Revue de Traduction et Langues Volume 15 Numéro 01/2016, pp. 135-143
Journal of Translation and Languages **مجلة الترجمة واللغات**
ISSN (Print): 1112-3974 **EISSN (Online): 2600-6235**

The Language of Advertising: The Case of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in the Algerian Advertising Scenery

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To cite this paper:
Boukreris, L., & Bouchegra, A. (2016). The Language of Advertising: The Case of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in the Algerian Advertising Scenery. *Revue Traduction et Langues 15(1),*135-143.

Abstract: *This article deals with the phenomenon of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in the language of advertising with a special emphasis on language mixing in the Algeria advertising scenery. The main objective consists to analyze how language mixing is used by advertisers to produce a persuasive effect on the consumer. Advertising designers use language mixing is in such an arty way and violate the norms of language use that the language of advertising appears to be a variety of its own right really serving attraction and memorability purposes that play an important role in the consumers' purchasing decision. In addition, the article attempts to pinpoint to the hidden purposes which go in an anticlockwise movement regarding the language policy efforts the government is making to promote standard Arabic. The transliteration of the Arabic language in its dialectal and standard form using Latin alphabet together with the use of Arabizi symbols constitute a long term hidden agenda which attempts to revive the long ago attempts to Latinize the Arabic language.*
Keywords: *Advertising, Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, strategy, persuasion consumer, language.*
Résumé : *Cet article traite du phénomène de l'alternance codique focalisant sur le langage publicitaire L'objectif principal consiste à analyser la manière dont le mélange de cette stratégie linguistique est utilisée pour produire un effet persuasif sur le consommateur. Les concepteurs publicitaires utilisent l'alternance codique d'une manière si artistique et violant les normes d'utilisation de la langue standard qu'une nouvelle variété semble réellement se dessinait pour réaliser les objectifs d'attraction et de mémorisation qui sont si important dans la prise de décision d'achat des consommateurs. En outre, l'article tente de souligner les objectifs cachés qui vont dans le sens inverse des efforts de politique linguistique que le gouvernement algérien déploie pour promouvoir l'arabe standard. La translittération de la langue arabe dans sa forme dialectale et standard en utilisant l'alphabet latin ainsi que l'utilisation de symboles Arabizi constituent un long terme efforts qui tente de faire revivre les tentatives d'il y a longtemps de latiniser la langue arabe.*
Mots clés : *Publicité, alternance codique, stratégies, persuasion, publicité, consommateur.*

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1. Introduction

The term 'advertisement' and 'advertising' have at their root, a Latin word 'advertere', meaning 'turn towards, while advertising as a field is defined as an art and a science which has been in existence for years. The difference between the past and the present is that advertising, nowadays, has become part of our daily life because of the economic and technological advancements the world witnesses and has greatly influenced the consumer's habits and behavior even the consumer's linguistic landscape and his cultural environment. Scholars versed in the field of advertising agree on the fact that advertising takes many forms such as magazine ads, posters, television ads and still other forms to persuade purchasing. However, it is complex and has a long term objective as regards impact on society including language awareness and practices. It may even participate in language policy and language use and languages contact process. The present article on the code switching and code mixing puts emphasis the way this phenomenon appears on Billboards, that is the phenomenon of advertising and language use focusing on code switching and code mixing occurrence, using some billboards taken from the Algerian linguistic advertising landscape.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Advertising: A Definition

The most popular definition of advertising is traced back to the American Marketing Association (AMA) which defines it as, "Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services of an identified sponsor (…). The presentation is meant for promoting the ideas, goods and services to create awareness and assist in selling the product." (qtd in Mathur, U C. 2008. p. 336). Different forms of advertising using different means and channels are present in our current life**.** Cook (2001) notes that "advertising is everywhere. We cannot walk down the street, shop, watch television, go through our mail, log on to the Internet, read a newspaper or take a train without encountering it. Whether we are alone, with our friends or family, or in a crowd, advertising is always with us, if only on the label of something we are using." (p.1). So to speak, it is almost impossible for any advertisement to be unnoticeable.

For Angela Gaddard 2002:5) "Advertising is so familiar to modern readers that it may seem odd to ask what an advertisement is. Although advertising is all around us-perhaps because it is all around us- we don't often pause to think about its nature as a form of discourse, as a system of language use whereby, on daily basis, huge numbers of readers have fleeting 'conversations' with the writers of countless texts." As regards the language of advertising, for Sylva- Michèle sternkopf (2005:210)," [It] is neither a variety nor a register in its own right. Rather, the language of advertising is able to take on any form that is required for communicating its message, thus covering and utilizing the entire linguistic continuum. After all, speaking the language of the recipient is one of the major prerequisite of successful sales talk."

2.2. The Language of Advertising

The language of advertising reflects the language(s) of the targeted society. This differs from one context to another. If we are to choose the Algerian context, which is our concern, Algeria is described as being a multilingual country in which different languages

and language varieties are used. For this reason, advertising designers give more attention to the messages introduced in their advertisements. Mathur (2008:336)) states: "Consumer advertising deals with the actual buyers and users of the market segment and therefore use a language and a medium best suited to the target segment." Hence, the language of any advertising not only determines the languages of the audience, but also shows how these languages are used in daily life.

In their daily life, Algerians tend to switch and mix between languages and language varieties. As mentioned above, messages of advertising reflect the way Algerians mix between languages. Fahnestock (2011: 87) states that individuals: *"shift into a different language variety. In a single word, phrase or a sentence they suddenly depart from the prevailing dialect, register, or level and switch to another. Such departures draw attention to themselves by violating the surrounding norm, often with persuasive consequences*." In the Algerian context as we will see later in this article, the language of advertising makes use of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing as strategies for persuasion, appeal and memorability. As regards memorability, Sternkopf (2010: 215) believes it to be:

> An important factor to be considered in any advertisement. The message of an advert needs to be remembered by the recipient. From a linguistic point of you … Several linguistic devices are highly repetitive by definition and therefore feature fairly frequently in advertising language, such as alliteration (repeating the initial sound), metrical rhythm (repeating the same rhythmic pattern), rhyme (repeating the same ending sound), grammatical parallelism (repeating the same grammatical structure) as well as semantic and syntactic repetition) (i.e, using the same syntactic structure or words from the same word.

2.3. Code Switching and Mixing: Concept and Definition

Code-Switching and Code Mixing (hereafter CS and CM) are too terms that are widely spread among bilingual and multilingual communities. Both of them share two different aspects: the first is the term "code" which is used by linguists as an "umbrella term for languages, dialects, styles, etc." (Gardner-Chloros,2009: 11) and the two other terms "switching" and "mixing" to refer to the way people manipulate the language they use either on purpose or without.

Scholars versed in the field offer different definitions. Romaine (1989) describes it as a "dynamic discourse strategy". For Meyers- Scotton (1993: 1), code switching is a question of code alternations, that is *"... a term used to identify alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation*". Schreir (2013:54-55) defines CS as "the use of material from two (or more) languages by a single speaker in the same conversation", replacing 'speaker' with 'author or scriber', and 'conversation 'with 'text.' In his turn, Gardner-Chloros (op cit: 4) states that code switching is the result of such different combinations of two or more language varieties that take place in countless bilingual/multilingual social networks. This linguistic phenomenon, he writes "refers to the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people". Other scholars distinguish two cases of alternations namely code switching and code mixing at the intrasentential and intersentential levels respectively. In fact, from

these definitions, CS is characterized by a dynamic shift in the use of different languages at hand to convey messages and in some cases, it is used to achieve an aim or aims, and this is what makes it a strategy used even in the language of advertisement. Milroy & Muysken (1995) confirm that those who are interested in the field of CS may encounter some difficulties since,

> The field of CS research is replete with a confusing range of terms descriptive of various aspects of the phenomenon. Sometimes the referential scope of a set of these terms overlaps and sometimes particular terms are used in different ways by different writers. (qtd in Gardner-Chloros, 2009:12).

In practice, CS is manifested in terms of borrowing, and interference. Both code switching and mixing practice are manifested in bilingual and multilingual speech communities and have been extensively analyzed from social and ethnic optical angles. Generally, scholars conceive the practice of code mixing or switching as a linguistic behavior having to do with language proficiency showing either fluency to alternate between languages in the case of perfect bilinguals or due to lack of knowledge of lexical items in the language being used. However, another field of code switching and mixing use of has been developing as a strategy in the advertising domain for persuasion and cultural accommodation purposes to get closer to the different segments of a targeted consumer segments.

In the case of Algeria, the phenomenon of code switching and mixing is apparent in daily use in the Algerian speech community. It is manifested as alternations of the High and Low Arabic varieties as well as French and Arabic and recently English is creeping as a result of globalization.

3. The Linguistic Situation in Algeria

Because of some historical and colonial reasons, the linguistic situation in Algeria is known to be a complex one characterized by a diglossic situation, that is, the high and low variety of the Arabic language, the Berber language together with its dialectal varieties and the presence of French as a colonial impact.

In the case of the Arabic language, scholars identify Classical Arabic, the poetic and religious form of the language, Modern Standard Arabic which is still in the making as a result of the educational and language in contact processes represented by that form commonly shared by all the Arab speaking world, and dialectal Arabic or the colloquial form which differs substantially from an Arab country to the other. In the case of Algeria, the dialectal variety remains the one widely used in daily informal use.

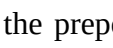
Berber and its corresponding varieties are also daily used among the Berber speech communities in addition to the French language the presence of which is not only historical as a result of colonialism but also because of its status as the first foreign language. Furthermore, the English language is creeping within the sociolinguistic situation of Algeria as a consequence of globalization.

In fact, the historical, social and educational factors which lay behind this phenomenon of language code switching and mixing have more or less been extensively analyzed by scholars versed in the field to identify the linguistic, psycholinguistic, social

and sociopragmatic reasons affecting language switching and mixing. Yet another very important field of CS and CM is widely developing in the advertising practice which is the subject of the present article attempting to highlight the role of code switching and code mixing strategies which are used in the Algerian written advertising discourse, more precisely advertising placards. It also seeks to observe how either code switching and or code mixing is used to effectively manipulate the Algerian consumer.

4. Strategies of Language Mixing: Some Advertisements

Some advertising placards are randomly selected and analyzed to see to the overt and covert strategies behind code switching in terms of effects on the consumers and on language use as well.

In the advertising placard 1 below, the advertising placard reads "MABROUK LA 4 G MOBILIS LAHKET RAPID 3LA TOUT DE SUITE À ORAN" meaning "congratulations the fourth generation Mobilis arrived rapidly right now". This advertising message on the one hand includes lexical item from both standard and dialectal Arabic transliterated using the Latin script in capital form "MABROUK …. LAHKET" meaning respectively "congratulations…… arrived", on the other hand it includes French lexical items "LA 4G MOBILIS RAPID…TOUT DE SUITE À ORAN" meaning "the fourth generation Mobilis rapid … right now in Oran" written in French using capital letters, in addition to the preposition  which belongs both to standard and dialectal Arabic transliterated in French using the symbol  to transcribe the Arabic alphabetical letter "ع" though it has the corresponding international phonetic symbol [ç] and the two other sounds using the Latin alphabet in lower case letters "la" giving . At the same time a violation of writing norms is apparent as regards the use of Capital letters which seems to contradict the school efforts if we consider the intimate relation between the social environment and language learning.

The second placard seems to be totally written using the Arabic scripts, yet it is an exact copy of the first placard marketing for the awareness of the French language targeting both Francophone and the Arabophone audiences and picturing the linguistic situation in Algeria.

In addition, transliteration does neither really render the words mainly when the sound systems are different nor constitute a tool to display authentic material. A distortion at the level of the phonetic release is identified in the second placard concerning the word "رابيد" which sounds unfamiliar, funny and different from the Latin sounds in the word "rapid". while the word "توتسويت" presents two mistakes: one at the sound level, the case of [ت] instead of [d], and the second one concerns the preposition '**de'** which is replaced by the sound [**t]**. These are two very important mistakes as the linguistic landscape plays an important role in language awareness and acquisition. For Shoamy (2012:544-547)

> Studies of the role of linguistic landscape in language policy… show that people constructing linguistic landscape often defy formal and explicit policies. New words and new orthographic conventions are created and displayed in public spaces … LLs not only reflect social structure and the dynamics of social relations but they are arenas through which various

agendas are dictated, battled over or negotiated. Moreover, space and geography are not separate and passive dimensions, but rather are actively drawn on in the theatre of the social life.



Figure 1



Figure 2

The third placard presents a promotion offered the operator "OOREDOO". As regards language use it is mostly Standard Arabic. The French word 'la famille' is switched to for two main objectives. The first relates to the meaning according to the French language i.e. 'the family' remembering people living away to call their family while the second one relates to the social connotation of the term 'la famille' among the Algerian youth which is highlighted with the singer's style of clothing standing for the close family relationship with OOREDOO as opposed to other operators for market competition purposes. Code mixing here is rather a strategy of attraction focusing on the selection of lexical items that frequently occur in daily life. The term 'la famille' within the young generation linguistic register means 'take care, don't forget, it is one of my relatives', suggesting the idea of special consideration. Thus, the advertiser narrows the distance between the company and the consumers by getting adapted to the consumers' environment and the way they use language.



Figure 3

On surface reading placard4 represents a Mercedes truck in pictured on a road in Constantine, the town of bridges. The Algerian flag appears to show that the truck is made in Algeria. The use of french, English and Arabic transliterated using the Latin alphabet in this fourth placard represents Algeria's multilingual situation. Code mixing here is used

with a certain acuteness. The transliteration of the term **'بلادي'** into‘**bladi**’ indirectly suggests the idea of foreignization of the product as well as the meaning of nostalgia the term ‘bladi’ reveals and the emotions of loyalty and belongingness it is loaded with displaying the duty towards one’s country and the feeling of proud. By the choice of the word ‘**bladi**’ is meant to stir up emotions towards the product as if it were a local brand. The use of the French word **‘mon pays’** instead will spoil the advertisement from its impact on the local consumer.



Figure 4

The fifth placard is a whole story displaying Algerian traditions in terms of family kinship valuing. The placard about ‘Safina’ uses the term **‘سفينة’,** a word taken from standard Arabic as a brand name for a kind of wheat by-product transliterated using the Latin scripts. The word bears the idea of capacity of transport of a great number of people together in one place reinforced with the Phrase **'هي لي تلمنا'displaying** code mixing of both dialectal Arabic and standard Arabic all together expressing the idea of gathering known in the Algerian context as **‘ لمة‘** which means meeting together during a family event in which the main course is based on safina’s wheat by-product i.e ‘a couscous party’. However, this is not the only ‘safina’s story. **لمة '** features all traditional and religious ceremonies. In such a case of code mixing, the advertiser made use of a memorable phrase to show the advertiser’s sensitivity to the traditions and feelings of the local consumer.



Figure 5

In the case of the last advertisement, the brand name 'Tartino' appears with the noun **'الضيف'** meaning **' the guest** and the preposition ' ب ' meaning 'with' used both in Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic in addition to **'wala walou'** meaning **'or nothing else'**', a frequently used popular expression offering the advertiser a language rhythmic game using alliteration , consonance and assonance at the same time seeking easiness of memorability, a state of being easy to remember or worth remembering.



Figure 6

5. Advertising as a Discourse

The term *discourse* has been at the crux of many researchers. In the field of linguistics, discourse is used generally to refer to "an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of form and meaning (e.g., words, structures, cohesion) that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience/interlocutor" (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000: 4). It is not only the language that works, but the context in which it is used plays also a significant role. In other words, the focus is on connected and contextualized elements of language use. When trying to analyze advertising, as a form of communication, discourse, analysts do not consider language alone, but rather, as Cook (2001:3) puts it well, "the context of communication: who is communicating, with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other". In addition to the language of advertising, as in the case of advertising placards, pictures are always accompanied with texts. Therefore, this is what makes this type of advertising attractive and giving more meaning.

As it is mentioned above, both text and context work in tandem i.e., we cannot speak about the first and overlook the second and vice versa. According to Cook (op cit), text is the linguistic forms separated from context that discourse analysts aim to analyze. However, context includes a number of different elements that should be considered. These elements interact in a synergetic relationship, namely substance, music and pictures paralanguage, co-text, intertext, participants and function.

6. Conclusion

There are different ways of code switching and mixing used in the language of code switching and or code mixing as regards language use in multilingual communities manifesting the users' linguistic competence each accordingly. It may even be in a conscious or unconscious manners. However, the use of code switching and or mixing in the field of advertising is subject to a thoughtful selection and mix starting from phonemic strategies i.e., insertion, deletion or exchange of phonemes where lexemes are modified by exchanging, adding or deleting letters to phrasal use. Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka 2013). Language game Homonyms is also present in the language of advertising given the fact that they are economical linguistic units evoking multiple meanings without repetition and offering the reader the joy of discovering the language game strategy and thus ignite the memory process. Advertisers also seek cultural accommodation to the consumer to overcome the social and cultural barriers addressing thus all consumer social segments.

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