

Code-switching and Language Attitudes on Facebook

تبدیل الرموز والمواقف اللغوية على فيسبوك

Changement de code et attitudes linguistiques sur Facebook

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Introduction

Sociolinguistic research has yielded an important improvement in recent years. It has offered more exact description and more practical analysis of language in its social contexts. Each language has its uniqueness, and considered as a mirror of the society along with people who use it. Recent mediums such as Twitter and Facebook have opened the door to shorthand typing and instant message lingo (texting language) causing some people to use different languages and language forms. Facebook, in particular, provides various weights to different behaviours to determine what to show in a user's screen.

In addition to distributing content, social media platforms provide users with unprecedented means to express their reactions and interests on a wide range of issues (Thonet et al. 2017); i.e., through Facebook, people engage in organizational communications via three behaviours: like, share and comment. Moreover, given the fact that multiple languages are available in the Algerian linguistic scene, people's tendency to use them on Facebook is not always the same. This depends on their fluency and attitudes towards the selected language to convey a certain message. It is true that the linguistic landscape of Algeria is quite intricate because of the existence of various languages and language forms. Arabic is diglossic where the high variety, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of the country and used for more formal situations whereas the low variety, Algerian Arabic, (AA) is used for more informal contexts.

Berber has also reached an official status, but it is used by a small number of people compared with Arabic (Hamzaoui, 2017). French is considered the first foreign language and, today, English has gained more importance than ever not only by the Algerian educational sector, but also by speakers themselves. Language contact situations between the aforementioned languages or varieties dispatch the assortment of values, norms, standards of language use and grammatical rules that surpass commonly recognized ethnic boundaries; and

all this will unquestionably set up code switching and code-mixing instances. And as a means of global communication, Facebook communication is having great impact on language use. It is a boom not only to the English language usage (Baron, 1998, 2001; Herring, 1996, 2001), but potentially to many other languages such as Arabic and French.

The importance of this study lies in yielding an in- depth analysis of the languages or language variety used by Algerian Internet users in their posts and comments via Facebook and tries to check the way they affect their linguistic and social behaviour. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate some aspects of code switching on Facebook with a special focus on Algerian Internet users' interactive networking through comments and posts, along with their attitudes towards the different languages, or language varieties used. In other words, this research aims to:

- scrutinize the practice of alternating between Arabic -with its different varieties-, French and English in online conversations among Algerian internet users.
- explore the attitudinal dimensions related to Arabic, French, English and AA. To undertake this study, an investigation was undertaken to focus on university students' conversations with each other.

1. Literature review

1.1. Language contact phenomena in the Algerian context

Mostari (2009 :377) states that “Algeria is a colourful sociolinguistic mosaic with the existence of a panoply of languages and varieties of languages, namely Modern Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, French, English and Berber with its varieties.” Following this quote, Modern Standard Arabic is the only official language in the country that should be used by all speakers of the speech community. However, in February 2016, Berber has been assigned the status of second official language in Algeria. In the Algerian society, two varieties of Arabic come into play resulting in the well-known phenomenon of diglossia, MSA, the official language of the country and AA, a variety that pervades the tongues of all Algerian speakers throughout the country. Moreover, another linguistic phenomenon may occur when different languages are in contact, i.e., bilingualism and its inescapable outcome called code switching.

Algeria, a nation belonging to the Arab world, is characterized linguistically as diglossic because of the co-existence of two varieties of Arabic: CA/MSA occupies the status of the High variety whereas the colloquial forms, AA and

Berber represent the Low variety. Each of these varieties is used in separate domains and fulfills specific functions. A growing rate of literacy in Algeria, for instance, seems to lead speakers to use a kind of language that includes elements from both ‘*Al-fusha*’ (MSA) and ‘*al-darija*’ (AA). Ferguson has recognized this variety in his ‘Diglossia revisited’ published in the *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*. He says in this respect:

Between [...] CA and the vernacular [...] there exists a variety of intermediary Arabic often called ‘*allugha al wusta*’ the ‘middle variety’ and described as a result of classical and colloquial fusion. (Ferguson 199 :5)

Today, it is clearly observable that diverse vernacular forms are closer to each other and at the same time to MSA to the degree that one may detect that Algerian debaters switch between, or mix, the two varieties in formal and semi-formal circumstances. Any discussion in relation to the Algerian sociolinguistic situation will remain incomplete without reference to the phenomenon of bilingualism. In fact, Algerian bilingualism is the consequence of the colonial legacy during which French became the language of the bureaucracy. French is so deeply rooted in Algeria; it may be impossible to hear a whole conversation without at least a few French words or expressions. Bouhadiba (1998: 1-2) says that French is ‘strongly implanted at the lexical level’.

After almost half a century of the departure of the French colonizer, the host language persists in its use and it is still present on the Algerian linguistic scene to the extent that many Algerians, even non-educated people use it in everyday conversations or mix it with AA in a spontaneous way. The use of two or more languages results in the emergence of another sociolinguistic phenomenon called code switching.

There is no one definition for code-switching (CS henceforth). However, this term is historically traced back to the early twentieth century, as conferred by Weinreich (1953), to have had a somewhat divergent form from “switching codes”. Following Weinreich, some researchers characterized “code-switching as a deviant linguistic behaviour that either refers to language incompetency or is not even worth inquiring about (Espinosa 1917; Bloomfield, 1927, cited in Wiens, 2014)” (Annab 2019:36). Generally speaking, CS means any alternation of languages that takes place at some point in the conversation. For example, Myers-Scotton (1993a:1) considers CS as “alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation”. Along the same line and according to Bullock and Toribio (2009), CS refers to “the alternating use of two languages in the same stretch of discourse by a bilingual person”. Poplack (1980) divided CS

into three types that may occur within the same discourse, being monolingual or bilingual namely, inter-sentential CS, intra-sentential CS and extra-sentential CS.

- a. Inter-sentential switching occurs at clause or sentence boundary as in the following instance: *'meṣṣba :h wana nahfeq* et finalement je n'ai pas eu une bonne note'. (I have been revising since the morning and finally, I have not got a good mark).
- b. Intra-sentential switching involves switching within the clause or sentence boundary as in: *'rani mafi l'hopital bsf nasme/* les analyses.' (I am going to the hospital for doing the tests).
- c. Extra-sentential switching consists of the insertion of a tag from one language into another. Consider the following example: *feft wasem šra lbarah*, n'est ce pas? (You saw what happened yesterday, didn't you?).

Additionally, Hughes, Shaunessy, Brice, Ratliff, and McHatton (2006) scrutinized the different types of CS, which encompass 'borrowing,' 'calque,' and 'intersentential.' In 'borrowing,' a language user would use one word from a different language. This specific word has the same grammatical usage but is absent or does not possess an equivalent word in another language. As for 'calque', the translation of a particular expression in one language is done without taking into account the suitable syntax of another language. The 'intersentential' type takes place when there is an alternation of languages across sentence boundaries (intersentential codeswitching) or within a sentence (intrasentential code-mixing (Magsanay 2020:60).

Being a community where a myriad of languages co-exist, CS is a central aspect of language contact that predicts the sociolinguistic behaviour of most Algerian speakers. Because of some socio-historical factors, CS is usually between Arabic in its two forms MSA and AA (and/or Berber) and French. In Algeria, it is easy to notice the switching between one code to another by a mere exposure to a natural and spontaneous conversation or by analyzing some typed comments or messages when Algerian internet users interact with each other. Within the Algerian linguistic situation, French plays an important role in Algerians' everyday on-going interactions. It is both mixed with AA and used as a full language without mixing with Arabic in education, media, social and professional settings (Annab 2019:16). Cotterell et al., 2014, cited in Annab 2020:16)) conducted a study on "Algerian Arabic/French Code-Switching". In this research, they gathered a corpus of Romanised Algerian Arabic and French from the comment section in an Algerian daily newspaper with the second-largest reader base of any Arabic paper. One example of switching is "mais les filles ta3na ysedkou n'import quoi ana hada Facebook

jamais cheftou” (Cotterell et al., 2014). This sentence uses AA, French, and English; the AA has been written in the Roman script and it means in English “our girls believe anything, I have never seen this Facebook before” (Annab 2019:16).

Moreover, many Algerians consider French as the language of civilization and prestige. Consequently, they sometimes switch consciously and on purpose to French in order to sound more *civilized*. Expressions such as: *c’est bon, normal, ça y’est, déjà* have become part of the Algerian verbal repertoire. New items like *flexy, connecter, taper* are excessively used nowadays especially by youth and teenagers due to the development of technology.

1.2. Facebook as a platform in social media

Among a number of social networking sites, Facebook is the largest and the most universally used social networking site used by people of different ages from children to adults. According to Davies and Guynn (2012), Facebook turned into the most popular site and source for new updates and online communication. Facebook members can establish and engage in communication as groups, which can be formed on any subject; create invitations to events; or post online notifications for meetings and other gatherings.

Apart from updating status and comments on others’ posts, users can interact and chat with their friends online by sending messages. Facebook users will receive automatic notification every time they receive a message, when there is a post on their wall or have any type of activity related to their account. Researchers also proposed enjoyment is the most influential factor in people’s continual use of Facebook, followed by a number of peers who use the site and its usefulness (Lin and Lu, 2011).

1.3. Attitudes towards languages and varieties

Language attitudes are the feelings and reflections of people towards their own language variety and the language varieties of others. People often make some suppositions about the way others speak; they may have positive or negative attitudes toward a particular variety of a specific region or social group. Holtgraves argues that,

language attitudes are not fixed cognitive structures. Language attitude shifts have most often been studied as a function of external factors, such as changes in intergroup relations and shifts in government language policies. (Holtgraves 2014:16)

Melander (2003) opines that attitudes show a significant factor in the area of sociolinguistic studies when they have the ability to assume a certain

linguistic behaviour such as language choice in bilingual/multilingual societies, the language of prestige and the language of loyalty. According to Bichani (2015), language attitude is scrutinized by speakers' evaluation of the social value of languages. In fact, speakers' attitude towards their mother tongue and other languages is connected with their language choice paradigms. Apparently, positive and negative attitudes would display either maintenance or deterioration in the use of the ethnic language (Bichani 2015). Nevertheless, he maintains that people's attitudes towards a language do not often correlate with their actual use of a certain language; speakers who claim patriotism towards an ethnic language may not necessarily speak the language in daily conversation. Besides, speakers of minority languages may indicate a negative attitude towards their own language in many respects, but this does not imply that they do not attach any importance to it.

When talking about the Arab world, researchers are little interested in the study of language attitudes towards the variety of Arabic and foreign languages in contrast with those of the western world. In fact, Arab linguists seem to approve Ferguson's (1959) view about functional division of High (H) and Low (L), and usually take for granted the prestige value of the high variety. In the Algerian speech community, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) occupies the high status; it is considered the *supra-language* (Hamzaoui 2017) due to its undeniable status as the language of Holy Qur'an and its association with education and literature, and it is never used for daily-life communication. Dendane (2007) declares:

the fact that a number of Qur'anic verses insist on bringing up this inextricable link between Arabic and the Holy Book makes people believe that the language of the Qur'an cannot be surpassed, and thereby hold it in the highest regard, though in practice it is a lower-status variety that people use in everyday speech interaction. (Dendane 2007:263-264)

Following Hamzaoui's (2017) viewpoint, Algerian Arabic (AA), which represents the low variety, is characterized by the absence of writing resources and standardization and it is used in informal conversations. Arabs in general, view the high variety as the *real language* in comparison to their vernaculars, which are generally perceived as *incorrect*, *deficient* and *vulgar*. Ennaji (1991:12) claims, "for most maghrebins, governments and people alike, Dialectal Arabic is a corrupt or incorrect form of Arabic which is useless in important matters". In a multilingual country like Algeria, French as a first foreign language is regarded as more prestigious than AA. Many Algerians, indeed, have positive

attitudes towards French and use it in both formal and informal settings when discussing high matters levels, and they sometimes avoid the use of AA, as this variety lacks prestige.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample Population

The participants of this study are part of three different groups. The first group labelled (G1), is called *Master 2 LS (2020-2021)*; it consists of 109 students who possess a Facebook account. These students are from the department of English, University of Tlemcen. This is a discussion group created by Master two EFL students to share information about all updates. The second group (G2) named *S.O.S l'antiquité Tlemcen l'authenticité* embroils 61037 participants and the third group (G3) called *الجزائريين الجامعيين الأساتذة نادي* (Algerian University Teachers Club) encompasses 1209 participants. Because of the extensive number of members belonging to each group, and as some of them were not interested in participating in this survey, we decided to submit the questionnaire to a smaller sample consisting of 40 participants from each group. The choice of these participants and groups was done on purpose to delve into the amount of Arabic, French and English use among them.

2.2. Research Instruments

A questionnaire is a group of organized questions used as an instrument to collect data; it represents “printed forms for data collection, which includes questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond, often anonymously” (Seliger and Shohamy 1989:172). First, an online questionnaire using Google forms was used to detect code switching and determine the participants’ attitudes towards the languages and language varieties at play. Second, we relied on direct observation to check and reinforce the results obtained from the online questionnaire. Direct observation is a method of collecting data in which a researcher simply views or listens to the subjects of the research, without asking specific questions or manipulating any variables. The method of direct observation is useful in evaluation research or field research.

2.3. Procedure

The original version of the questionnaire used in this study was in English, then it was translated into Arabic and French to facilitate the task to the participants and avoid any bias or ambiguity with regard to their responses. The participants, of each selected group, were asked to complete an online

questionnaire embracing five questions using Google Forms. To obtain reliable data and reinforce those obtained from the questionnaire, direct observation allowed the researchers to select some Facebook groups and take some screenshots, and then observe in-depth the representation of the languages at stake by Algerian internet users.

2.4. Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:248), the mixed methods approach refers to “an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks”. This descriptive research relies on this research method to analyse the gathered data both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3. Findings

3.1. Online Questionnaire Findings

Question1: What is your age?

Table 1. The age variable of the participants of each group

| Groups \ Age | Age | | | |
|----------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | <18 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35+ |
| G1 = 40/100 % | 0 | 32 = 80% | 5 = 12.5% | 3 = 7.5% |
| G2 =40/100 % | 2 = 5 % | 4 = 10% | 14 = 35% | 20 = 50% |
| G3 =40/100 % | 0 | 0 | 6 = 15% | 34 = 85% |

Age distribution of the participants is shown in Table 1. The percentage of participants in each age group is mentioned as follows: G1 *Master 2 LS (2020-2021)*, <18 (0%); 18-24 (80%); 25-34 (12.5%) and 35 + (7.5%) encompassing different age groups of teachers and students. G2 called *S.O.S l'antiquité Tlemcen l'authenticité* includes participants whose age varies between those <18 (5%); 18-24 (10%); 25-34 (35%); and 35 + (50%). As for G3 known as *الجزائريين الجامعيين الأساتذة نادي* clearly shows that the participants' age variable varies between those <18 and rating 0 %; 18-24 (0 %); 25-34 (15 %); and 35+ with a ratio of 85%, while no participants were under 25.

Question2: Which language or language variety do you use more when writing your posts and comments on Facebook?

This question seeks to find out which language or language variety is used via Facebook among the selected participants from each group. Table 2 and its following graph clearly highlight the results obtained.

Table 2. Language choice on Facebook posts and comments

| Varieties Groups | MSA | AA | French | English |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| G1 =40/100 % | 8 = 20% | 6 = 15% | 2 = 5% | 23 = 57.5% |
| G2 =40/100 % | 4 = 10% | 12 = 25% | 26 = 65% | 0 |
| G3 =40/100 % | 31 = 77.5% | 5 = 12.5% | 4 = 10% | 0 |

The striking fact observed in the analysis of the above table, representing language choice on Facebook posts and comments, is that the English language is the most useful (57.5%) among the respondents of G1. This seems evident since these participants are either students or teachers of English. We can also witness the presence of MSA (20%) - though to a lesser extent compared with English- among this group category whereas only a few participants selected AA (15%) and French took the last position with only 5%. A large number of the G2 participants rating 65% claimed that French is extensively used when writing their posts and comments on Facebook while AA (25%) comes at the second position, and at last comes MSA with a rate of 5% only. Finally, we can notice that the language of Facebook chosen by the majority of G3 respondents is MSA (77.5%), four participants rating 10% reported to use AA (10%) and the same rate is attributed to French (10%).

Question 3: To what extent do you switch between languages when typing your posts and comments on Facebook?

Table 3. The use of Code switching in Facebook communication

| Groups | Always code-switch | Do not/rarely code-switch |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| G1 =40/100 % | 28 = 70% | 12 = 30% |
| G2 =40/100 % | 32 = 80% | 8 = 20% |
| G3 =40/100 % | 5 = 12.5% | 35 = 87.5% |

Regarding the third question, the participants were asked about the extent to which they code-switch when writing their posts and comments. This is one of the most interesting items of the questionnaire since our aim is to detect whether these participants switch back and forth between the languages at play or not. Table 3 clearly shows that the majority of the respondents from G1 (70%) really switch between different languages/ language varieties when typing their posts and comments to facilitate comprehension whereas only 30% do not. Others explained that as they sometimes do not find the accurate words

to express their ideas, they automatically mix between languages. Moreover, the findings obtained from G2 revealed that 32 participants rating 80% always code-switch.

Consider some of the statements provided by the participants of G1 and G2:

- “It comes as a natural behaviour and lack of vocabulary”.
- “Since I speak more than one language, sometimes I feel that expressing myself in another language is easier than the other one and vice versa”.
- “Sometimes there is a lexical gap which causes code switching”.
- “It provides me with a feeling of self-confidence and make me very comfortable when writing my comments”.
- “I shift from AA to French to facilitate the understanding of my message”.
- “Code-switching is inevitable. I find it easier to express myself this way”.
- “I’ve been accustomed to this act and this facilitates communication and comprehension between us”.
- “Sometimes I feel unable to translate some words or expressions from my idiolect since this latter is full of French words, so to facilitate the comprehension of my message, I keep it the way it is, and it is well-known that code switching is a widespread phenomenon among Algerians because of multilingualism”.

However, the results provided from the last group clearly demonstrate that the majority of the respondents rating 87.5% do not or rarely code switch between languages on Facebook when writing their posts and comments. They insisted on the fact that the use of Arabic-French is degrading today while only a minority (5) rating 13% answered with ‘I code-switch’.

Question 4: Which language or language variety do you prefer to use on Facebook?

Table 4. Language preference via Facebook

| Varieties Groups \ Languages | MSA | AA | French | English |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | G1 =40/100 % | 8 = 20% | 2 = 5% | 12 = 30% |
| G2 =40/100 % | 4 = 10% | 10 = 25% | 26 = 65% | 0 |
| G3 =40/100 % | 29 = 72.5% | 3 = 7.5% | 7 = 17.5% | 1 = 2.5% |

This question is of paramount importance as it attempts to determine which language or language variety is preferred to be used on Facebook. The results showed that 18 participants from G1 rating 45% prefer to use English as it is the language of their specialty while 12 participants rating 30% opted for French and eight participants rating 20% showed some preference towards MSA. Concerning G2, 26 participants with a rate of 65% declared that they prefer using French on Facebook and a fairly good number, with a rate of 25%, declared that AA is the best variety to be used. Yet, a percentage of only 10% is attributed to those who selected MSA. When it comes to the last group, G3, the high majority of its participants rating 72.5% reported that they favour MSA; seven respondents rating 17.5% showed a kind of fondness towards French, while the rest consisting of only three participants rating 7.5% opted for AA.

Question 5: What is your attitude towards code switching on Facebook?

Table 5. Attitudes towards the use of CS on Facebook

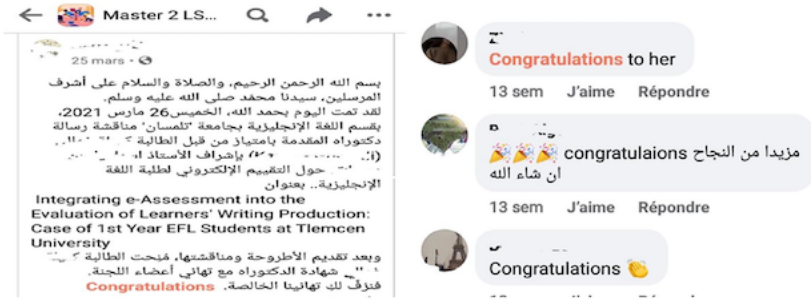
| Groups | Positive | Negative |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| G1 =40/100 % | 28 = 70% | 12 = 30% |
| G2 =40/100 % | 36 = 90% | 4 = 10% |
| G3 =40/100 % | 5 = 12.5% | 35 = 87.5% |

In question 5, the participants were asked to reveal their attitudes towards CS on Facebook. 28 respondents with a rate of 70% reported that they have positive attitudes towards using more than one language/ variety while the remaining participants rating 30% reported that they have negative attitudes towards CS. The vast majority of the second group rating 90% revealed that they strongly exhibit positive attitudes towards CS. However, the results obtained from G3 clearly demonstrate that the majority of the respondents rating 87.5% displayed negative attitudes towards CS; they mentioned that using only one language is the best, appropriate and correct form of writing.

3.2. Direct Observation Results

This section presents excerpts of posts and comments randomly chosen from the three selected groups for this study to verify and reinforce the results obtained from the online questionnaire administered to the participants engaged in this study.

Figure 1. Excerpts of posts and comments from G1



From the above excerpts, it can be noticed that the participants switch between English and MSA. Nevertheless, French is not incorporated in their comments.

Figure 2. Excerpts of posts and comments from G2



As far as G2 posts and comments are concerned, it is crystal clear from the above excerpts that the respondents switch back and forth between French and AA to express their ideas. Interestingly enough, it is highly noticeable that when typing their comments in AA, they use the Latin script.

Figure3. Excerpts of posts and comments from G3



Regarding G3 and from the above-mentioned excerpts, we can easily detect that code switching is almost not used compared with the other excerpts of G1 and G2. This is, certainly, because the name of the group itself is mentioned in MSA and that this group includes university teachers from different regions of the country who show rather positive attitudes towards MSA.

4. Discussion

The present study has been conducted with the aim of determining some aspects of code switching and attitudes towards the language or language varieties used by three discrepant groups of Algerian internet users when writing their posts and comments. The results revealed that out of the three groups under scrutiny, G1 participants used a mixture of English and AA/ English and MSA to express solidarity between them and facilitate the comprehension of their comments. It seems that Facebook communication is having a considerable effect on language use among the members of this group, for it is a boom not only to the English language usage (Baron 1998, 2001; Herring, 1996, 2001) but also to Arabic.

As far as G2 is concerned, the findings showed that a great number of the G1 participants switch from French and AA and the other way round to write their comments. The use of the Latin script or Romanized Arabic when writing their comments in AA is ubiquitous using as it seems to them like writing their posts in French. This correlates with Annab's (2019) claims. Because of the long-term French colonisation and the deep rootedness of the French language in Algeria, it may be impossible to hear a whole conversation without at least a few French words or expressions. However, the respondents of G3 admitted to rarely or not shifting at all between languages, and that they select only one language when typing their comments. MSA is the most variety used among this group of intellectuals, though AA is also used to a lesser extent. The use of two varieties of the same language refers to the diglossia (Ferguson, 1959), a widespread phenomenon that still exists in Algerian linguistic landscape.

Additionally, the basic types of switching presented by Poplack, (1980) and Magsanay, (2020) are easily noticeable from the excerpts provided by direct observation. Being a multilingual person is a reason for CS. Still other reasons for code switching relate to self- confidence, comfort, and the easiness of writing posts and comments. It seems that Algerian *Facebookers* cannot stick to only one language when writing their posts and comments.

In terms of the attitudes exhibited by the participants towards the languages or language varieties used on Facebook, G1 participants displayed positive attitudes towards English and MSA since the former is the language used for

instruction. French is highly appreciated among the participants of the second group since nearly all their posts and comments are written in this language. This preference is analysed by the speakers' evaluation of the social value of languages (Bichani, 2015). It is also associated with the notion of *prestige* and *intellectuality*. However, negative attitudes towards French, AA and English have been detected among the participants of G3 who favoured MSA rather; this preference connects to its tight association with Islam and the Qur'an (Dendane 2007; Hamzaoui, 2017).

Oddly enough, as far as the respondents' attitudes towards CS are concerned, those from G1 and G2 were positive because this behaviour fills out their lexical gap whereas the participants of G3 showed negative attitudes towards code switching and preferred using MSA solely when writing their posts and comments. This relates to the fact that most of the posts appearing in this group are written in MSA and most of the G3 participants are teachers of Arabic. However, this does not imply that they do not attach any importance to the other languages and varieties (Bichani, 2015).

Conclusion

The conclusions we can draw for this study can be summarized under several points. First, in terms of CS, this sociolinguistic phenomenon is inevitable among the three groups; though it occurs to a lesser extent among G3 participants. The participants of the present study switched back and forth between English and AA, English and MSA, French and AA and sometimes between MSA and AA because they lack enough fluency in a certain language or language variety. Another reason may relate to facilitating comprehension of their messages, and, thus, enhance socializing with members of the same group. Second, as far as the participants' attitudes towards the languages and varieties used on Facebook, positive feelings towards English and MSA were displayed by G1- *Master 2 LS (2020-2021)*- participants. However, the participants of G2 -*S.O.S l'antiquité Tlemcen l'authenticité*- showed a kind of preference towards French rather than any other language and the members of G3- *الجزائريين الجامعيين* - *الأساتذة نادي* - exhibited positive attitudes towards MSA.

The different attitudes towards each language/ language variety used depend on the speaker's competence in the language used and the group to which the member belongs. Recommending the Algerian Internet users to avoid code switching when writing their posts and comments via Facebook seems to be an arduous, if not an impossible task since the country itself is multilingual with the existence of an array of languages, and therefore, the users cannot stick to only one language.

The study at hand has some limitations because of the indeterminateness of the population of Facebook posts and comments. The sample size is also relatively small. This may limit the generalizability of the results. In fact, this gap may be explored in another piece of research to see the extent to which the findings and conclusions of the present study can be generalised to other Facebook groups and pages in order to have a deeper understanding and scrutiny about the languages used on Facebook, the way people code switch, the reasons behind code switching as well as the feelings towards this behaviour among other Algerian Internet users.

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Abstract

The brisk growth of technology has triggered an important context in which different languages and varieties can be used within the same conversation. This study scrutinized some linguistic practices within social media using Facebook as the major platform. In this study, the possible sociolinguistic phenomenon of code switching - that takes place on Facebook posts and comments among Algerian Internet users- was explained, and the different attitudes towards the languages and varieties employed were determined. The sample consisted of 40 participants selected from different groups, and data were gathered via an online questionnaire using Google forms. The analysis of data revealed that Facebook

as a social media platform may provide the users with opportunities to switch back and forth between languages and varieties. The results also indicated that the participants are skilled in more than one language. Another significant result lied in the participants' attitudes towards the languages and varieties at play. These participants displayed highly positive attitudes towards either Arabic, French or English depending on the group to which they belong. As a result, this study contributed to the evolution of understanding the meaning of code switching as a language contact phenomenon in Facebook along with its impact on the participants' attitudes towards the languages and varieties used.

Keywords

Attitudes, code switching, Facebook, language, variety

Résumé

La croissance rapide de la technologie a déclenché un contexte important dans lequel différentes langues et variétés peuvent être utilisées dans une même conversation. Cette étude a examiné certaines pratiques linguistiques dans les médias sociaux en utilisant Facebook comme plateforme principale. Dans cette étude, le phénomène sociolinguistique possible de l'alternance de code - qui a lieu sur les messages Facebook et les commentaires parmi les internautes algériens- a été expliqué, et les différentes attitudes envers les langues et les variétés employées ont été déterminées. L'échantillon comprenait 40 participants choisis parmi différents groupes, et les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'un questionnaire en ligne au moyen de formulaires Google. L'analyse des données a révélé que Facebook en tant que plate-forme de médias sociaux peut fournir aux utilisateurs des possibilités de basculer entre les langues et les variétés. Les résultats indiquent également que les participants maîtrisent plus d'une langue. Un autre résultat significatif réside dans les attitudes des participants envers les langues et les variétés en jeu. Ces participants ont affiché des attitudes positives envers l'arabe, le français ou l'anglais selon le groupe auquel ils appartiennent. Par conséquent, cette étude a contribué à l'évolution de la compréhension de la signification de l'alternance de code en tant que phénomène de contact linguistique dans Facebook, ainsi qu'à son impact sur les attitudes des participants envers les langues et les variétés utilisées.

Mots-clés

Attitudes, alternance de code, Facebook, langue, variété

مستخلص

لقد أدى النمو السريع للتكنولوجيا إلى نشوء سياق هام يمكن فيه استخدام مختلف اللغات والأصناف في نفس المحادثة هذه الدراسة بتمحيص بعض الممارسات اللغوية داخل وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي باستخدام فيسبوك كمنصة رئيسية وفي هذه الدراسة،

تم شرح الظاهرة الاجتماعية اللغوية المحتملة المتمثلة في تبديل الرموز -التي تحدث في مواقع الفيسبوك والتعليقات بين مستخدمي الإنترنت الجزائريين- وتم تحديد المواقف المختلفة تجاه اللغات والأصناف المستخدمة. وتألقت العينة من 40 مشاركا تم اختيارهم من مجموعات مختلفة، وتم جمع البيانات عن طريق استبيان إلكتروني باستخدام استمارات جوجل. وكشف تحليل البيانات أن فيسبوك كمنصة لوسائط التواصل الاجتماعي قد يتيح للمستخدمين فرصا للتغيير ذهابا وإيابا بين اللغات والأصناف. وتشير النتائج أيضا إلى أن المشاركين ماهرون بأكثر من لغة. وكذبت نتيجة هامة أخرى في مواقف المشاركين إزاء اللغات والأصناف المستخدمة. وأبدى هؤلاء المشاركون مواقف إيجابية للغاية تجاه اللغة العربية أو الفرنسية أو الإنكليزية حسب المجموعة التي ينتمون إليها. ونتيجة لذلك، ساهمت هذه الدراسة في تطور فهم معنى تغيير الشفرة كظاهرة اتصال لغوية في فيسبوك إلى جانب تأثيرها على مواقف المشاركين تجاه اللغات والأصناف المستخدمة.

كلمات مفتاحية

المواقف، تغيير الرموز، فيسبوك، اللغة، نوع