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Research Article

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Abstract

In multilingual Algeria, social media advertisements combine linguistic resources that may simultaneously communicate cultural closeness and global appeal. This convergent mixed-methods study examines how 135 Algerian social media users perceive code-switching and plurilingual advertising. Questionnaire measures captured advertising exposure, reading comfort, nine attitudinal evaluations, and written examples. Descriptive analyses, exploratory nonparametric comparisons, rank correlations, and thematic interpretation were integrated. Respondents associated mixed-language advertising with cosmopolitan identity (67.4%), engagement (66.7%), and modernity (63.7%), although 58.5% preferred single-language advertisements and 60.7% trusted advertisements more in their preferred language. Greater comfort with mixed forms ($\rho = -.26$, $p = .007$) and English ($\rho = -.21$, $p = .029$) corresponded to less perceived confusion. Written accounts indicated familiarity, prestige, audience targeting, and occasional distrust. The findings suggest that linguistic hybridity has symbolic appeal but is not uniformly easy to process; interpretations depend on linguistic repertoires and perceived communicative fit.

Keywords: Code-Switching; Plurilingualism; Social Media Advertising; Audience Perceptions; Algeria; Linguistic Repertoires.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media advertising is encountered in the same scrolling spaces where people sustain friendships, encounter popular culture, and negotiate how they present themselves. Unlike a conventional advertisement delivered in a single, relatively stable medium, a platform-based message may appear beside user comments, hashtags, videos, and informal exchanges that routinely cross linguistic boundaries. These environments give language choice a double function: words convey commercial information while also displaying who a brand imagines its audience to be. Studies of networked multilingualism and computer-mediated language practices have consequently challenged the assumption that online communication can be understood through self-contained, monolingual messages [1], [2], [3]. A recent synthesis of brand language research further underscores how linguistic choices shape consumer engagement, while identifying the limited attention previously paid to languages beyond English [4].

Algeria provides a particularly instructive setting for examining this issue. Algerian Arabic (Darija), Standard Arabic, French, English, and Tamazight circulate in different institutional, interpersonal, and commercial settings, although their social visibility and perceived values are not interchangeable. Research on advertising posters in Algiers documents the co-presence of Arabic, French, English, and Tamazight, while research on urban business signs traces the growing symbolic prominence of English in contemporary Algerian commercial life [5], [6]. Yet observations of storefronts or advertisers' language choices cannot, by themselves, establish how individual viewers read the same linguistic combination in a fast-moving social media feed.

A mixed-language advertisement can be appealing for several reasons. A familiar Algerian Arabic expression may create a sense of local recognition; a French term may evoke a professional register; and an English slogan may suggest participation in global youth culture. Such interpretations, however, are not automatic properties of the languages themselves. The same combination may feel authentic to a viewer who routinely uses those resources but confusing or exclusionary to someone with a different linguistic repertoire. Advertising scholarship shows that multilingual messages can construct hybrid identities, signal a desired market position, and operate as communicative or symbolic resources [7], [8], [9]. Evidence from ethnic advertising also indicates that consumers respond to language in relation to group identification and perceived fit, not merely whether a familiar language has been included [10].

Consequently, apparent approval of multilingualism should not be confused with universal preference for linguistically complex advertisements. An individual may regard code-switching as modern and creative while still choosing a single-language message for quick comprehension or trusting a brand more when it communicates in the viewer's preferred language. Work on localized advertising illustrates how linguistic variation interacts with culturally meaningful cues, while social media research shows that wording and communicative confidence can influence engagement with brand posts [11], [12]. These findings make it necessary to distinguish the symbolic evaluation of mixed-language advertising from its processing demands and perceived credibility.

The existing evidence also leaves a clear contextual and methodological gap. Much scholarship on Algerian advertising has examined linguistic repertoires in commercial signs, sellers' strategies, or the language form of advertisements; these studies offer valuable accounts of what advertisers do, but comparatively less systematic insight into how viewers evaluate what they

see. The present research therefore takes audience reception, rather than campaign performance, as its unit of analysis. It combines ratings of exposure and reading comfort, attitudinal evaluations, and respondents' own descriptions of memorable campaigns. This pairing is important because summary percentages can reveal a pattern of preference or ambivalence without explaining what that pattern means to a participant.

The study investigates how often respondents encounter social media advertisements in Algerian Arabic, Standard Arabic, French, English, and mixed forms, and how comfortable they feel reading each category. It then examines judgments of clarity, engagement, trust, modernity, cosmopolitan identity, social status, cultural belonging, confusion, and preference for a single language. It further explores whether those judgments differ according to language comfort and demographic characteristics, and how respondents themselves describe the influence of linguistic choices on the brand or message. These linked questions are addressed as an integrated inquiry rather than as isolated hypotheses, because the central interest is how practical comprehension and socially meaningful language choices coexist.

The contribution is threefold. Empirically, the study offers audience-centered evidence from Algerian social media users rather than inferring reception from the languages visible in advertising. Conceptually, it draws on plurilingual repertoires, indexical meaning, audience accommodation, and processing ease to explain why linguistic mixing can be valued and resisted at the same time. Methodologically, the convergence of ratings and written accounts allows statistical patterns to be interpreted through the very meanings respondents attach to familiar or unfamiliar language choices. The results do not establish advertising effectiveness or represent the entire Algerian population; instead, they provide an analytically useful account of the conditions under which multilingual advertising is perceived as engaging, intelligible, or potentially distancing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Multilingualism and Plurilingual Repertoires

Code-switching generally refers to alternation between linguistic varieties within a communicative event, whereas plurilingualism emphasizes the situated use of an individual's interconnected and uneven linguistic resources. Classical grammatical accounts of alternation helped describe where switching occurs [13]. More recent translanguaging scholarship instead treats the integrated repertoire as a resource for producing meaning across socially recognized linguistic boundaries [14], [15]. These perspectives are complementary for the present purpose: code-switching describes observable advertising choices, while plurilingualism helps explain how audiences interpret those choices through experiences that cannot be reduced to separate monolingual competences.

Attitudes toward switching also vary across interlocutors and social settings. Research involving multilingual individuals finds substantial variation in whether code-switching is perceived as natural, desirable, or situationally appropriate [16], while cultural identification is implicated in attitudes to bilingual alternation [17]. This makes respondents' self-reported reading comfort relevant, although comfort should not be treated as a comprehensive assessment of proficiency. A viewer may understand an English slogan yet dislike its placement in a local advertisement, or appreciate a French phrase as stylistic without preferring French for the full message.

Linguistic Hierarchies, Indexicality, and Global–Local Identity

The social value of a linguistic resource depends on the historical and institutional environments in which it circulates. A sociolinguistics of globalization emphasizes that mobility and unequal access shape what multilingual repertoires can accomplish [18]. The concept of indexical order similarly describes how a form can signal more than its literal meaning, including inferred social position, authenticity, or participation in a particular community [19]. In commercial communication, these meanings help explain why a language may be selected even where it is not necessary to transmit product information.

Brand positioning research distinguishes global, foreign, and local cultural appeals and demonstrates that their effects depend on consumer identification and context [20], [21]. It would therefore be reductive to interpret English as always prestigious, French as always professional, or Algerian Arabic as uniformly intimate. Such associations must be observed in participants' responses rather than inserted as stable cultural facts. In this study, perceived cosmopolitanism, status, modernity, and belonging are examined as distinct evaluations to avoid collapsing several symbolic effects into a single favorable-attitude score.

Code-Switching and Consumer Responses to Advertising

Controlled advertising studies show that bilingual messages do not have a simple linear effect on persuasion. Language-switch direction can influence consumer responses [22], and syntactic constraints may matter under particular processing conditions [23]. Sociolinguistic associations activated by the language switched into can also shape evaluations of a message [24]. Studies of multinational and local brands further suggest that the most effective language choice depends on how the linguistic code interacts with brand positioning and consumers' expectations [25].

Evidence from Korean advertising similarly links code-switching effects to the context in which languages are presented [26]. Research on the appreciation of English slogans shows that comprehension matters when the audience encounters foreign-language advertising [27], while experiments on foreign languages as country-of-origin cues illustrate how language can produce symbolic associations independently of literal product claims [28]. Moreover, bilingual advertising may be advantageous or unhelpful depending on the symbolic identity of the brand [29]. Together, these studies justify treating clarity, engagement, trust, and cultural meanings as potentially divergent rather than interchangeable outcomes.

Accommodation, Digital Brand Language, and Perceived Trust

Communication accommodation concerns how language styles are adapted to an interlocutor and how these adjustments affect social distance. Evidence from social media brand interactions indicates that matching a customer's linguistic style can influence perceived relationship investment and trust [30]. In computer-mediated interpersonal settings, linguistic accommodation also shapes rapport and impression formation [31]. These findings suggest that using Darija or familiar mixed forms in an advertisement might be experienced as recognition, but they do not imply that every linguistic accommodation attempt succeeds.

Large-scale analyses of brand posts show that informality, complexity, and emotional language can relate differently to likes, comments, and shares [32]. Consumer research on fluency likewise differentiates understanding from positive brand evaluation: subjective processing ease can support favorable responses to an advertisement [33], whereas unfamiliar technical language

may reduce intended purchase by increasing processing difficulty [34]. In the present study, these studies are theoretical comparators rather than evidence of actual purchase behavior, because the questionnaire measured reported perceptions, not observed advertising responses.

Integrative Perspective and Research Gap

Recent interdisciplinary accounts of foreign-language advertising argue for a closer integration of linguistic interpretation and consumer response research [35], [36]. For Algerian social media advertising, the resulting problem is not simply whether multiple languages are used, but when a switching pattern produces perceived closeness, prestige, clarity, confusion, or distrust. The same viewer may attach a positive symbolic value to multilingualism and reject it as a routine presentation format; this is a meaningful coexistence rather than a measurement contradiction.

This study accordingly uses a multidimensional interpretation in which repertoire-related comfort may be associated with perceived ease, while the symbolic indexical meanings of language choice may be associated with engagement or identity. Demographic differences and recalled advertising episodes provide further descriptive context. These are interpretive expectations, not experimentally tested causal mechanisms; the cross-sectional survey cannot establish the direction of influence.

METHODS

Research Design

The study adopts a mixed-methods, convergent design [37]. A single online questionnaire gathered closed-ended and open-ended data at the same time. The two strands were analysed separately and then compared. The quantitative strand describes patterns of exposure, comfort, and attitude and tests their associations with background variables. The qualitative strand explains how respondents interpret the effect of language choice, which closed items cannot capture. A survey design suits research questions about audience perceptions; the study does not measure actual advertising effectiveness or analyse advertisement texts.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were Algerian social media users recruited online through convenience and snowball sampling: the questionnaire link was circulated through social media and personal networks, and respondents were invited to forward it. After cleaning, 135 valid responses were retained. Respondents were aged 17 to 46 (M = 22.1, SD = 5.6). Most were female (n = 108, 80.0%; male n = 26, 19.3%; one not stated) and came from the High Plateaus (37.0%), Central (22.2%), North (21.5%), and South (17.0%) regions, with three respondents living abroad. Most were university students: after recoding, 65.2% were undergraduates or other, 25.2% Master's students or graduates, and 9.6% doctoral or post-doctoral (Figure 1). The sample is therefore young, female-dominated, and highly educated, and it is not statistically representative of Algerian social media users. The findings are exploratory.

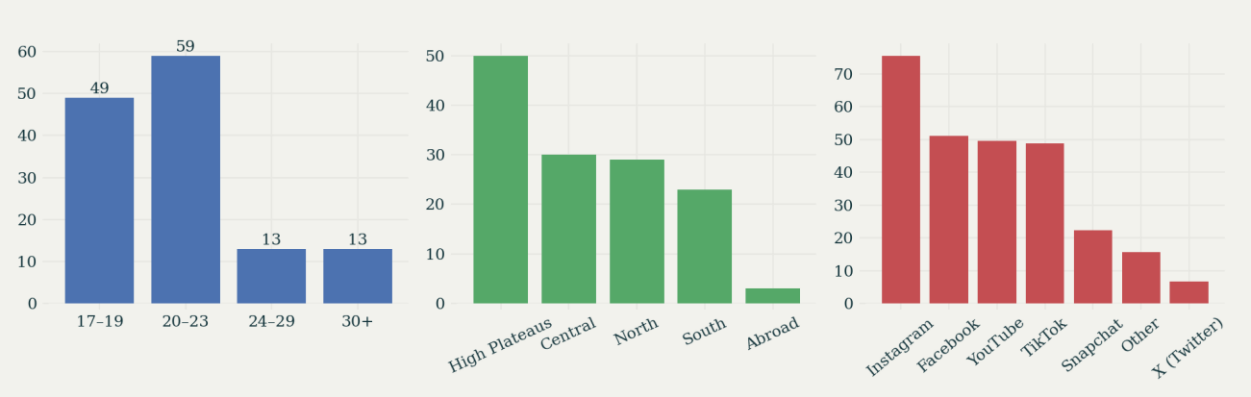


Figure 1. Age, region, and platform use of respondents (N = 135).

Instrument

Data were collected with an online questionnaire built in Google Forms. It had five sections: (1) demographics (age, gender, educational level, region); (2) platforms and languages used regularly; (3) exposure, i.e., how often respondents see advertisements in Algerian Arabic, Standard Arabic, English, French, and mixed forms (never to very often, coded 1 to 5); (4) comfort in reading advertisements in each of the same categories, recoded so that 1 = not at all comfortable and 5 = very comfortable; and (5) nine attitude statements rated from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), followed by one open-ended question asking respondents to describe a memorable multilingual advertisement and how language choice affected their view of the brand or message. Respondents could answer in Arabic, French, English, or a mixture of languages. Table 1 shows how the attitude items correspond to the theoretical constructs.

Table 1. Attitude items and their theoretical anchors.

Construct	Item (abbreviated)	Theoretical anchor
Preference for one language	Prefer ads that use only one language rather than mixing	Markedness
Clarity	A mix of Arabic, French and English makes the message clear	Processing ease
Engagement	A mix makes the message more engaging	Markedness
Cosmopolitan identity	Multiple languages reflect a cosmopolitan or global identity	Indexicality
Trust	I trust ads more when they are in my preferred language	Accommodation
Modernity	Mixed-language ads appear more modern and trendy	Linguistic capital
Confusion	Mixed-language ads are confusing or hard to follow	Processing ease
Cultural belonging	Multiple languages make me feel more connected to my cultural identity	Accommodation
Status	Code-switching signals social status, modernity or sophistication	Linguistic capital

Procedure and Data Preparation

The questionnaire was distributed online between 29 September and 2 November 2026. The first page stated the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that responses were anonymous, confidential, and used only for academic research. Responses were exported from Google Forms and screened before analysis. Two submissions were removed: one entry dated 27 December 2025, months before the main collection period and treated as a test entry, and one near-identical duplicate submitted twenty seconds after an earlier entry with the same profile and identical answers. This left 135 valid cases. Free-text educational levels (for example "L2", "Master 1", "PhD student") were recoded into three categories, and age was grouped into bands. Because some respondents left exposure or comfort items blank, those blocks were analysed with available cases (exposure n = 107; comfort n = 108), while all 135 respondents completed the nine attitude items. The confusion item was reverse-coded when scale scores were computed.

Data Analysis

Closed-ended items were analysed descriptively (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations). Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. Relationships between comfort in particular languages and attitude items were examined with Spearman rank correlations, and group differences (gender, age band, education, region) with Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis tests, because the data are ordinal. Given the number of tests and the sample size, inferential results are exploratory and no correction for multiple comparisons was applied. The open-ended responses were analysed through thematic analysis [38]: familiarisation, initial coding, searching for and reviewing themes, and defining themes. Coding was inductive, followed by interpretation against the theoretical framework. Responses in Arabic or French were translated into English for reporting. Coding was carried out manually by the researchers. The two strands were compared in the discussion, using the written accounts to explain, support, or qualify the questionnaire patterns. More recent scholarship on reflexive thematic analysis reinforces the importance of transparent interpretation and distinguishes analytic quality from mechanical inter-coder agreement [39], [40], [41]; these sources provide methodological context and do not imply that additional procedures were undertaken.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents read an information statement before answering, and completing the questionnaire was taken as consent. No names, contact details, or account handles were collected. Data are stored securely and used only for academic research, consistent with Algerian Law 18-07 on the protection of personal data. The study followed the ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was supported by deriving each attitude item from a construct in the theoretical framework (Table 1). Reliability was acceptable: Cronbach's alpha was .78 for the seven-item evaluation scale (clarity, engagement, cosmopolitan identity, modernity, cultural belonging, status, and reverse-coded confusion) and .75 when the trust item was added.

The nine attitude items cover conceptually distinct constructs. Therefore, although the reported alpha values provide information about the specified evaluation composites, they should

not be interpreted as proof that all aspects of perceived advertising quality form one unidimensional latent factor. No factor analysis or validation study beyond the reported content mapping and internal consistency is claimed here.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Advertising Exposure and Reading Comfort

Respondents reported most frequent exposure to advertisements in Algerian Arabic (M = 3.80, SD = 1.23; 60.7% often or very often) and English (M = 3.64, SD = 1.02; 56.1%), followed by mixed forms (M = 2.92, SD = 1.47; 36.4%), Standard Arabic (M = 2.86, SD = 1.10; 29.0%), and French (M = 2.41, SD = 1.16; 19.6%). Comfort was highest for Algerian Arabic (M = 4.53, SD = 0.96) and Standard Arabic (M = 4.30, SD = 0.91), followed by English (M = 3.95, SD = 0.93), mixed forms (M = 3.23, SD = 1.51), and French (M = 2.98, SD = 1.23). Only 37.0% rated themselves comfortable or very comfortable with French and 50.9% with mixed forms, compared with 91.7% for Algerian Arabic (Table 2, Figure 2). Asked which language they use regularly on social media, respondents most often named English (27.4%), Algerian Arabic (25.2%), mixed forms (24.4%), and Arabizi (Arabic written with Latin letters and numerals; 12.6%); most appear to have selected a single main language.

Table 2. Exposure (n = 107) and comfort (n = 108) by language; 5 = very often or very comfortable.

Language	Exposure M (SD)	Often / very often (%)	Comfort M (SD)	Comfortable / very comfortable (%)
Algerian Arabic	3.80 (1.23)	60.7	4.53 (0.96)	91.7
Standard Arabic	2.86 (1.10)	29.0	4.30 (0.91)	85.2
English	3.64 (1.02)	56.1	3.95 (0.93)	68.5
French	2.41 (1.16)	19.6	2.98 (1.23)	37.0
Mixed forms	2.92 (1.47)	36.4	3.23 (1.51)	50.9

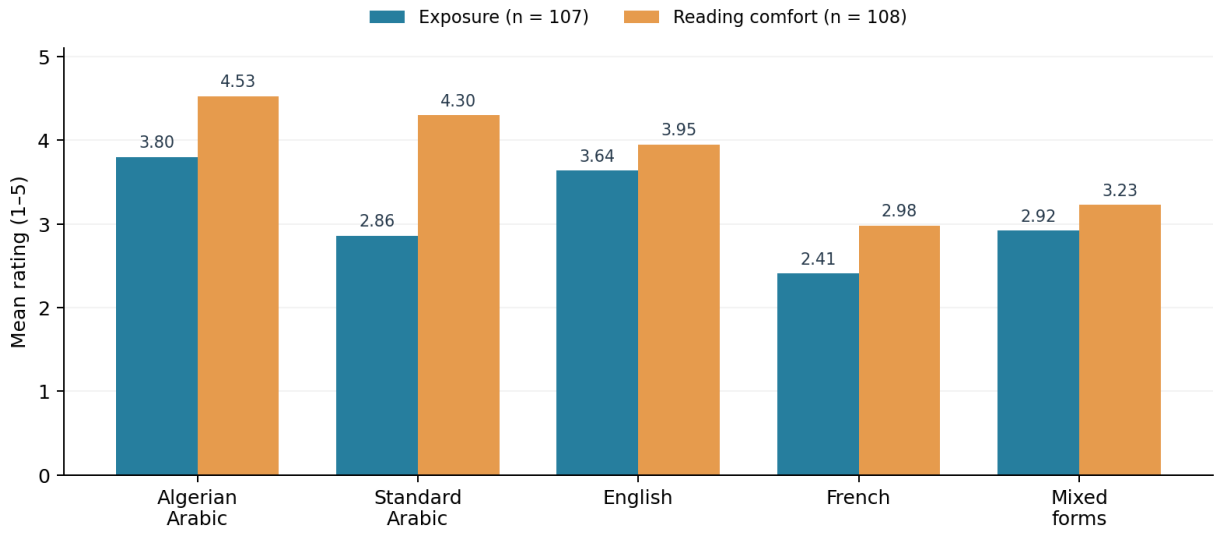


Figure 2. Mean self-reported exposure and reading comfort by language. Values correspond to those reported in Table 2.

Evaluations of Multilingual Advertising

Respondents were broadly favourable toward multilingual advertising on the symbolic dimensions (Table 3, Figure 3). Two thirds agreed that multilingual advertisements reflect a cosmopolitan or global identity (67.4%; M = 3.77) and that a mix of languages is more engaging (66.7%; M = 3.64). Nearly two thirds agreed that mixed-language advertisements appear more modern and trendy (63.7%; M = 3.58), and just over half agreed that code-switching signals status or sophistication (51.9%) and that multilingual advertisements strengthen their sense of cultural identity (54.1%). Perceived clarity was positive but more divided: 57.8% agreed that a mix makes the message clear and 24.4% disagreed, while 33.3% agreed that mixed advertisements are confusing or hard to follow (37.8% disagreed).

At the same time, 58.5% agreed that they prefer advertisements in one language rather than a mix (19.3% disagreed), and 60.7% said they trust advertisements more in their preferred language. Respondents therefore appreciate what mixing signals while retaining a preference for single-language and preferred-language advertising. The preference for one language was negatively associated with perceived engagement (rho = -.30, $p < .001$), indicating that those who prefer a single language find mixing less engaging.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for attitude items (N = 135; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Statement	M	SD	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %
Reflects cosmopolitan identity	3.77	0.95	67.4	23.7	8.9
More engaging	3.64	0.97	66.7	20.0	13.3
More modern/trendy	3.58	1.07	63.7	20.0	16.3
Trust more in preferred language	3.61	0.98	60.7	25.2	14.1
Prefers one language	3.56	1.09	58.5	22.2	19.3
Makes message clear	3.42	1.09	57.8	17.8	24.4
Signals status/sophistication	3.47	0.95	51.9	34.1	14.1
Feel connected to cultural identity	3.42	0.97	54.1	25.9	20.0
Confusing / hard to follow	2.96	1.05	33.3	28.9	37.8

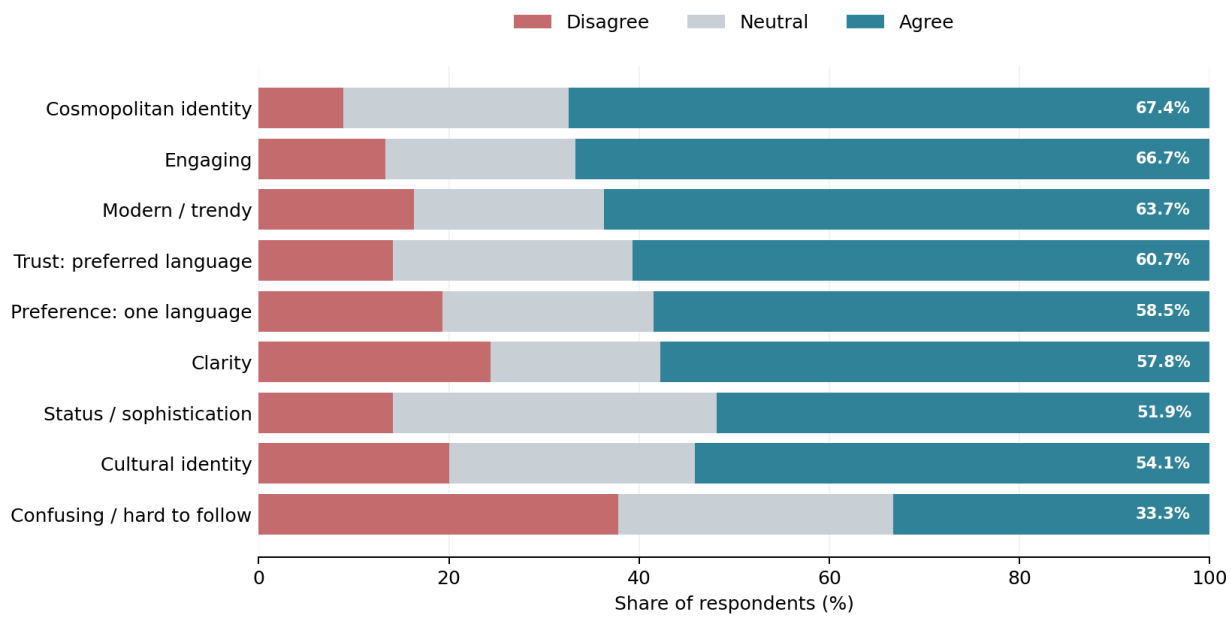


Figure 3. Distribution of disagree, neutral, and agree responses for each attitude statement (N = 135). Percentages correspond to those reported in Table 3.

Variation by Comfort and Background

Comfort in particular languages was largely unrelated to evaluations of clarity, engagement, modernity, or belonging (Figure 4). The clearest pattern concerned confusion: respondents more comfortable with mixed forms (rho = -.26, p = .007) and with English (rho = -.21, p = .029) were less likely to find mixed advertising confusing, and the correlation for French was in the same direction but not significant (rho = -.15, p = .117). Given the number of tests, these results should be read as exploratory.

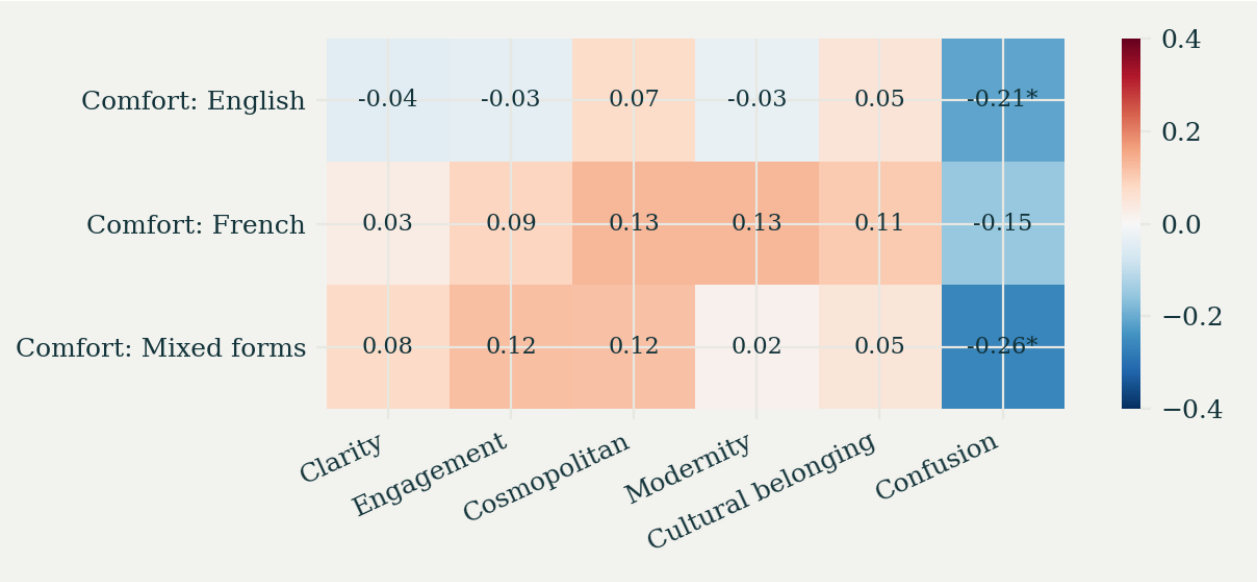


Figure 4. Spearman correlations between language comfort and attitudes (* p < .05, uncorrected; n = 108).

A composite evaluation score (the mean of the seven evaluation items, with confusion reversed) did not differ significantly by age band ($H = 1.18$, $p = .55$), education ($H = 0.45$, $p = .80$), or region ($H = 1.44$, $p = .70$). Female respondents scored somewhat higher than male respondents ($M = 3.53$ vs. 3.25), a difference that did not reach conventional significance ($U = 1729$, $p = .067$). One age effect emerged on a single item: respondents aged 24 and over reported lower agreement that mixed advertising is confusing ($M = 2.46$) than those aged 17–19 ($M = 3.02$) and 20–23 ($M = 3.17$) ($H = 7.87$, $p = .020$). With few older respondents ($n = 26$), this finding is tentative.

Respondents' Written Accounts

The open-ended answers reveal five recurring themes. Extracts are labelled R followed by the respondent's position in the cleaned dataset; original spelling is retained, and extracts in French are translated into English.

Familiarity and closeness. Many respondents described advertisements that mix Algerian Arabic and French, and sometimes English, as natural and close to everyday speech. They most often cited telecom operators such as Djezzy, Ooredoo, and Mobilis, and Coca-Cola advertisements. Typical comments said the mix reflects how Algerians actually speak and makes the message relatable and easy to understand. As R127 put it, a Coca-Cola advertisement mixing Arabic and French felt "familiar and attractive" and made "the message easy to understand". R88 felt "involved and concerned since both languages are widely used in our community", and R82 said that hearing dialectal Arabic in a couscous advertisement "urged me to buy the brand as it is attached to our local gastronomy and traditional cuisine".

Modernity and openness. French and English were linked to a modern, creative, or international brand image, and Algerian Arabic to closeness to local people and culture. Some respondents said the mix signals a brand that is open and understands the audience's daily mix of languages. R40 wrote that "Arabic made it feel familiar, while French made the brand seem modern and professional", and R118 said simply that "the two languages made it more modern".

Division of roles among languages. Several respondents assigned functions to each language: Arabic to reach the local audience, French to sound professional or technical, and English to attract younger people. One respondent explained that French lends scientific credibility to a food product because French is associated with science in Algeria.

Being addressed. Some respondents felt an advertisement was aimed at them when it used youth-coded English and Darija rather than the formal French many business owners use. R6 described a gym advertisement that mixed Algerian Arabic, French, and "gen z coded English" and felt that "the ad was adressed [sic] to me specifically".

Confusion, distrust, and preference for one language. A minority found mixing confusing, distracting, or less professional, and one respondent associated it with scams. Others said awkward pronunciation of English or French words weakens an advertisement, or that mixing excludes people who understand only one language. A number of respondents said language made no difference to them or could not recall a specific advertisement. R27 felt that multiple languages made an advertisement seem "not trustworthy" and "a scam", R69 found a French–Arabic fashion advertisement "incomprehensible", R109 judged mixing "less professional", and R97 preferred a single language "otherwise it'd be confusing for me". These convergent and divergent patterns are integrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Joint display integrating original quantitative patterns and qualitative themes.

Quantitative observation	Related written-account theme	Integrated interpretation
Engaging: 66.7%; cosmopolitan identity: 67.4%	Modernity and openness	Mixed forms may signal a globally oriented identity.
Modern/trendy: 63.7%; cultural connection: 54.1%	Familiarity and closeness; division of roles	Local recognition and prestige may be valued together.
Prefer one language: 58.5%; preferred-language trust: 60.7%	Confusion, distrust, and preference for one language	Positive symbolic meanings do not eliminate desire for straightforward comprehension.
Confusion agreement: 33.3%; mixed-form comfort vs confusion: $\rho = -.26$	Being addressed; confusion and distrust	Repertoire fit may help explain why the same strategy is experienced differently.

Discussion

Symbolic Appeal Does Not Eliminate Preference for Clarity

The strongest descriptive pattern is not an unequivocal endorsement or rejection of mixing, but its ambivalent reception. A majority associated multilingual advertisements with cosmopolitan identity (67.4%), engagement (66.7%), and modernity (63.7%). At the same time, majorities preferred one-language advertisements (58.5%) and expressed greater trust in messages using their preferred language (60.7%). These attitudes measure different judgments; their simultaneous presence should not be interpreted as inconsistency. The negative association between single-language preference and perceived engagement ($\rho = -.30$, $p < .001$) further suggests that attractiveness and comprehensibility are related but not equivalent.

The written accounts provide a plausible interpretation of this pattern. For some respondents, the combination of familiar Algerian Arabic with French or English made advertising both locally recognizable and internationally oriented. For others, unfamiliar switching, unclear pronunciation, or the impression of inauthenticity undermined credibility. This contextual variation is consistent with bilingual advertising studies in other markets, where language effects depend on audience, stereotype, and communicative fit rather than on the mere number of languages present [42], [43]. The present data extend that discussion by showing the symbolic and practical judgments within the same Algerian exploratory sample; they do not establish causal advertising effects.

Repertoires, Processing Ease, and Social Address

Comfort with Algerian Arabic ($M = 4.53$) and Standard Arabic ($M = 4.30$) was higher than with French ($M = 2.98$) and mixed forms ($M = 3.23$). The correlations between comfort and confusion were modest but directionally coherent: comfort with mixed forms ($\rho = -.26$, $p = .007$) and English ($\rho = -.21$, $p = .029$) was associated with less reported confusion, whereas the French correlation ($\rho = -.15$, $p = .117$) did not meet the conventional uncorrected threshold. These comparisons cannot determine whether comfort reduces confusion, whether clearer advertising increases reported comfort, or whether both reflect other characteristics. They nonetheless indicate that participants' repertoires are a relevant lens for interpreting perceived accessibility.

The qualitative theme of "being addressed" adds a relational dimension. Respondents could view a Darija–English combination as specifically directed toward young users, whereas another

respondent regarded mixing as less professional or suspicious. The choice to address a particular audience thus entails a potential trade-off: greater social resonance for some and a narrower sense of inclusion for others. Existing Algerian research on Facebook Live sales similarly reports a preference for familiar Algerian Arabic with French loanwords and warns that excessive switching may alienate less proficient viewers; this locally relevant finding is retained as a contextual online source rather than misrepresented as a DOI-indexed publication [44].

Demographic Variation and the Limits of Exploratory Inference

The composite evaluation score showed no statistically significant differences across the reported age bands, education groups, or regions, and the female–male comparison did not meet the conventional threshold ($p = .067$). A single age-related result for the confusion item ($H = 7.87$, $p = .020$) should be considered tentative because older respondents were comparatively few, tests were not adjusted for multiplicity, and the sampling strategy was nonprobabilistic. In particular, a nonsignificant group difference is not evidence that groups have identical attitudes.

It is also important not to overinterpret the comparison between reported exposure to English and French in this sample. English advertising had higher reported exposure and comfort than French, but this pattern comes from mostly young, educated respondents and does not establish a population-wide linguistic shift. The data describe perceived advertising contact and reading comfort; they do not measure actual frequency in platform feeds, users' competence in each language, or the historical status of French and English across Algeria.

Implications for Digital Language Awareness

Because everyday advertising offers accessible examples of language choice, classroom activities might ask learners to compare how a Darija expression, a French phrase, or an English slogan changes a message's imagined audience and persuasive tone. Such activities could develop critical awareness of linguistic hierarchies, switching conventions, and the difference between symbolic appeal and clarity. They would need to be evaluated independently: the present study did not assess classroom practices, learning gains, or actual consumer responses.

For advertisers, the evidence suggests an audience-sensitive principle rather than a single preferred linguistic formula. Multilingual elements may enrich identity signaling when the intended audience recognizes them, while clarity and perceived authenticity still need to be maintained. This is an interpretive implication from audience perceptions, not a tested recommendation for maximizing sales or engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how 135 Algerian social media users perceive code-switching and plurilingual language in advertising. Mixed-language advertising was widely associated with cosmopolitan identity, engagement, and modernity, but the same sample showed substantial preference for single-language advertisements and greater trust in preferred-language messages. More comfortable readers of mixed forms and English tended to report less confusion, and written accounts showed why: familiar switching can express local closeness and global aspiration, whereas unfamiliar or awkward combinations can impede understanding and credibility. The central contribution is the distinction between the symbolic value of language mixing and the audience's practical ability or willingness to process it. Future studies should recruit more heterogeneous participants, compare

advertisement genres and platforms, use actual advertising stimuli, and examine observed responses rather than infer effectiveness from perceptions alone.

LIMITATIONS

The sample is a convenience sample of mainly young, female, university-educated respondents recruited online, so the results cannot be generalised to all Algerian social media users. The data are self-reported perceptions and do not measure behaviour such as purchasing. Most constructs are measured with single items, and the open-ended question depends on memory, as several respondents could not recall an example. The significance tests are uncorrected and exploratory. Positive and negative items (clarity and confusion) correlated only weakly, which may indicate inconsistent responding or acquiescence, so scores should be interpreted cautiously.

Given the exploratory sample and the number of uncorrected inferential comparisons, the reported associations require cautious interpretation. Future studies should assess the dimensionality of the attitude measures, report uncertainty intervals, and conduct robustness checks using respondent-level data.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author

Sarra Benmarouf – Department of Foreign Languages, University of Naama (Algeria);
orcid.org/0009-0006-7843-6914
Email: benmarouf.sarra@cuniv-naama.dz

Authors

Sarra Benmarouf – Department of Foreign Languages, University of Naama (Algeria);
orcid.org/0009-0006-7843-6914
Hayat Bagui – Department of Foreign Languages, University of Naama (Algeria);
orcid.org/0000-0002-7849-5221
Yasser Yahiaoui – Department of Foreign Languages, University of Naama (Algeria);
orcid.org/0009-0006-4435-4734

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

S.B. Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, and writing – original draft. H.B. Supervision and writing – review and editing. Y.Y. Support for data analysis and writing – review and editing. All three authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors used Grammarly and ChatGPT (OpenAI) during manuscript preparation and editorial revision to support language editing, text organization, and clarification of methodological reporting. These tools did not generate new empirical observations or independently verify participant responses. All three authors reviewed and revised the resulting text and accept responsibility for the accuracy of the data, citations, interpretations, and final manuscript.

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