



Functional Differences Between Monolingual Persian Speakers and Arabic-Persian Bilinguals: Implications for Substitution in Translation

Esmail Dorri¹

¹. Phd in Translation Studies, Qadir University of Applied Science, Shiraz, Iran, esmaildorri2024@gmail.com

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Extended Abstract

Introduction: his study investigates the functional linguistic differences between monolingual Persian speakers and Arabic-Persian bilinguals, specifically focusing on how linguistic background influences the use of “substitution” as a cohesive device in a third language (English). The research seeks to determine whether bilingualism provides a cognitive or structural advantage in mastering discourse-level cohesive tools during language acquisition and translation tasks.

Methods and Data: A quantitative approach was employed involving 90 participants, comprising both monolingual Persian speakers and Arabic-Persian bilinguals, with a balanced distribution of genders. The participants were administered a substitution-based proficiency test designed to measure their ability to use cohesive devices effectively. The testing procedure was standardized with a duration of 20 minutes per participant. To ensure validity and reliability, the resulting data were evaluated by three independent raters, and the scores were analyzed to address three primary research questions: (1) the performance gap between the two linguistic groups, (2) the role of linguistic background in substitution accuracy, and (3) the potential impact of gender on language acquisition within these groups.

Findings: The empirical results revealed a significant performance advantage for the Arabic-Persian bilingual group compared to the monolingual Persian group. Specifically, the bilingual participants demonstrated superior proficiency in utilizing substitution as a cohesive mechanism in English, suggesting that prior bilingual experience facilitates the acquisition of complex discourse markers in a third language.

Furthermore, the study identified a gender-based divergence in the monolingual group, where significant differences in performance were observed between male and female participants. However, this gender effect was not statistically significant among the bilingual group, indicating that the cognitive advantages provided by bilingualism may mitigate or override gender-related variations in language performance.

Discussion and Conclusion: The findings underscore the facilitative role of bilingualism in the acquisition of cohesive devices in a third language. This research contributes to the field of applied linguistics by highlighting how existing linguistic frameworks (such as Arabic-Persian bilingualism) can enhance the mastery of discourse-level cohesion in English. These results offer valuable implications for pedagogical strategies in multilingual classrooms and the development of specialized translation curricula.

Introduction

With the mainstream of the world's inhabitants talking in more than one language (Romaine, 1995), exploring bilingualism and multilingualism can offer significant insights into human cognition and learning. The competency of one mental system to effectively cope with two languages is outstanding; if bilinguals employ two languages separately, moving between them by turning them on and off, or they continually retain both languages alive and process two in parallel every time? The conventional language switches theory, consistent with which bilinguals are capable of intentionally activating and deactivating their two languages (Gerard & Scarborough, 1989), has been challenged by a number of recent discoveries. Bilingual programs, which have expanded progressively in recent years, offer great potentials in enabling the implementation of the New Standards because instruction and education, mainly in the content domain, transpire in the language in which the student is most fully skilled in it. Therefore, pupils are far more expected to be capable of accessing the complex combination of language and content that symbolizes the new Standards.

In the field of learning, studies have established the positive influence of acquisition of reading in the first language (L1) (Garcia, 2000). Besides, L1 reading proficiency has been reliably revealed to be related to second language (L2) reading and writing regardless of native language (Cummins, 1991; Proctor, August, Snow, & Barr, 2010). Yet, such relations are strongly related to levels of L2 proficiency, which highlights the necessity for bilingual programs to be vigorously developing both L1 and L2.

Thomas (1988) conducted a study that involved comparing the learning of college French by English monolinguals and English-Spanish bilinguals. The results of her research revealed significant disparities between the two groups, with the bilinguals outperforming the monolinguals. She concluded that bilinguals who learn a third language appear to possess a heightened awareness of language as a system, enabling them to excel in tasks typically associated with formal language learning compared to monolinguals embarking on learning a foreign language for the first time. This study aims at investigating whether there is any difference between monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device. In other words, the main objective of this study is to determine if there is any difference between Persian monolinguals and Arabic-Persian bilinguals in terms of knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device in English. Also, this study aims to determine if there is any difference between female and male monolinguals as well as female and male bilinguals in terms of knowledge of substitution.

Saraire (2014) believes that translators typically work within the commercial limitations set by editors. Translated texts are used to examine the intrinsic and extrinsic techniques employed by translators, revealing the rationale behind their utilization in the translation process. According to Rahmatillah (2016), the ability to translate is a skill that a translator must acquire. It is essential for the translator to comprehend the source text and accurately convey its meaning in the target language while maintaining the original style. Additionally, a competent translator should possess proficiency in both foreign languages and their mother tongue. According to Izwaini and Al-Omar (2019), substitution is employed not only for translating

substitution, particularly clausal substitutions, but also for restoring ellipsis. Research indicates that only a couple of instances of ellipsis are conveyed as ellipsis in the subtitles, possibly due to the emphasis on a single element in the elliptical sentence rather than offering a simple yes or no answer. In other cases, ellipsis is predominantly conveyed through repetition and substitution.

Main Body

The majority of the descriptive and experimental works in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have focused on various aspects of bilingualism. However, there has been a lack of specific research comparing Iranian Arab bilinguals to Iranian monolingual English as Foreign Language learners in terms of their understanding of substitution. In the south-east of Fars State, teachers often encounter classrooms with a mix of bilingual (Arabic-speaking) and monolingual students. Teaching in a purely monolingual (Persian-speaking) environment differs significantly from teaching in classrooms with a combination of bilingual and monolingual students. Teachers must possess adequate knowledge of the different strategies and processes employed by these two groups in language learning (Gorjian & Mahmoudi, 2012). Therefore, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of these two groups in relation to the use of substitution as a cohesive device in English.

The Arab community's target population is proficient in communicating in Persian outdoors and speaking Arabic at home with their parents. Due to the researcher's extensive interaction with numerous bilingual individuals within the educational system, an investigation has been initiated to determine if bilingual learners, whose native language is Arabic and second language is Persian, can benefit from learning a third language. Specifically, the researcher aims to ascertain whether knowledge of a second language (Persian) facilitates the acquisition of a third language (English). The rationale behind this study is to explore potential differences in language transfer between monolingual and bilingual learners when learning an additional language. Both monolingual and bilingual learners have been equally exposed to the target structure (substitution) in school. Based on the aforementioned arguments, the following research questions are posited:

Q1: Do Persian-speaking monolinguals and Arabic-Persian speaking bilinguals differ in their substitution knowledge as a cohesive device in English?

Q2: Is there a distinction between male and female Persian-speaking monolinguals in terms of their knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device in English?

Q3: Is there a variation between male and female Arabic-Persian speaking bilinguals in terms of their knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device in English?

To address the following inquiries, this study enlisted a total of 90 participants. These individuals were carefully chosen from a pool of 175 students in high schools located in the south-east of Fars province. The main criterion for their selection was their willingness to take part in the study. Their ages ranged from 15 to 17 years old. To ensure uniformity among the learners, the researcher employed the Oxford Placement Test. According to the results of this test, all 175 learners were classified as intermediate. To distinguish between monolingual Persian learners and bilingual Arabic-Persian learners, a brief 5-minute interview was conducted by the researcher. To control for the learners' age, all participants were selected from the first grade of high school. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed among the learners to

assess their socioeconomic background, which they completed. These learners were then divided into four groups: Male Persian (23 learners), Female Persian (22 learners), Male Arabic-Persian (22 learners), and Female Arabic-Persian (23 learners). To gather the necessary data, a consent form was provided to the learners, which required the signature of their parents. Furthermore, the school principals were duly informed about the research process. The rationale behind selecting Arabic-Persian bilingual learners was due to the specific constraints they face within the context of Iran.

The Arabic-Persian bilingual individuals were required to study their academic subjects in Persian in order to interact with the Persian community. Additionally, a majority of these bilingual individuals hailed from families with average incomes. At the commencement of the research, the participants were instructed to approach the tests with seriousness, as their scores would be utilized in the final evaluation. The data collection procedures took place over two sessions. During the initial session, 175 learners underwent the Oxford placement test, and 90 of them were chosen based on their scores falling between 140 and 180. To ensure a mix of monolingual and bilingual learners within this group, they were asked to complete demographic questionnaires and undergo a brief 5-minute interview with the researcher. The interview consisted of basic inquiries regarding family, school, occupation, interests, and other everyday topics relevant to the learners. Following the selection of 90 intermediate learners, they were divided into four groups: Male Persians (23 learners), Female Persians (22 learners), Male Arabic-Persians (22 learners), and Female Arabic-Persians (23 learners). In the second session of the study, the researcher visited the learners' classes and administered the substitution test. The participants were given 20 minutes to complete the test and return it to the teacher. Subsequently, the researcher collected all the tests and organized them according to the learners' groups. From this pool, 90 learners who scored between 140 and 180 were chosen to partake in the study.

Group	N	Mean	SD
Male Persian	23	160.18	5.449
Female Persian	22	170.23	7.282
Male Arabic-Persian	22	149.97	10.777
Female Arabic-Persian	23	168.14	7.82

In order to find out the knowledge of substitution of language learners in different groups, a 30-item test was administered to the learners. The results of the test of different groups are provided in the following tables. The results of the substitution test for the male Persian group learners are provided below. As it can be observed in

the above table, all the 23 members of the male Persian group took the substitution test. The results of the test showed that their mean is 160.18 with standard deviation of 5.449 and variance of 29.69. The results of the test showed that the learners' minimum score in the test was 15 and their maximum score was 24.

The results of the female Persian group test are given. As it is obvious in the above table, all the 22 members of the female Persian group took the substitution test. The results of the test showed that their mean was 170.23 with standard deviation of 7.282 and variance of 53.03. The results of the test showed that the learners' minimum score in the test was 22 and their maximum score was 26.

The results of the male Arabic-Persian group test are provided below. As it can be observed in the above table, all the 22 members of the male Arabic-Persian group took the substitution test. The results of the test showed that their mean is 149.97 with standard deviation of 10.777 and variance of 116.14. The results of the test showed that the learners' minimum score in the test was 16 and their maximum score was 24.

The last group in this study was the female Arabic-Persian group. Their results in the substitution test were provided below. This group scored highest among the other groups in the substitution test. As it was clear, all the 23 members of the female Arabic-Persian group took the substitution test. The results of the test showed that their mean was 168.14 with standard deviation of 7.82 and variance of 61.15. The results of the test showed that the learners' minimum score in the test was 23 and their maximum score was 27.

This research aimed to examine the impact of monolingualism and bilingualism on the understanding of substitution in English. To achieve this, four groups were formed consisting of male and female Persian monolinguals and Arabic-Persian bilinguals. All participants were required to complete a substitution test. The findings revealed that female Arabic-Persian bilinguals achieved the highest scores, followed by female Persian monolinguals, male Arabic-Persian bilinguals, and male Persian monolinguals. To further explore the differences between these groups, three research questions were formulated. The first question investigated the disparity between Persian monolinguals and Arabic-Persian bilingual learners. The results of the substitution test indicated that Arabic-Persian bilinguals generally outperformed Persian monolinguals. Additionally, the independent sample t-test confirmed significant differences between the two groups. The second research question examined the variation in knowledge of substitution between male and female Persian monolinguals. The substitution test results demonstrated that female learners achieved higher scores compared to their male counterparts. The independent sample t-test also revealed significant differences between the two groups of learners. Lastly, the third research question explored the discrepancy in knowledge of substitution between male and female Arabic-Persian bilinguals. The substitution test results showed that female learners obtained higher scores than male learners. Similarly, the independent sample t-test indicated no significant differences between the two groups of learners.

The data analyses revealed that bilingualism has a positive impact on the acquisition of substitution as a cohesive device in a third language. As a result, the null hypothesis, which stated that bilingualism does not affect substitution performance, was rejected. This finding supports previous research on bilingualism, which has

shown that being bilingual leads to more effective learning of foreign languages. This aligns with Thomas's claim that bilingual individuals who have literacy skills in both their native and second languages perform better in language manipulation tests. This study has important implications for language teaching, as it provides a foundation for improving substitution instruction as a cohesive device in first, second, and third languages. The reasons why monolingual individuals tend to have lower scores in English compared to bilinguals are not yet fully understood. It is possible that monolinguals have temporarily smaller vocabularies in each language due to limitations in their cognitive capacities. Additionally, the lower scores may be attributed to the lower frequency of exposure to substitution in either language for monolingual individuals, as suggested by Ben Zeev.

The results of this section further highlight the advantages of bilingualism. It is proposed that bilingual individuals, whether they are monolingual or bilingual, have a leg up when it comes to learning English. However, the influence of being in an English-dominant environment outweighs the benefits of bilingualism or monolingualism. Additionally, bilingual individuals may exhibit a more extensive vocabulary knowledge due to their involvement in communication in two language communities compared to their Persian monolingual counterparts. These findings align with Cummins' (2000) threshold and interdependence hypotheses. They also endorse Bialystok's (2001) assertion that bilinguals possess a larger overall vocabulary than monolinguals, although they are limited by their cognitive abilities and do not exceed their age and developmental stages based on their conceptual growth.

It is evident that being bilingual does not have a negative impact on language or conceptual development. In fact, balanced bilingualism offers numerous advantages to bilingual children, as it grants them access to two language communities and a more diverse linguistic environment. This exposure positively influences their vocabulary and cognitive development. Recognizing the benefits that balanced bilinguals enjoy due to their exposure to two languages can aid early educators in designing appropriate curriculum for these children, thereby supporting their development in both languages. Furthermore, educators and scholars are responsible for assessing the school readiness of bilingual children should understand the significance of testing both languages in order to obtain accurate results. Despite certain limitations such as the absence of an experimental design and purposeful sample selection, this study's findings provide a clearer understanding of the developmental benefits that bilinguals gain. Consequently, these results instill greater confidence in asserting that simultaneous bilingualism is not detrimental to a child's developing mind.

Conclusion

The present research was conducted to evaluate the role of bilingualism and gender in learners' knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device in English. Based on the first research question, the findings revealed a meaningful difference between Persian-speaking monolinguals and Arabic-Persian bilinguals. The researcher investigated that bilingual participants recognized a higher level of awareness and more effective application of substitution as a cohesive device in English, indicating that bilingualism can facilitate discourse-level competence in a third language. This

caused that knowledge of more than one language may positively have effects on learners' sensitivity to linguistic cohesion.

In terms of the second research question, the comparison between male and female Persian-speaking monolinguals revealed a substantial variation in their knowledge of substitution as a cohesive device. This shows that gender alone may be a fundamental criterion in the acquisition of this aspect of English cohesion among monolingual learners. Similarly, in response to the third research question, the analysis of Arabic–Persian bilingual participants revealed no significant variation between male and female learners in their knowledge of substitution. The result implies that the advantages shown in bilingual learners are more closely related to bilingualism itself rather than gender differences.

To sum up, the findings of this study highlight the positive impact of bilingualism on learners' capability to achieve and apply cohesive devices in English. The results contribute to a better understanding of how linguistic background affects third language learning and recommend that bilingual experience may boost learners' discourse competence. Future research may further explore other cohesive devices and include larger samples to provide a more comprehensive account of the interaction between bilingualism, gender, and language proficiency.

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