

Code-Switching and social identity construction among Arabic-English bilinguals: A stance perspective.

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Abstract

This is a qualitative, semi-ethnographic study that closely analyses audio-recorded, informal, peer group interactions of a small group of adult, female, Arabic-English bilingual friends, who are part of the Arabic-speaking minority in Manchester, UK. Unlike traditional approaches where speakers' Code-Switching (henceforth CS) was believed to denote a homogenous or a unified identity that is unquestionably reflected through language, this study adopts a stance-based approach to examine how speakers utilise CS patterns to (re)construct and negotiate individual and interactional aspects of their identities. Stance is an indexical tool that speakers utilise in order to evaluate their interlocutors' utterances or the interlocutors themselves and to position themselves in relations to either/both. This paper explores the indirect relationship between the different CS patterns speakers exhibit and the multifaceted aspects of their identities. It also examines the extent to which the stances speakers take respond to or challenge wider sociocultural values and macro identity labels, (e.g. Arab/English, student, immigrant/sojourner). Being a report of a working project, the paper argues that the CS style participants develop and use strategically can be explained through certain evaluative stances, similar embraced lifestyle choices and shared ideological associations speakers make between both languages used and their social significance.

Keywords: identity construction, stance, interactional, Code-Switching, ethnographic.

1. Introduction

This study is located in the conventions of Social Constructionism that considers reality an 'ongoing human production' where individuals have some agency to subjectively (re)create their reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 192). In the case of language, switching codes can be a means through which speakers may (re)construct aspects of their identities, adopt or highlight different/partial roles that are not necessarily 'dual' or contrasting as was commonly believed. The complexity of the linguistic practices of bilinguals can be well captured if the notion of identity is approached within a poststructuralist context (Bauman 1991; Giddens: 1991). In the dynamic, postmodern societies of today's world, speakers can constantly negotiate/define their identities, or 'cross over' to languages/varieties of other groups they do not ethnically belong to (Rampton, 1995).

In contrast to how identities of bilingual speakers have been theorised previously (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Gumperz, 1982), this study does not assume a direct link between the language(s) speakers deploy and their ethnic/cultural identity. It suggests that the two linguistic varieties a bilingual uses go hand in hand and can be seen as mutually significant (Woolard, 1999) in creating a 'new' space for the bilinguals to occupy and utilise for self-positioning (Finnis, 2013, 2009). To make sense of the Code-switching (henceforth CS) practices of a group of London Greek Cypriot community, Georgakopoulou and Finnis (2009, p. 469) rightly argue that their CS 'does not only create identities [based on] socially and culturally derived positions but also ... [based on] desiring and fantasizing personas'. It is often claimed that it is ordinary/inevitable for bilinguals to experience a change when switching between two languages. Each language or a 'voice' may trigger a cultural shift or a distinctive interpretative framework that can lead to different positions or stances associated with each voice/code (Sapir 1929; Whorf, 1941, in Pavlenko, 2014) that speakers use to make sense of their experiences. The analytic tool used to demonstrate this idea is that of 'Stance';

an indexical process by which a linguistic feature becomes indirectly and interactionally associated with a social meaning or a certain value.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before I define what I mean by CS, I would like to first clarify what I mean by the term 'Bilingual'.

2.1 Who is a bilingual?

The term bilingual has traditionally been used to describe a speaker with a 'balanced' competence of two languages. For example, Bloomfield (1933, p. 55-6) considers bilingualism to be a result of 'perfect foreign-language learning [that] is not accompanied by loss of the native language' and results in a 'native-like control of two languages'. As correctly argued by Romanie (1995, p. 5), this way of measuring speakers' bilingualism, and using words such as 'native-like' and 'balanced' marks other groups of bilinguals: 'late' or 'non-balanced', as deficient. Who I consider to be bilingual in this study is not one who has a native-like competence in two languages, but one who can communicate efficiently in both.

A group of current scholars, such as Li Wei (2000) and Grosjean (2010) consider bilingualism to be a rather practical activity that is manifested through bilingual forms of speech, such as CS, and is not a matter of fluency that is abstractly/rigidly measured. Similarly, Auer (1988) asserts that bilingualism can only be demonstrated through actual use and performance (Auer, 1988, p. 191).

2.2 Overview of Code-Switching

CS is a linguistic process where speakers alternate between two languages, a linguistic behaviour that is exhibited by bilingual speakers with different levels of proficiency in either language. It is usually defined as the ‘juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of [...] speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems’ (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). The codes/languages discussed in this study are Arabic and English. The variety of Arabic that the participants speak is not the Modern Standard Arabic, but the colloquial Arabic of Libya and Syria.

According to Gumperz (1982), bilinguals mainly and unconsciously switch between two codes in order to make a communicative effect that is dependent on the sum of the structural units of the two switched codes (1982, p. 61). Strategic CS can also be a verbal contextualisation cue by which interactants construct and negotiate meanings and identities. For instance, CS is almost exclusively produced in peer group interactions and is utilised as an in-group identity marker, often indicative of certain ideologies and experiences that a particular group members share.

CS is mostly known to be practiced by ‘early’ bilinguals - as called by Hoffman (1991) - or second-generation immigrants as a result of a constant 'balanced' exposure to two languages that are often spoken in different mediums (Gumperz & Hernandez, 1969, p. 2). Although it is not always the case, CS usually occurs between two languages of different prestige and status, such as a majority and a minority/community language. CS can also be characteristic of the speech of recent and adult immigrants who are usually referred to as ‘sequential’ or ‘late bilinguals’ (Pavlenko, 2014, p. 21; Hoffman, 1991). These may include international students, and professionals who belong to a wide range of minority language groups, particularly from developing countries.

2.3 Patterns of CS

Code-switches can take the form of a grammatical item, lexical item (e.g. noun or a verb), a phrase or a clause. The first of these is called 'Insertion', that is adding a simple - often lexical - unit belonging to one language to the sentence boundary of the other language (Muysken, 2000, p. 1-3). 'Alternation' is another pattern which describes the process of switching to another language, often outside the sentence boundaries of the other language - by using complex and longer linguistic items, such as phrases or clauses (Muysken, 2000, p. 4-5).

In example (1) below, the English noun *offer* is inserted after the Arabic definite article 'the', as part of the Arabic sentence 'You got the offer?'. The noun *offer* functions as the object of the Arabic verb *got*. Insertions tend to function as referential points, and *offer* here is referential of the speaker's everyday experience of a shopping context in the UK. It also fills a lexical gap because it is accurately expressive while the known, equivalent Arabic word, such as *Fursa* (opportunity) is not be suitable for this context.

Example (1)

Fadia: **offer** شريتي واحدة ولا خديتي ال

(*Did you buy one or you got the offer?*)

In the next example, the Arabic clause 'I mean not that' is alternated with the English one 'she's not nice', which completes the meaning of the Arabic part of the sentence.

Example (2)

Narjis: مسكينه هي طيبه يعني مش انا **she's not nice**

(*Poor her, she's kind. I mean not that she's not nice*)

3. Traditional Models of CS

3.1 'We-code/they-code' Model

At the beginning of their work on CS, Blom and Gumperz (1972) developed this model to explain the CS behaviour of several groups of speakers of different bilingual communities. It was generally argued that bilinguals use their first language or the 'we' code, to signal an in-group identity and reinforce a shared ethnic identity. However, and based on the group of bilinguals they studied, it was claimed that the formers' use of a second language or a 'they' code is usually associated with an out-group identity. Speakers' identity then was viewed as a simple/automatic marker of their membership in a particular ethnic or socioeconomic group which they had been assigned to since birth.

3.1.1 Criticism & Alternatives

The approach was later criticised for its regard of identity as static or fixed, in addition to how it unproblematically correlated speakers' use of language with aspects of their master identity, such as ethnicity, and regarded the latter as given (Cameron, 1990). Instead, language is suggested to be a social action that should be regarded as being as crucial as other social categories in the role it plays in constructing individuals' identities (Eckert, 2000). Through viewing it as a social 'practice', language can be a means through which speakers 'do' their identities rather than only reflecting an identity they have (Eckert, 2012, p. 88). Further, speakers may index new social meanings and ideological views by exploiting the very same linguistic features differently, at different contexts (Eckert, 2008).

Ethnography is another important element that should be incorporated to investigate how speakers locally make sense of their lives and what codes they use for meaning-making and self-representation (Stroud, 1998, 2004; Sebba & Wotton, 1998). This can be achieved

through paying attention to the conversational interactions of a specific group of speakers, and examining how their interactions and linguistic orientations conform to or subvert wider social norms (Stroud, 1998, p. 323; Cashman, 2005, p. 305). In Bailey's (2000, 2007) studies of a group of Dominican bilinguals, CS is considered a 'we code' and used to negotiate a unique bilingual identity for the speakers; a strategy through which they perform a group membership and separate themselves - linguistically and culturally - from young, recent immigrants.

3.2 The 'Sequential' approach:

Unlike Gumperz's approach, Auer (1984, 1998) and Li Wei (1995, 1998) argued that the meaning of CS utterances is contextually and interactionally constructed through interlocutors' strategic and mutual meaning production that emerges through the local and sequential organisation of turns. By taking Conversation Analysis (CA) as an analytic method, they reject 'brought along' associations between speakers' utterances and their social categorisation, such as ethnic identity (Auer, 1992). Instead, only 'brought about' associations or those that interlocutors draw on in their talk actually matter, such as a direct reference to their ethnic group (Ibid).

The model was mainly criticised by many, such as Blommaert (2005, p. 67) and Coupland (2001, p. 11-12) for dismissing the role of ethnography and considering context to be only explicitly constructed by participants themselves as their macro identity labels cannot be assumed to be relevant to their linguistic choices.

4. A comprehensive model for exploring identity

To study identity in a comprehensive manner, approaches working in opposite paradigms: 'micro' and 'macro' are potentially more fruitful if combined together, as macro identity-related issues can be more fully discussed/challenged through looking at how language is used in everyday, local interactions. Bucholtz & Hall (2008, p. 154) suggest that studying identity at the 'interactional' level has to be complemented by considering 'ethnographic' and 'sociocultural' aspects of the community. They argue that 'identities may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances', and that it is, for example, through stance that we can understand how language and identity are interlinked (Bucholtz & Hall 2005, p. 585).

Taking a stance-based approach is not a common practice in CS studies, with Jaffe's (2007, 2009) examination of CS practices of bilingual teachers in Corsican bilingual schools being the only example in the literature thus far. Before giving an account of the stance-based approach, I will first define what I mean by 'stance'.

4.1. What is Stance?

The concept of stance was first alluded to in the seminal work of Goffman (1981) on 'Footing'. Footing is seen as a general term that covers speakers' 'change of gears' or their different acts of alignment and stancetaking instances in conversations (Goffman, 1981, p. 126). It was in her 1993 work where Ochs first conceptualised 'stance' as an analytic tool that mediates between the language used by speakers and the specific social identity or the social role they adopt. Stance can be defined as the change in a speaker's current footing and the way a speaker takes a 'momentary' or an 'enduring' attitude towards the content of her utterance(s) and towards those of her interlocutors or the interlocutors themselves. One can mark a change in her footing by showing different levels of orientation towards their

interlocutor's utterances. A change in footing can be realised in one's or a co-participant's linguistic and non-linguistic production as well as in the utterance's content or/and form.

Stance is also defined as an act 'that is achieved dialogically [to] evaluat[e] objects, position subjects ... and align with other subjects' (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163). Regardless of the number of stance types (e.g. affective, epistemic, etc.) found in the literature, Hunston & Thompson (2000) suggest that speakers in all their stancetaking acts are generally and necessarily taking an evaluative act or an attitudinal perspective. It is a tool through which speakers express their feelings and opinions or make judgments.

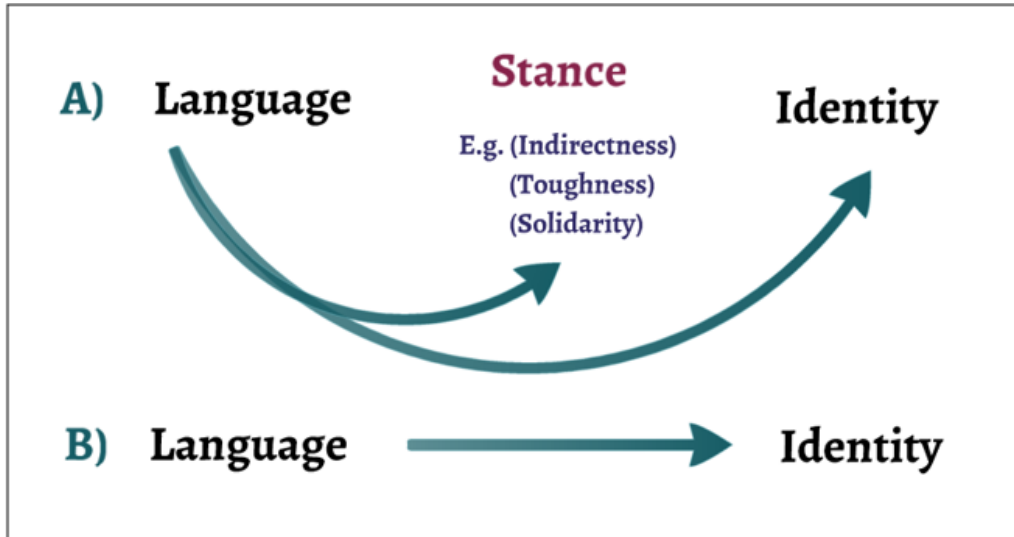
4.1.1 A stance perspective to CS

This process of the non-artificial/indirect linking of a linguistic variable to a social meaning is best illustrated through the term 'indexicality', which is mainly associated with the influential works of Ochs (1992) and Silverstein (2003). The importance of this term stems from the way it makes examining identity construction and negotiation through language feasible. An indexical value - a speaker's stance - is the social meanings that is constituted through using a certain linguist feature(s) at a particular context. The link between one's given identity categories and the way they index identity is complex and far from direct. It is through stance, however, that this relationship is embodied (See fig. 1 below). An individual's choice of a linguistic variable/code manifests the identity labels a speaker believes to have currency in a particular situation.

Linguistic variable(s) can be deployed to index a speaker's personal stance or social role she temporarily adopts, e.g. indirectness or toughness. Then, regularly taken stances by particular speakers are generalised to become naturally associated with that speaker and are deemed characteristic of their linguistic style. At a later stage of the habitual usage of (a)

particular linguistic feature(s), a stance becomes part of or directly associated with the identity of that particular speaker.

Figure 1. Illustration of the indexicality process



5. The Present Study

This study explores the way in which speakers momentarily exploit CS in enacting and performing the fluidity and multiplicity of their identities. In doing so, it highlights the different types of stances these speakers take up to 'do' identity work. The research questions this paper attempts to answer are:

- 1- How do speakers utilise CS patterns to negotiate aspects of their identities?
- 2- To what extent are the speakers' stances used to conform to/challenge macro aspects of their identities (e.g. Arab/English, student, immigrant/sojourner)?

5.1 Research Population

This sample is a 'purposive' one (Lanza, 2008, p. 83). The five participants are my friends (See table 1 below, pseudonyms used) and were selected after a close and long

observation of their CS patterns, which I initially hypothesised to be relevant for my study, and thus could be utilised for addressing CS identity-related issues. One of the participants - 'Narjis' - is an *English-Arabic* early bilingual whereas the rest of the five, including me, are *Arabic-English* late bilinguals. The Arabic-English bilingual community in Manchester as well as in England is very heterogeneous; thus, I do not claim this sample to be a representative one.

Table 1. Participants' Profiles

Name	Age	Age of Arrival to UK	Age of L2 Acquisition	Education	En. Level
Narjis	36	1-4/11+	Ar. 4	BSc Pharmacy	Native
Zainab	34	27	12	PhD Biomedical Science (Current)	Advanced
Hania	26	20	10	PhD Sociolinguistics (Current)	Native-like
Kamila	25	19	12	PhD Linguistics (Current)	Native-like
Aya	25	19	11	BSc Food & Nutrition	Advanced/ Native-like
Fadia	24	18	10	PhD Education (Current)	Native-like

As an insider researcher, I am aware of the potential implications that my position may have on the research. Subjectivity is to be redressed throughout by adopting reflexive, methodological approaches (listed below) to help maintain a sense of neutrality and make sure my interpretations of the participants' stances are validated.

5.2 Methodology & Data Collection

To approach bilingualism from a sociolinguistic perspective means that it is regarded as a social action and a bilingual speaker is a 'social actor' who shapes and constructs her reality through linguistic variation (Li Wei, 2008, p. 12). To capture the intricacy of bilingual speakers' identities, recent studies on bilingualism have been utilising combined-method approaches and ethnographic methods (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 26). In line with such studies, the current one adopts a multiple-method approach to gain a deeper understanding of how speakers utilise CS to negotiate their identities. These methods are:

- **Semi-structured interviews.** It is important to conduct interviews and explicitly ask participants about their attitudes towards CS and their linguistic ideologies instead of only relying on my own interpretations of their stances. The interviews are intended to be semi-structured, 'ethnographic chats' (Selleck, 2013) with about 45 open-ended questions, conducted in an interactional/relaxed manner.
- **Audio recordings (Peer group interactions).** To carry out a detailed, moment-by-moment analysis of the speakers' CS behaviour, long and spontaneous conversations are needed. Thus, I have recorded a series of small group interactions (1 or 2 hour long recordings), which I am part of.
- **Self-recordings.** Speakers are asked to self-record themselves with a friend of theirs (not a main participant) whose proficiency of English is not as advanced as they are. The reason is to examine whether this friend's 'less' advanced command of English has any effect on the participants' CS strategies or intensity level.
- **Questionnaires.** They are designed to collect general information about the participants' demographic details and linguistic background.

- **Retrospective participant commentary.** These commentaries are important to check speakers' reflections on some excerpts from recorded interactions, a method adopted in many ethnographic works (Rampton 1998, p. 291; 1995). Taking this reflexive approach is essential to neutralise and confirm or modify my interpretations of the participants' stances.

6. Findings/Discussion

The results obtained so far - mainly drawn from peer group interactions and questionnaires - show that CS is an unmarked and a conventional speaking style that all participants display in their in-group conversations. CS is used for both referential and non-referential (indexical) functions, such as filling a lexical need for a word or expression and conveying abstract goals and communicating identity-related issues (See table 2 below). Most switches are made from Arabic to English where English is quite saliently used to be polite and pay compliments to others while Arabic is usually used to be direct or critical. Moreover, English can be used to sound formal, but is also used to sound informal and express emotions; thus, it can be often considered a context-based variable.

Table 2. Stances taken up when switching to either language

English	VS.	Arabic
Chosen language		
Adulthood		
Rationality/ Negotiation		
Politeness		
Efficiency		Wordiness/ Elaboration
Informality/ Positive Attitude		
Formality/ Indirectness		Directness/ Criticism
Competition/ Defence tool		Arguments
Sarcasm		

The social or political context where a group of immigrants are situated, and the symbolic power of each language can affect the language orientations of bilinguals and therefore, their CS practices. Language is not arbitrarily exploited, but it is a means by which speakers may gain access to power (Bourdieu, 2006) or show alignment with speakers of the majority language. In this case, the disparity in the status between the two languages also plays a role in the speakers' linguistic self-positioning as two different codes are not usually considered 'equivalent resources but hierarchically stratified' (Blommaert et al, 2005, p. 214). Since English is the dominant language - often used to sound authoritative - speakers might be inclined to use it to adjust to their new environment and survive.

The next section discusses some of these stances speakers associate with English, and these are: indexing 'positive', 'polite', 'competitive' and 'native speaker/authentic' identities.

6.1 CS as indexing an 'Expressive/Positive' persona:

One of the stances the participants strongly associate English with is positivity. In many contexts, participants tend to switch to English when expressing emotions. In example (3) below, Aya uses the English utterance: 'I finished it' (L.8) to show her excitement about finally finishing the bitter drink, an event that she later describes (L.11) - using Arabic - as an 'achievement'. What is interesting about the way Aya produces this utterance: 'I finished it' is the intonation she uses in producing it. She uses a rising intonation that sounds very similar to how an English 'native' speaker would produce such an utterance to convey a similar meaning/attitude, such as positive feeling and excitement. It could be argued that this group of speakers express their emotions in an English way through emulating the exact intonation English native speakers use in such contexts. This practice can be a result of integration and frequent contact with English native speakers that less fluent second language learners may

not exhibit. The same rising intonation is also used by other participants in example (5) below by both Kamila and Zainab in producing the utterance: 'It's nice'. On his discussion of the process of 'Dialogism', Bakhtin argues that the words speakers borrow from others 'carry with them their own expression ... evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89).

Example (3)

[Aya is at Narjis's place, drinking a ginger drink because she has a cold, but is not really liking the drink]

1 Narjis: وهادا أقوى من الأول

(And this one *is stronger than the first one*)

2 Aya: //هاذا أقوى؟!//

(*This is stronger?*)

3 Narjis: //صح؟(.) ولا ما /حسيتي؟//

(*Yeah? Or you didn't notice?*)

4 Aya: //I dunno!

5 Narjis: لأنو غلى أكثر

(*Because it was boiled for longer*)

6 Aya: إيه ممكن هو لما يبرد بيبدأ أسهل إنك إنت تشربيه

(*Yeah, maybe when it gets cold, it's easier to drink*)

(2)

→ 8 Aya: **I finished it!** <A bit surprised>

9 Narjis: **Well done!**

10 Zainab: ما شاء الله كويس

(Glorious the God! Good)

→ 11 Aya: إنجاز <laughing>

(What an achievement!)

Later, and when I asked Aya for her 'Retrospective participant commentary' and about the reasons for switching at this particular point (L.8), this was her answer:

Example (4)

→ 1 Aya: كأن **to make it funny**

(It's like to make it funny)

2 Hania: إيه

(Yeah)

3 وحتى حسيت/ت إن:

(I also felt that)

4 Aya: كأن: **jokingly** هكي* **yeah***

(As if jokingly, like, yeah)

→ 5 Hania: **^positive^ connotations** /إن وحتى حسيت إن فيها **oh I ^did^ it**

(And I even thought it has some positive connotation, like: 'Oh I did it')

→ 6 Aya: /أيوأ(.)

(Exactly)

→ 7 =**Yeah**

Although not being quite sure about the reason for her switches in many other instances, Aya here thinks she code-switched to sound 'funny', which is a positive reason behind utilising English. Then, Aya promptly agrees with my suggestion that the utterance

seems to have 'positive connotations'. This makes more sense when taking into consideration that Libyans and Arabs are not generally used to or encouraged to express their positive feelings; therefore, Aya here could be adopting the voice of English people as an outlet for doing that. This could also have to do with the idea that Arabs tend to exhibit a collectivist orientation as opposed to the individualistic orientations of most Americans and Western Europeans (Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) define collectivism as embracing a culture where individuals are family-orientated, sacrificing their free will and personal needs out of consideration for family and wider community (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990, p. 140). Although this may not be applicable to all parts of the Arab world today, being tradition-based societies means that individuals' behaviour could be restricted to a point that expressing emotions can be difficult to negotiate as they are not usually approved of (Kafaji, 2011, p. 67).

Expressing emotions using English could be a result of a socialisation process by which individuals - second language learners - indirectly adopt some speech/cultural values of native speakers. Culture here is considered to be a mental framework/ideology that is not automatically obtained by merely being born in a specific society, but is achieved through social and environmental communication. Hall (1980: 63) argues that the traditional definition of culture as a range of customs, traditions and artistic taste does not constitute what a culture is, but it is a reflection of an ideology or overarching, cultural values.

The next example - example (5) below - illustrates how the participants use English to make another positive move, and that is to be nice to others and pay compliments to them. Here, it was a time when they have not seen me for a while, so Zainab says: 'You've put on weight'. Then she and Kamila directly state that using Arabic, where they sound a bit critical, but not necessarily meant it to be so (L.3 & 4). Although I did not take this badly, Zainab has probably noticed I was surprised by her comment and starts making up for that. She uses

some English (L.5), then starts the stream of compliments using 'it's nice' three times in three different lines after which Kamila echoes her towards the end where I start giving in (L.9). Eventually, I am convinced (L.13) and happily say 'Thanks'.

Example (5)

1 Zainab: سامنه يا هانية!

(You've put on some weight, Hania)

2 Hania: <Embarrassed> لا مش حتى هكي و:به عر/فتكم. عرفتمكم كلكم بتقولولي

(No, it's not that, ohh I knew you'll, I knew you'll all tell me)

→ 3 Zainab: لا لا مل./لا مليونه عن قبل

(No, no, you've put on some weight compared to before)

4 Kamila: ايه صح

(Yes, true)

5 Zainab: لا مش سامنه = **(Something ba:d)**

(No, I didn't mean you gaining weight as something bad)

6 Kamila: /كويس حلو لا!

(No, it's good, nice)

→ 7 Zainab: **It's nice**, عرفتي؟

(It's nice, you know?)

8 Kamila: ايه/

(Yeah)

{...}

9 Hania: <Embarrassed> م:مكن زايده شوية مش /عارفه

(Maybe a bit, I don't know)

→ 10 Zainab: هكي **it's nice** لا لا

(No, no it's nice like this)

11 Kamila: =It's ^nice^ نحس

(It's nice, I think)

→ 12 Zainab: (.) إيـنه /حلو(.) **very nice**

(Yes nice, very nice)

13 Hania: /**Thanks** <laughing>

It can be suggested that the pragmatic effect created here is not only a result of using the English utterance on its own, but it is more because of the switching from Arabic to English and the contrast made between them, particularly (L.3 & 7) as English in (L.7) seems to work as a softener to the directness caused by the Arabic utterances. Most stances discussed here are a reflection of a meeting point between the two languages and not necessarily of specific associations inherent to either language. This example is a good illustration of the late-bilingual participants' admiration/adoption of some of the English people's values, such as being nice and having a positive mindset.

6.2 CS as signifying a 'Polite/Indirect' attitude:

Another common stance with which switching to English associated with is being polite/indirect. Indexing a 'polite' attitude is one stance that all the late-bilingual participants made it clear at many points when explicitly asked for the reasons behind their CS, in questionnaires and interviews. Example (6) below shows how Aya uses English to tentatively make an indirect request from Narjis about whether she can use her iPad. The context might have slightly played a role in the very 'polite' way Aya approached Narjis as it seems like Aya is somewhat embarrassed by asking Narjis for a favour during her visit. Also, she is probably being careful not to interfere in anyone's business since Narjis's kids are the ones playing on

the iPad most of the time, and not Narjis herself! Thus, and as a way of not sounding 'imposing' or to perhaps save her face, Aya is pessimistically anticipating that 'the iPad [is] busy' (L.3) followed by her actual request: 'If I can use it?' (L.3), which is produced as an unclear, low-voice utterance.

Narjis then overlaps with Aya and uses Arabic to take a different evaluative stance and quickly reassure her that she can definitely use it (L.4); casually chatting with Aya about her work (L.6). The 'polite' effect made by the use of English here is further illustrated by Narjis's use of Arabic for a quick, direct answer in the turn right after the one where Aya makes her indirect request.

Example (6)

1 Aya: Narjis!

2 Narjis: أه حبيبيتي

(Yes, darling)

→ 3 Aya: =**Is the iPad busy?**(.) (***if I /can use it?***)

4 Narjis: لا لا لا (.) بدك ت تشو/ في هاداكا شغلك؟

(No no. You want to do your work?)

5 Aya: //ايه (.) (***kids*** /بس ال)

(But the kids. Yes)

6 Narjis: //Oh yeah (.) إنت امبارح نعستي وما صار منو /صح؟

Oh yeah, you felt sleepy yesterday and couldn't get it done, right?)

Unlike Aya's slightly hesitant reply in example (4) above where I had to prompt her to think of why she code-switched then, I did not need to do the same here (see example 7 below). Within thirty seconds of my question, Aya says that she thought she code-switched to

'ask politely' or to be 'indirect' which tallies well with what most of the participants often use English for in other examples.

Example (7)

- 1 Aya: **It's kind of, I think, to ask politely(.) *//Or dunno***
- 2 Hania: **//Aha yeah(.) yeah** <smiling>
- 3 Aya: **Or indirectly, I dunno**

6.3 CS as a 'Competitive/Defensive' strategy:

Example (8)

- 1 Kamila: **This is قصدي a, a subjective /thing** عرفتي؟
(*This is, I mean, a subjective thing, you know?*)
- 2 Zianab: **باهي. إيه إيه باهي لما تتوضي شبعانه نوم**
(*Ok, yeah yeah, when you feel you've had enough sleep*)
- 3 Kamila: **إيه باه؟**
(*Yeah, Ok?*)
- 4 Zainab: **إنك إنت ترجعي ترقدي مره تانية؟** **How can you persuade yourself**
(*How can you persuade yourself to go back to sleep?*)
- 5 Kamila: **نحط راسي عالمخده** <laughing>
(*I just put my head on the pillow*)
{...}
- 6 Zainab: **I can't understand you** /الصراحه <Smiling>
(*I can't understand you, to be honest*)
- 9 Kamila: **عرفتي؟** **it's impossible for you to /understand it**

(You know? It's impossible for you to understand it)

10 Zainab: .إنت حتى إنت. / **I think you ^cannot^ understand my situation**

(You too, I think you can't understand my situation)

In this example, Zainab, Fadia and I can't believe what Kamila has just told us, that she can go back to sleep after waking up at night, not feeling the need for sleep. Being aware that she is the only one who thinks about this differently, Kamila starts defending herself using English: 'This is ... a, a subjective thing'. As a way of challenging Kamila's stance, Zainab also takes the same stance Kamila is taking and uses English to try to test the logic behind what Kamila is saying (L.4). Few turns later, Kamila reiterates and claims that it is something personal and is 'impossible for [Zainab] to understand', a point at which Zainab interrupts her and competitively replies that equally, Kamila 'cannot understand her situation'.

It can be seen that switching to English here heightens the argument as both interlocutors seem to be considering it as a resourceful or empowering means through which they can make their point. According to the process of 'authentication/authorization' developed by Bucholtz & Hall (2004, p. 386), using English here represents a 'strategic use of linguistic markers of expertise' through which each of the interactants temporarily authorises herself to be the one who could eventually have the last word in the discussion.

6.4 CS to perform an 'Authentic English speaker' identity:

Example (9)

[Hania & Zainab were having another conversation when Fadia turned to Kamila and asked her to bring her her mobile phone]

1 Fadia: **Do you know the password?**

2 Kamila: **To you:r thingy?!** [Referring to Fadia's mobile]

3 Fadia: **No!**

[At this point, Hania & Zainab have finished their conversation and they're listening to Fadia & Kamila]

4 Kamila: =**I don't know.**

5 !الللي هنا؟! <Laughing> [Referring to the internet router]

(Ooh this one here?)

6 Fadia: **To my ^thingy^?! (Am)** كميله أنا/فاتحاته!

(To my thingy?! Am, my phone is switched on, Kamila!)

7 Kamila: /**Yeah I know I was thinking why is she asking me the question in the first place?!**

(1)

8 آه امم [trying to figure out what the letters are]

(Eee, Emm)

9 Fadia: =**^Du:de!^ Just tell me the pa:sswo::rd** <Exaggerated American accent>

10 Kamila: هيا

(In a bit)

Similar to the previous example, English here is used to either make a teasing remark, such as that made by Fadia: 'To my thingy?!', or to defend oneself, such as Kamila's replies (L.4 & 7) when trying to come up with an excuse of the unexpected way she interpreted Fadia's request (L.1-3). This playful sarcasm was created through the way each of the two

speakers accommodate to/build upon each other's evaluative stances. What is interesting here, however, is the accent which Fadia produced the English utterance (L.9) in is a very strong American accent: 'Just tell me the passwo::rd' /pæs.wɪd/. This can be an illustration of the analogy Rampton (1998) makes between the bilinguals' voices and the codes they exploit. He bases this on Bakhtin's notion of 'double-voicing' (1981, p. 189), the idea that people's utterances are often borrowed and built on others'. Similarly, Rampton suggests that utterances a bilingual produces can be seen as belonging to somebody else or another group the bilingual (dis)associates herself from/with. Heller also views switching to another code as a way of enabling bilinguals to 'take refuge in voice of the other ... without [having] full membership in one or the other' (1988, p. 93, 87).

Bakhtin's notion of 'Uni-directional' voicing is also relevant as it refers to the case where a speaker's utilisation of others' words does not greatly differ from the way they are originally used' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 193). Considering the 'quite authentic' accent Fadia uses, her voice as the (borrower/bilingual) and that of the original (imagined native speaker) seem to greatly overlap and cannot be easily distinguished. Unlike 'Vari-directional' where a speaker is believed to be 'Stylising' the voice of the other out of ridicule or to use in banter (Bakhtin 1984; Rampton, 2013: 361), I would argue that Fadia is putting on an American accent to be perceived as 'funny'/'witty' by Kamila and the unaddressed speakers (See Snell, 2010, p. 648).

One social move that Fadia's CS to (American) English cannot be indicative of is the possibility that she is claiming an (ethnic) membership to an American community. Speaking in an American accent does not rule out the fact that Fadia is an Arab. Her exploitation of a distinctive feature of American English, such as the alveolar /ɹ/ in 'passsword', helps her to claim a personal legitimacy or a linguistic membership in addition to the privilege that comes

with it when a 'non-native' emulates a 'native' speaker. Similarly, Jaffe (2009, p.19) argues that one of the reasons for which CS can be used is to 'attract attention to its form' and not the content/social meaning (See Jaffe, 2000). Finally, the CS exhibited in the last example may provoke questions about linguistic membership and highlight the blurry boundaries between some problematic terms, such as 'native' and 'non-native' speakers, and 'sojourner' and 'second-generation immigrant'.

7. Conclusion & Limitations:

By incorporating 'stance' as an analytic approach, this study has discussed the indexical relationship between the CS strategies a group of Arabic-English bilinguals take and their personal and relational identities. Based on the results collected so far, the paper has shown that CS is a linguistic, resourceful means through which speakers perform multiple aspects of their social identities that are not tied to inherent associations with either language. A number of evaluative stances, such as being 'positive', 'polite', 'competitive/defensive' and 'authentic speaker' were considered to account for some of the CS acts speakers take.

As a report of a working project, this paper has some limitations by definition. One of the aspects that still needs to be investigated is a full list of the different types of stances speakers take up when switching to either language. Since the focus in the current paper was mainly on the switches made in the direction of English, switches made in the opposite direction (to Arabic) - which are expected to be less frequent - could also be examined in future work. The study would also benefit from carrying out a quantitative analysis of many facets of the speakers' CS behaviour, such as the difference in the CS frequency/intensity level of each participants and the reasons they mostly utilise CS for.

7.1 Academic Impact:

From a methodological perspective, this study endeavours to contribute to the body of knowledge already existing on the linguistic and stylistic construction of identity. It aims to engage with the on-going discussion concerning the effectiveness of utilising a variationist-based tool, such as 'stance', together with Interactional sociolinguistics and ethnography (Schilling-Estes, 2004, p. 165) to examine how identity is enacted on various levels (Phonetic or morpho-syntactic variables to discourse-level variables, as it is the case here). Also, issues around CS patterns developed by adult and late bilinguals belonging are hardly addressed in the CS research area. Conversely, the CS patterns of early/simultaneous bilinguals - belonging to different communities and speaking different language pairs - are well established (Giampapa, 2004; De Finna, 2007; Finnis, 2013; Al-Rowais, 2012).

Transcription Symbols

- Arabic: Text
- English: **Text**
- Translation: (*Text*)
- Loud: Text
- Not clearly identified:(Text)
- Quiet utterance *Text*
- Mode of production < >
- Overlapping or interruption: /
- Simultaneous start: //
- Latching =
- Abrupt stop: .
- Natural Pause (.)

- Emphasis: ^Text^
- Lengthened sounds: X:
- Untranscribed interactions {.}

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