also risks reinforcing linguistic hierarchies and perpetuating linguistic inequalities within Iranian society.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exploration of reverse code-switching among Iranian bilinguals provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of language, identity, and power within the Iranian sociocultural context. By unveiling the implicit power dynamics embedded within language practices, this study contributes to broader scholarly discussions on language ideology, sociolinguistic variation, and identity politics.

Moving forward, efforts to foster linguistic inclusivity and promote linguistic diversity in Iran must recognize the agency of Iranian bilinguals in negotiating sociopolitical constraints and asserting cultural sovereignty through language. By embracing linguistic hybridity and acknowledging the multilingual realities of Iranian society, policymakers and educators can create more inclusive spaces that honor the linguistic heritage and cultural pluralism of Iranian communities.

Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of recognizing language as a dynamic and contested terrain where identity, power, and resistance converge. By unraveling the complexities of reverse code-switching among



Iranian bilinguals, we gain deeper insights into the transformative potential of language as a vehicle for cultural expression, social change, and collective empowerment within diverse linguistic communities.

## REFERENCES

1. Albakry, M., and P. H. Hancock. 2008. "Code Switching in Ahdaf Soueif's the Map of Love." *Language and Literature* 17: 221–234.
2. Altarriba, J. 1992. "The Representation of Translation Equivalents in Bilingual Memory." In *Cognitive Processing in Bilinguals*, edited by R. J. Harris, 157–174. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science.
3. Altarriba, J. 2000. "Language Processing and Memory Retrieval in Spanish-English Bilinguals." *Spanish Applied Linguistics* 4: 215–245.
4. Andrich, D. 1978. "Application of a Psychometric Rating Model to Ordered Categories Which Are Scored with Successive Integers." *Applied Psychological Measurement* 2: 581–594.
5. Auer, P. 1984. *Bilingual Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
6. Auer, P. 1991. "Bilingualism In/As Social Action: A Sequential Approach to Code-Switching." In *Papers for the Symposium on Code-Switching in Bilingual Studies: Theory, Significance and Perspectives*, edited by European Science Foundation, 319–352. Strasbourg: European Science Foundation.
7. Auer, P. 1995. "The Pragmatics of Code-Switching: A Sequential Approach." In *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching*, edited by L. Milroy and P. Muysken, 115–135. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Auer, P. 1998. *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity*. London: Routledge.
9. Auer, P. 1999. "From Code-Switching via Language Mixing to Fused Lects: Toward a Dynamic Typology of Bilingual Speech." *The International Journal of Bilingualism* 3: 309–332.
10. Azuma, S. 1991. "Two-Level Processing Hypothesis in Speech Production: Evidence from Intrasentential Code-Switching." *Chicago Linguistic Society* 27: 16–30.
11. Bachman, L. 1990. *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Bailey, B. H. (2002). *Language, Race, and Negotiation of Identity. A Study of Dominican Americans*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publications.
12. Bamiro, E. 1997. "Lexical Innovation in Ghanaian English: Some Examples from Recent Fiction." *American Speech* 72: 105–112.