

Received 27/05/2025

Accepted 15/11/2025

Linguistic Dexterity in Multilingual Algeria: Code-switching as Strategic Communication among Kabyle Women in Chlef

Amina BABOU*

Hassiba BenBouali University(Chlef), Algeria, aminababou88@yahoo.fr

Abstract

This inquiry considers code-switching behaviours among Algerian speakers, with particular focus on Kabyle women in the city of Chlef. While the broader research project involved 124 participants, this paper presents a detailed conversation analysis of 6 strategically selected participants to deploy multilingual repertoires to negotiate identities and social power dynamics. Research unveils that the choices of women are not determinative in situations but rather goal-directed negotiations of their own rights and obligations. Natural code-switching occurrences across various social contexts have been documented while maintaining non-interference with authentic speech patterns. Follow-up interviews demonstrate participants' awareness of their language-alternation patterns, motivations, and attitudes toward code switching. The findings report that code-switching in Algeria serves dual pragmatic and socio-cultural functions, providing technical precision in academic contexts while simultaneously conveying identity positions. Thus, Women exhibit contextual awareness by limiting Kabyle usage around non-Berber speakers while relying on Algerian Arabic as their foundational language across both private and public domains.

Keywords: Algeria, Code-switching, Gender, Identity, Kabyle, Multilingualism

1. Introduction

Code-switching, the practice of alternating between languages or linguistic varieties has been extensively considered within bilingual contexts. Crystal (1987) affirms that this linguistic style occurs when bilingual speakers tend to alternate between two different varieties during their speech with other bilinguals. Correspondingly, A variety of linguists view bilingualism "The use by an individual, a group or nation of two or more languages in all uses to which [they] put either" Bouamrane (1986, p.15). Bell (1997, p.240) claims that "speakers naturally change their linguistic style depending on the situation." This means that men and women may switch between languages in different ways when it comes to syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation. People choose codes for social and psychological reasons that have to do with how people act around each other, the environment, and cultural norms. This sociolinguistic study focuses at code-switching in Algeria, focusing on how gender and social environment affect how people use language. The study employs the community of practice framework (Eckert, 2000) to look at these questions:

* Corresponding author : aminababou88@yahoo.fr

- How does the idea that "French is generally more popular with women than men" (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 1994) fit with how people in Algeria use language today, especially in locations like Chlef where many languages are spoken?
- What social, psychological, or situational elements make Kabyle women switch between Kabyle, Algerian Arabic, and French in their daily lives? How do these choices alter how people feel about being a part of a community?
- How do Kabyle women in Chlef employ code-switching to deal with power issues, maintain their culture, or make it easier to talk to people in their social networks?

2. Literature Review

There are many different languages in Algeria, including Algerian Arabic, French, Kabyle, and Modern Standard Arabic. This demonstrates that men and women switch languages in quite different ways. Recent studies and theories report that these shifts are connected to cultural and social standards, figuring out who you are, and the effects of colonization in the past.

In Algeria, Kabyle women use code-switching (CS) as a complex combination of language, social, and mental elements that happen in a community with more than one language. Research reveals that Kabyle women switch languages for several reasons, not only because it seems easier for them. When researchers looked at code-switching behaviours in Algeria, they always discovered substantial differences between men and women. Women change codes more often than men do. Algeria's multilingual tapestry shows a complicated sociolinguistic reality in which individuals use a lot of different languages every day. This language mosaic includes Algerian Arabic, French, and Berber languages, with Kabyle being the most common. They all live together in a shifting relationship that shows off the country's rich culture and history. A recent survey conducted in Chlef has provided significant insights into the code-switching patterns of men and women. For example, Babou (2021) looks at how gender affects code choice in this society by looking at how women and men utilize Algerian Arabic, French, and Berber in different ways. The study reports that both men and women swap codes, but women do it more often in regular interactions, especially when they need to reveal who they are or make a deal. Along the same lines, Babou (2021) claims that Chelifian women utilize code-switching to gain power by moving up and down the sociolinguistic hierarchies that opt for using French (which is tied to modernity and education) and Berber (which is linked to cultural heritage). This line of reasoning seems to rebuff the idea which reads that women do not care about language. Instead, it presents them as active people who employ their ability to speak more than one language to construct their identities and cope with issues like race, gender, and socioeconomic class. The study exhibits that the distinctions between men and women in code-switching are not fixed in stone; they can constantly fluctuate from one community to another. This is due to the fact that men and women modify the languages based on the situation so that they can understand one other. By this token, Sekhri (2024) asserts that this is why women change codes more often than males do. They usually use it negotiate their social belonging and construct relations of solidarity. On the other hand, men do not switch languages very often unless they have to, as

when they need to make things clearer, fill in word gaps, or get technical ideas across quickly. This difference discloses that code-switching can be a sign of gender identity construction. In this sense, Women use it to break or follow societal rules and expectations, while males utilise it for practical reasons.

Sadiqi (2003) also says that Berber (Tamazight) is connected to everyday life since mothers teach it to their kids. Berber is a very important language for families and communities. For instance, ladies who take care of kids often use it to talk to them. Berber women, regardless of the level of literacy, still utilise the language to talk about family, relationships, and memories in everyday situations. These tendencies coincide with Sadiqi's theory that Berber is a "female-coded" language. This expounds how gender affects how people use the language and how women are active social agents for keeping the language alive in private and culturally important locations.

3.The Languages of Algeria

Algeria is a multilingual nation whose linguistic context has been shaped by numerous invasions and conquests throughout history, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Turks, French, and Arabs. The original inhabitants of North Africa are the Berbers, who have interacted with various peoples through both conflict and trade. Among the many languages that have existed in North Africa, Arabic has obtained "*The lion's share to the extent that it has become the most used language in the Maghreb*" (Benali-Mohamed, 2007, p. 26). This prominence is largely due to Arabic being the language of the Quran and Islam.

3.1. The Arabic Language

Classical Arabic (Cl.Ar) enjoys great prestige due to its historical background as the language of great Arabic literature. The "purity" of the language is associated with Classical Arabic, "The Arabic of Quran, or the dialect of the prophet's tribe (Quraish)." In the modern period, this purity is maintained through prescriptive Arabic grammar books and dictionaries that develop the modern variety of Arabic through education and Arabisation (Ennaji, 2005). Ennaji (2005) states that classical Arabic is a sign of erudition and Arabic scholarship, commonly adopted by religious scholars for Islamic topics and studies. Besides, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is "*standardized and codified to the extent that it can be understood by different Arabic speakers in the Maghreb and in the Arab world at large. It has the characteristics of modern language serving as the vehicle of a universal culture*" (Ennaji, 1991,p. 9) (Quoted in Benali-Mohamed, 2007,p. 28). The main difference between Classical Arabic and MSA is primarily in vocabulary rather than grammar. Bentahila (1983) argues that these labels [i.e. CA/MSA] do not seem to designate clearly distinct historical changes in the development of the language, for its grammar has remained unchanged throughout this time. The only linguistic contrasts between the various periods distinguished are of style and vocabulary; so the number of labels may be misleading since they do not refer to grammatically distinct varieties. Algerian Arabic (AA) is considered the "low" and non-prestigious variety used by most Algerians for everyday communication. It varies by geographical distribution, with three major varieties: eastern, western, and central. Unlike Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic is neither codified nor standardized.

3.3. French Language

4. Methods and Materials

The larger research experiment included 124 Algerians who looked at different parts of code switching behaviours. But for this paper, we are just looking at a detailed conversation analysis of six people from the city of Chlef (four women and two men). This targeted sample was chosen on purpose so that we could look closely at how Kabyle women adopt code switching in everyday discourse. The people who took part come from a wide range of demographic backgrounds, such as different age groups (from 25 to 45 years old), educational levels (from high school to doctorate degrees), and cultural settings within the Kabyle community. Using Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model as the main theoretical framework, this deliberately chosen sample facilitated comprehensive qualitative analysis. An in-depth conversation analysis was carried out on these 6 participants who revealed subtle patterns in how Kabyle women use code switching as a linguistic resource to deal with social identities and power dynamics in different situations.

4.2. Research Instruments

A triangulation approach was implemented guarantee methodological integrity and accuracy of data. The main tools adopted for the research were audio recording equipment, interviews, and forms that questioned about the participants' sociolinguistic backgrounds. The recordings were the most important source of information for conversation analysis which facilitated multiple analyses of code-switching examples and patterns. After the observation phase, participants took part in semi-structured interviews to determine their level of code-switching awareness and to investigate their motivations for language alternation and their emotional responses to it. These remarks provide crucial emic points of view that helped us understand the recorded sessions better. We were able to accurately record how Kabylarian women switch between languages in their ordinary discussions using these methods. It also had a lot of vital background information for applying Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model to fathom what the language choices they made meant for society and language.

5. The Markedness Model

Myers-Scotton (1993, p. 3) notes that CS "*serves the same general socio-psychological functions everywhere.*" She came up with "the markedness model," which aims to explain why people use CS in different languages and settings. Myers-Scotton's method is substantially different from earlier ones, such as Blom and Gumperz's (1972) situational/metaphorical distinction, which she argued had difficulties with taxonomy and rendering ideas comprehensible. The Markedness Model posits that speakers use CS as a way to deal with their social status and connections, not because of elements that are out of their control. The idea is that speakers usually choose the unmarked option to fit in with what society expects of them. On the other hand, marked decisions are planned transgressions of social norms for strategic reasons. Besides, marked decisions usually have prosodic features like pauses or comments on the transition that suggest they were done on purpose. According to the theory underpinning this approach, speakers have a "markedness metric" that enables them observe all code possibilities, whether they are marked or not, depending on the kind of interaction they are having (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 80). She provides a statistic to prove that everyone has the same level of intelligence; speakers detect what code is anticipated (unmarked) and what code is not (marked).

Myers-Scotton's model illuminates every crucial element of how code-switching works as a mechanism for people to convey their sense of self and work out their rights and duties with others in different linguistic circumstances. According to the Markedness Model, speakers have a built-in cognitive capacity termed a "markedness evaluator" that helps them recognise the difference between marked (unexpected) and unmarked (expected) code choices in any situation where they are communicating. This universal cognitive skill allows speakers comprehend that there are linguistic possibilities along a continuum from less marked to more marked, and the order of these options changes based on the style of discourse. People who talk are said to be "goal-directed and creative," and they use their brains to think about the benefits and cons of switching to either marked or unmarked codes. This point of view shifts the focus from situational determinism to the speaker's power to pick their own words.

6. Analysis

6.1. The Unmarked Maxim Choice

According to Scotton (1993), all people are equipped with a competence to access linguistic choices. By so doing, they tally with the norms and the expected choices through adopting what she labels "unmarked choices" or they transgress the norms and convey their disagreement via the use of "marked choices". Unmarked choices represent switches anticipated by the audience; these are generally expected based on interaction components such as participants, topic, and setting (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Scotton suggests that the unmarked code constitutes the "expected medium" in specific conventionalized exchanges (1993, 89-90). This choice is designated as expected due to its frequent usage in such contexts, and Scotton anticipates that speakers will select it more often because of its unmarked status.

In this theoretical framework, linguistic selections are always made through evaluating markedness for a specific "Rights and Obligation" set (RO set). Choosing the unmarked linguistic option reflects an unmarked set of rights and obligations between interacting social participants. To evaluate an utterance's markedness, all speakers must have a markedness evaluator and tend to act rationally, having various options from which they select the most appropriate one. The "appropriate choice" refers to the selection most beneficial to the speaker considering their audience and the ambiguous environment surrounding the speech event (Bassiouney, 2006, p. 163). Supporting this concept, speakers must calculate the costs versus rewards when making one choice over another (Myers-Scotton, 1993). "Costs" denotes the quantity of words the speaker chooses to employ, while "rewards" represents the intentional and referential meaning conveyed to listeners. The following conversation between two colleagues at the University of Chlef exemplifies Myers-Scotton's unmarked choice maxim in multilingual settings, where code-switching between Kabyle and French represents an expected linguistic pattern that negotiates both solidarity and academic identity.

Extract 1

A: /ðəʃu θxəðməθ ðəks θhaðram jiyəs niy mazal?/

(What did you do? Did you speak with him or not yet?).

B: Chaque fois nrəh yərs axdinin mazal idirəh (Each time we go to see him, they tell us that he is not there- in his office-)

A: aţafnay aţas asuges baʃ ađizər bunadem imanis sana iθədud/

(They delayed us. A whole year in order to know our status)

A: θəfđið lxədma s l'ogiciel ixdifka?

(Have you started working on the software that he gave us?)

B: Non, pas encore. Je vais travailler sur logiciel aéraulique.

(No, not yet. I will work on Aerodynamic software).

A: Tant mieux (Good).

The conversation occurs between two colleagues at the University of Chlef discussing their postgraduate theoretical year results. Both appear frustrated after multiple unsuccessful attempts to meet their supervisor. Speaker A (a male) and Speaker B (a woman) start talking

in Kabyle, which is a language they both comprehend, even though they are at a formal school. When the male peer raises a question that has to do with science, the female speaker surprisingly changes from Kabyle to French. This exchange implies that it is normal for bilingual peers who do not speak Berber as their primary language to switch between Kabyle and French. The decision was reached for two main reasons: one, French is a better language for talking about science, and second, it demonstrates support for Arab colleagues who joined the discourse. Accordingly, Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model depends on what speakers intend to say, but this scenario illuminates that linguistic choices also take into consideration what the audience wants. By choosing the unmarked possibility, both speakers lower their costs and boost their rewards. Their move to French does not trigger any social issues because it fits with what their conversation partners expect. This conversation depicts how women manage different social identities in their communities of practice. The woman speaking displays that she knows that French is the right and expected choice to render solidarity while additionally illustrating her point and demonstrating her intellectual credentials.

Respondent A

"After years in academia, I see my code-switching as both useful and political." Practical because French is the language of our school, and political because the choice of language shows that you belong. When I convert from Kabyle to French at work, I respect my cultural identity while also recognising the reality of the workplace. This ability to switch between languages is especially useful for women academics because it lets us travel between multiple identities and communities without losing our voice in either one. My students often say that I switch between languages quite easily, which I see as a strength rather than a weakness. "

Respondent B

"When I talk about work, it's practically automatic for me to move from Kabyle to French. We gained these ideas in French, therefore scientific terms just sound better in French. This feels more natural and accurate at university. But there's also a social aspect: when Arab peers join our chats, switching to French makes it simpler for them to comprehend us. It's about being part of something. Some people might think that we intend to show off our educational backgrounds, but we're really just changing how we talk to make it easier to understand. Although sometimes, it happens to code switch to show off my academic credentials."

As displayed in the interview, Respondent A employs marked code-switching in academic situations consciously, and she explicitly acknowledges the utilitarian and political reasons behind her choices. She explicitly notes the utilitarian and political nature of language and uses that example to justify her choice: "French is the language of our school and political because it shows that you belong". This interpretation of language choice attunes with Myers-Scotton's explanation of marked choices as demarcating a speaker's intention to deviate from social norms and restructure social relations. In simpler terms, Respondent A perceives code-switching as "an asset for women academics" that facilitates the interaction with "multiple identities and communities". Therefore, switching to the French language in academic settings serves as a marked choice that actively embodies professional identity and challenges traditional gender roles.

Alternatively, respondent B presents a more nuanced set of motivations for marked code-switching, operating both on the pragmatic and the social-identity level. While her belief that “scientific terms just sound better in French” reflects the study’s definition of technical precision in academic settings and her findings in its use are thus unmarked, the statement that she switches to French when “Arab peers join our chats” for inclusivity purposes is born from a strategic utilization of one’s position in the peer group. Moreover, the admission that “sometimes, it happens to code switch to show off my academic credentials” reflects the metalinguistic self-awareness of the choice between marked and unmarked code. This also aligns with Myers-Scotton’s concept of markedness evaluators, according to which speakers have the cognitive ability to determine when a choice of marked code is called for given one’s social goals and when an unmarked one is preferable. The idea that one both claims to be inclusive and simultaneously draws on their educational competences for social gain thus demonstrates the dual nature of a marked choice in negotiating both solidarity and status-quo.

6.2. The Marked Maxim Choice

Choosing a marked choice differs from selecting an unmarked choice because it sketches that the speaker is attempting to modify how things are done and work out intriguing rights and responsibilities with the other speaker. In these situations, multilingual persons carefully choose which language to employ to either make the social distance between them and the people they are talking to less or wider. This method of negotiation enables speakers establish space for themselves by using codes that modify the power dynamics of the conversation. Myers-Scotton (1993) highlights that the marked option has two potent parts: first, it is an intentional break from the unmarked choice, which challenges the existing unmarked Rights and Obligations set; second, it actively points to a new RO set. The Markedness Model is focused on figuring out why people follow different rules, but this study looks at how people, especially women, deploy language to get more accurate RO sets. The scenario listed below reveals how a woman speaker adjusts the way she talks on purpose to get her point across.

Extract 2

C: Azzul amiḵ θəliḍ/ ça va ? (Hello! How are you? Fine?)

D: ḥamdullah (Thanks God).

C: iwaxamiḵ ça va? (Your family, are they fine?).

D: ḥamdullah lwaqθ akki (Thanks God for this moment).

C: swəfḥal θakki? (How much this?).

D: θakki 2200 AD bəṣaḥ ikkemini 2100.

(The price of this is 2200 Algerian Dinars, but for you it is 2100 AD).

C: bu:h ɣlajaθ əru snaqsiji fwiṭ? (Oh! It's expensive. Would you reduce the price?).

D: wallah mafiha (By God, I cannot).

It is worth highlighting that this conversation excerpt was recorded in a women's clothing store between a female salesperson and a female customer who is also Kabyle. In Arabic-speaking communities, it is quite common for Kabyles, particularly women, to utilise their native language when interacting with speakers of the same language during price negotiations or bargaining in marketplaces. This is evident in her conversation opening with

the Kabyle greeting 'azzul,' which can be considered the unmarked choice since women typically regard Berber as the language of everyday activities, closeness, and intimacy. This linguistic selection is strategically employed by women as a tactic for effective haggling with other female vendors. This code remained unmarked until the female salesperson decided to generate the marked choice by switching to Algerian Arabic to increase social distance-a subtle way of indicating to the client that she could not reduce the price any further. This marked choice signals a different Rights and Obligations set - one where she holds authority in the transaction. Overall, this exchange perfectly evidences how marked choices function to negotiate social relationships. The salesperson strategically employs linguistic choices to maintain control over the transaction, while the customer attempts to use linguistic solidarity to gain price concessions. The marked choice here serves as a tool for establishing boundaries in what appears to be a routine haggling interaction between Kabyle women.

Respondent C (The vendor)

"We change languages all the time in the market without even thinking about it. When I speak to people from Kabyle-speaking areas, I say "Azzul" to make a connection. When I talk about expenses, I sometimes employ Arabic words like "ḥamdullah" and "wallah" since they have significance in culture. Saying "God willing" makes my assertions about prices sound more real. When I said "wallah mafiha," I didn't just declare I would not drop the price; I also said, "This is really my very last offer." I can negotiate more successfully and keep a close connection with customers by using these different dialects."

Respondent D

"When I shop at markets, I try to employ more than one language on purpose. Starting with Kabyle makes things easier, especially with older sellers. I realise that I employ Arabic religious phrases even when I speak Kabyle since they mean more to me and are more polite. I was setting up the bargaining framework in Kabyle when I enquired "swəfhal θakki?" (how much is this?). But my exclamation "bu:h ylajaθ" demonstrates that I was very surprised by the price. I get better responses from vendors when I keep this mix instead of only using one language. "

Respondent C illustrates exploratory code-switching within a framework of commercial pragmatism and relationship orientation. Her comments about "we change languages all the time in the market without even thinking about it," may suggest that she refers that to the unmarked, automatic behavior. However, her statement that she uses "Azzul" to "make a connection" "to Kabyle" reveals more conscious linguistic calculation. Similarly, her use of Arabic religious expressions to add "significance in culture" and make the assertions of price "sound more real" reflects the exploratory negotiation of trust and credibility. This seem to tally with Crystal's observation that bilingual speakers use or alternate in choice of varieties during the discourse with other bilinguals. In this sense, Bell (1997) describes such behavior as speakers naturally changing linguistic style depending on the situation. Respondent D realizes that "starting with Kabyle makes things easier, especially with older sellers" portrays generational linguistic preferences. Her realization that Arabic religious phrases "mean more to me and are more polite" in the same Kabyle discourse context illustrates the exploratory nature of code choices in which speakers test the boundaries to optimize social outcomes.

6.3. Exploratory Maxim Choice

Speakers may use code-switching when they are vacillating about what the expected or best communicative intent is, or at the very least, when they are not sure which code would be best for reaching their social goals. This kind of language choice happens when the unmarked choice is not clear or transparent— when identification becomes intricate. This kind of uncertainty could make people confused about what the expected rules and roles are in the encounter. As was said before, women who adopt Kabyle exhibit solidarity and use it on purpose to add figurative significance to their identities. Nevertheless, this pattern is not always evident. The exploratory choice maxim can be seen by the fact that women are less likely than males to stick together with other Berber speakers when there are non-native Berber speakers around. This ambiguity comes from worries about potential misunderstandings that could cause problems with communication and break the standards of communication because of the language they picked. This case will be presented applying the following example.

Extract 3

E: /aqlikmin ðækki? si şvaħ lattanaðiṽ fellam/

(Are you here? I have been looking for you since morning).

F: /kæn ɛandi cours şba:ħ/

(I had a lecture this morning).

E: /vyiṽ kæn akkəm saqsiṽ majala θaqarəm/ module /ismis/ immunologie.

(I would like to ask if you study a module which is called "immunology"?).

F: i:ħ qri:næħ

(yes, we have studied it).

E: /amala afkiji:d les cours nəl module akki laxatəf ħawadʒəxθa asugas akki/

(So, give me the lectures of this module because I need them this year).

F: D'accord (OK).

E: Merci (Thanks).

F: De rien (for nothing).

In the conversation above, the female speaker (B) uses Algerian Arabic while her Kabyle peer maintains consistent use of Kabyle throughout the interaction. He was rushing and wanted to enquire about a module, hoping she might lend him course materials. What is particularly noteworthy is the young woman's decision not to use Kabyle, which typically serves as an alignment strategy among Berbers and signals ethnic identity. When we questioned the male speaker about his persistence with Kabyle, despite the female's use of Algerian Arabic, he explained that he had not realized they were communicating in a laboratory surrounded by Arab speakers and was primarily focused on obtaining the information he needed. By way of contrast, this woman is likely to manipulate the different values that are ascribed to each language, such as education, prestige, modernity, ethnic identity, and intimacy in a given context, in order to score "gains" in a conversation. This is the case where the female student attempts to eschew any misunderstanding from the other group who might perceive this as an intention to exclude them from the conversation. At the end of the conversation, it becomes evident that the woman consistently refrains from using Kabyle – a code that would certainly

establish solidarity between her and the other Berber speaker but might simultaneously provoke negative reactions from the remainder of the group who do not understand Berber. Consequently, she opts for French to conclude the conversation rather than selecting a code that could conflict with expected norms and social roles. The female speaker's exploratory code-switching can be further characterized as an intention to employ a neutral linguistic choice that remains acceptable to all conversation participants.

Respondent E

"I began speaking to my colleague in Kabyle without even thinking about it. Because we talked a similar language, I felt like we were already connected and part of a community. But when we talked about science subjects, I automatically utilised French expressions like "module" and "immunologie." We don't have these scientific terms in our native Kabyle language because we usually learn in French at university. My phrase "afkiji:d les cours" shows how well we mix these two languages. I kept the Kabyle grammar and included the French phrase "les cours" because it matches well with what university teaching materials are. Ending our talk with "Merci" over a Kabyle term was also not a conscious choice. At university, these French politeness signs come up a lot since they are such a big part of how we interact with one other."

Respondent F

"In this conversation, I responded to my classmate in the language pattern they established, which is very common among us students. When they said hello to me in Kabyle, I said "/kaen εandi cours şba:ħ/," which combined the Arabic structure with the French term "cours." We weren't ready to say this, but it's the way we talk at university. When they asked me to affirm that I had studied immunology, I changed my answer to one that was more Arabic. I said "i:h qri:naeh" because it was a simple answer. But when we started making agreements to share resources, I turned to French completely and said "D'accord" and "De rien". These French phrases sound more formal, therefore they are better in this context. It's interesting; I didn't know how often I switched languages until I heard the audio."

While the opening statement, in respondent E interview, "I began speaking to my colleague in Kabyle without even thinking about it" conveys automatic, unmarked behavior, the subsequent explanation that "we talked a similar language, I felt like we were already connected and part of a community" indicates that Kabyle is an in-group solidarity marker among ethnically-matched university peers. This illustrates what Myers-Scotton refers to as the unmarked option, the code choice that speakers make "to bring 'society's expectations about what is normal' into this situation within their control" —in the present context, there is an expectation of ethnic-linguistic solidarity among Kabyle women students.

Respondent F provides complementary insights into university code-switching through conversational accommodation, Arabic structural influence, and metalinguistic awareness via reflective analysis. She systematically matches her interlocutor's language patterns in the pre-interview, responding to Kabyle greetings with trilingual utterances that support conversational coherence. Hence, Respondent F reveals that code-switching follows

systematic accommodation principles than random alternation. Furthermore, respondent F again exhibits explicit formality marking when she switches to French for the negotiation elements of agreement-making (with “D’accord”) and gratitude (with “De rien”). In sum, Respondent F reflects exploratory code-switching; the university is the source of competing demands between ethnic and linguistic solidarity and institutional accessibility and technical necessity and pragmatic competence.

7. Conclusion

The investigation portrays that women in Chlef, Algeria, are exceptionally skilled at switching between Kabyle, Arabic, and French. People interact with each other on an incredibly deep level, and this depicts itself in very different ways for men and women. This practice of communicating in more than one language has a number of connected objectives and reveals different characteristics in the languages women choose to use. The findings suggest that code-switching can be used in both practical and sociocultural various manners. In educational settings, language practice often proves advantageous because speakers may easily utilize French technical phrases to express ideas that lack equivalents in Kabyle. In educational institutions, code-switching is an effective way to talk to people because French words assist in making things clearer that prove challenging to identify in Kabyle. This trait is crucial for some parts of identification. In this case, commencing a conversation in Kabyle shows cultural solidarity, whereas switching to French can disclose where someone stands in terms of work or education. These patterns of behaviour are especially appealing since they illustrate how gender influences them. Berber, especially Kabyle, is largely a "female language" that people only use at home and in traditional settings. Women reveal that they are aware of their surroundings by not using Kabyle around those who do not speak Berber. At the same time, Algerian Arabic is the main language that women employ to talk to others in both private and public situations, where they are better able to understand what others are saying. Women can exhibit their femininity and gain the societal influence by strategically deploying code switching. The study demonstrates that women in this society are skilled at talking to one another and use their ability to speak more than one language to deal with complex social identities. They constantly fluctuate between language codes even while communicating to the same person. Code-switching also helps people fit in and cope with their relationships in different contexts. This linguistic versatility has become so integral to communicative competence that it often functions unconsciously. This implies that the phenomenon reflects not linguistic deficiency but rather extensive communicative adaptability. What we can discern from this survey is that Algerians who speak more than one language can cope with challenging social circumstances and keep relationships across language hurdles. Being able to speak numerous languages is not only about following precise rules; it is also about utilizing flexible, responsive methods that enable women to manage linguistic complexity and social dynamics.

Bibliography

BABOU, A. (2021). Algerian Arabic, French and Berber code-switching: Is there a nexus between gender and code choice in the community of Chlef? *Academic Review of Social and Human Studies*, 13(2), 84-94.

- BELL, A. (1997). Language style as audience design. In N. COUPLAND & A. JAWORSKI (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: A reader* (pp. 240-250). Palgrave.
- BENALI-MOHAMED, R. (2007). *A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Tamazight in Algeria with a special reference to the Kabyle Variety*. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis. Oran University.
- BENTAHILA, A. (1983). Motivations for code-switching among Arabic-French bilinguals in Morocco. *Language & Communication*, 3(3), 233–243. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309\(83\)90003-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309(83)90003-4).
- BLOM, J. P., & GUMPERZ, J. J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structure: Code-switching in Norway. In J. J. GUMPERZ & D. HYMES (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics* (pp. 407-434). Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- BOUAMRANE, A. (1986). *Aspects of the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Aberdeen].
- CRYSTAL, D. (1987). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- ECKERT, P. (2000). *Linguistic variation as social practice: The linguistic construction of identity in Belten High*. Blackwell.
- ELSTER, J. (1989). *Nuts and bolts for the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- ENNAJI, M., & SADIQI, F. (1994). *Applications of modern linguistics*. Afrique Orient.
- ENNAJI, M. (2005). *International Journal of The Sociology of Language*, New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.
- HADDADOU, M. A. (2000). *Le Guide de La Culture Berbère*. Paris : Edition Paris-Méditerranée.
- HADDADOU, M. M. (1994). *Guide de La Culture et de La Langue Berbère*. ENAL-ENAP.
- IDDOU, N. (2001). *Language Use Among Kabyle Speakers*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Oran University.
- MYERS-SCOTTON, C. (1993). *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Clarendon Press.
- SADIQI, F. (2003). *Women, gender and language in Morocco*. Brill.
- SEKHRI, O. (2024). The influence of gender on the use of code-switching in the Algerian context. *EL'BAHITH*, 16(1), 590-600. <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/244172>