Speaking to Belong: Identity Representations and Code-Switching among Young Franco-Algerians on TikTok

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Abstract

This study explores the role of code-switching in the identity construction of Franco-Algerian youth on TikTok, through a qualitative content analysis combined with a questionnaire survey. The corpus, composed of fifty videos created by Franco-Algerian users, reveals a high frequency of code-switching, mainly in its intra-sentential form, used in a spontaneous and routine manner. The analysis shows that this practice functions as a "we-code", marking diasporic community belonging and reinforcing intra-group ties. These findings are supported by the questionnaire results, which show that the majority of respondents associate the use of both French and Arabic with identity affirmation and a sense of cultural pride. Moreover, the videos frequently include multimodal elements (symbols, music, hashtags) that contribute to the performance of this hybrid identity. Overall, the results highlight that TikTok constitutes a key space of reappropriation and visibility, where Franco-Algerian youth transform a minoritized language in the public sphere into a legitimate resource for self-stylization and community valorization.

Keywords

Code switching, sociolinguistics, diasporic identity, Franco-Algerians, TikTok

1. Introduction

The rise of social media has profoundly transformed young people's modes of communication and language practices, particularly among those from immigrant backgrounds. TikTok, a short-video sharing platform, now stands out as a key space of digital socialization where self-performance, creativity, and identity expression intersect. For young people from the Franco-Algerian diaspora, this space constitutes a strategic arena for making their dual cultural and linguistic belonging visible, allowing them to combine diverse repertoires within innovative discursive forms.

While research on online multilingualism has multiplied in recent years (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Leppänen & Elo, 2016; Varis & Wang, 2011), few studies have specifically focused on the multimodal practices and identity representations of Franco-Algerian youth on TikTok. Most existing studies focus on textual platforms (forums, Facebook, Twitter) or on code-switching in school contexts, leaving largely unexplored how these young people simultaneously mobilize linguistic, visual, and auditory resources to construct and assert their identities in a mainstream digital space.

This article aims to analyze how Franco-Algerian youth showcase their diasporic belonging on TikTok through code-switching, linguistic hybridity, and the use of multiple semiotic resources. The objective is to show that their productions go beyond simple linguistic mixing and are part of a genuine identity stylization, combining verbal, visual, and auditory signs to express an assumed hybrid identity.

The study is based on a corpus of recently published TikTok videos and on a questionnaire, survey conducted with Franco-Algerian youth active on the platform. The analysis, which is qualitative and interpretive in nature, combines a sociolinguistic approach to code-switching (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1998; Rampton, 1995) with a multimodal analysis of visual and auditory signs (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017), in order to highlight the identity functions of these practices.

2. Materials and Methods

This research adopts a mixed-method approach, articulating digital content analysis and questionnaire survey, in order to explore the uses of language miscegenation and identity representations of young Franco-Algerians on TikTok. It falls within the field of digital sociolinguistics and multimodal discourse analysis, mobilizing the work of Androutsopoulos (2015), Tagg and Seargeant (2017) and Varis and Wang (2021).

2.1. TikTok Corpus Analysis

The first part of the study is based on a corpus of fifty TikTok videos published between January and June 2024 by young creators identifying themselves as Franco-Algerian and aged between 18 and 25. These videos were identified using hashtags and keywords representative of the communities studied (#dzpower, #Algérie, #franco-

algériens, #doubleculture, etc.). Only publications containing explicit verbal content (oral discourse, voice-over or text captions) and dealing with themes related to daily life, diasporic culture, humor or identity affirmation were selected. Each video was documented (date, number of views, hashtags, description) and then transcribed in full, distinguishing segments in French, dialectal Arabic and any borrowings from other languages.

2.2. Survey Questionnaire

The second part is based on a questionnaire survey aimed at collecting the declared practices and language representations of young French-Algerian users of TikTok. The questionnaire was distributed online via social networks, reaching a sample of 162 respondents aged between 18 and 30. It included socio-demographic questions (age, gender, family origin, level of education), closed-ended questions on TikTok usage (frequency of use, frequency of codic alternation, languages used, motivations) and a few open-ended questions aimed at capturing perceptions of the link between language and identity.

3. Results

3.1. Analysis of TikTok Videos

3.1.1. Typology of Code-Switching Practices

Analysis of the corpus of fifty videos produced by young Franco-Algerians reveals a strong presence of code switching, observed in 86% of the publications. This practice, defined by Gumperz (1982) as the passage from one linguistic code to another within the same interaction, manifests itself here mainly in two forms: Intra-Sentential code switching and Inter-Sentential code switching.

Table1. Distribution of code-switching types in the corpus

Type of code-switching	Number of occurrences	Percentage
Intra-Sentential	42	84 %
Inter-Sentential	21	42 %

Intra-sentential code-switching refers to the insertion of segments or isolated words from one language into a sentence produced mainly in another language (Poplack, 1980; Muysken, 2000). It is the most frequent type observed here and reflects an integrated and routine bilingualism in the discourse of Franco-Algerian youth.

(1) Oh donc tu es riche ? - Oui je le suis, *el hamdoulillah*.
 [Oh, so you're rich? - Yes, I am, praise be to God.]
(2) Il va faire le ménage *bessif*.
 [He's going to do the cleaning by force / against his will.]
(3) Sa particularité, c'est qu'elle est totalement imperméable, *hbibi*.
 [Its special feature is that it's completely waterproof, my dear.]

(4) Mes parents : mon fils **meskin**, ta journée de travail doit être compliquée.
   [My parents: my poor son, your workday must be tough.]
(5) Bonjour, tu vas bien frérot, **wallah** je te connais sur TikTok.
   [Hello, how are you bro? I swear to God, I know you from TikTok.]

These sequences illustrate the occasional insertion of words or expressions in Algerian Arabic (el hamdoulillah, bessif, hbibi, meskin, wallah) within a predominantly French syntax, which is characteristic of intra-sentential code-switching (Poplack, 1980; Muysken, 2000). This process does not create any structural break in the utterance, both languages coexist fluidly and naturally, functioning as a single integrated linguistic repertoire (Auer, 1998).

These occasional alternations serve specific pragmatic and interactional functions, contributing to the performance of a shared diasporic identity. For instance, "el hamdoulillah" (praise be to God) conveys an emotional and religious stance, "bessif" (by force) expresses a culturally marked modality of obligation, "hbibi" (my dear) and "meskin" (poor thing) carry an affective and relational charge, while "wallah" (I swear to God) reinforces the credibility of the statement by activating community-based in-group solidarity (Androutsopoulos, 2015).

This spontaneous integration of Arabic terms into French sentences shows that Arabic is perceived as an ordinary and legitimate linguistic resource in peer-to-peer digital interactions, rather than as a break from the dominant norm. It reflects a routine bilingualism, where switching from one language to another is no longer a marked act, but an integral part of the everyday speech of young Franco-Algerians.

Inter-sentential code-switching, on the other hand, involves producing entire successive sentences in two different languages (Gumperz, 1982). It is less frequent than intra-sentential switching but more marked on the enunciative level, and is often used to emphasize the emotional or identity-related weight of a statement.

(1) **Dorka kharja men l'hammam, dorka ndirlek vidéo beh tchoufi winou l'hammam hada yhabbal**, c'est un hammam à l'ancienne vraiment, attend je te montre déjà les horaires…
   [I've just come out of the hammam, I'll make you a video right now so you can see where it is, this hammam is amazing… it's really an old-style hammam, wait, let me show you the opening hours first…]
(2) Et le pire dans tout ça, c'est que quand j'ai fini, je lui ai dit, **allah yahefdek khouya, mliha gaa.**
   [And the worst part of it all is that when I was done, I told him, May God protect you, my brother, it's really great!]
(3) Je suis algérien !! **nkhaf ghi men Rabi** ! DZ
   [I am Algerian!! I fear only God!]

Here, code-switching often marks a shift in tone or register. Switching to Arabic serves to convey evaluative, expressive, or identity-related content, while French remains

associated with a narrative, explanatory, or factual register. In the first example "Dorka kharja men l'hammam, dorka ndirlek vidéo beh tchoufi winou l'hammam hada yhabbal, c'est un hammam à l'ancienne vraiment, attend je te montre déjà les horaires…" (I've just come out of the hammam, I'll make you a video right now so you can see where it is, this hammam is amazing… it's really an old-style hammam, wait, let me show you the opening hours first…), the sequence in Algerian Arabic, highly spontaneous and situated in familiar oral speech, expresses the speaker's immediate and affective enthusiasm about the place she wants to show, before shifting to French to adopt a more explanatory and informative tone. Similarly, in the second example "Et le pire dans tout ça, c'est que quand j'ai fini, je lui ai dit, allah yahefdek khouya, mliha gaa.", the narrative is conducted in French until the ending, where Arabic appears as an affective and communal closing formula "allah yahefdek khouya" (may God protect you, my brother), sealing the interpersonal relationship described and introducing an emotional nuance absent from the French. Finally, in the third example "Je suis algérien !! nkhaf ghi men Rabi ! DZ", the opposition between the identity declaration in French and the religious affirmation in Arabic produces an effect of communal pride and authenticity, reinforced by the Algerian flag.

This bilingual structuring in successive blocks illustrates what Gumperz (1982) describes as a symbolic function of code-switching. Indeed, switching to Arabic does not merely fill a lexical gap; it signals a change in the enunciative frame and activates a shared identity grounded in affective, religious, or communal dimensions.

3.1.2. Identity Function of Code-Switching

The analysis of the corpus shows that code-switching, far from being a mere reflection of bilingualism, functions as a tool for identity construction among young Franco-Algerians on TikTok. It serves to signal belonging to a community, to assert a dual cultural identity, and sometimes to play with linguistic stereotypes in a humorous revalorization process (Rampton, 1995; Androutsopoulos, 2015; Boukhris, 2023).

Some excerpts first reveal the use of code-switching as a marker of communal rapport:

(1) La musique **te3na** 😅🫠 DZ
    [Our music 😅🫠 DZ]
(2) Moi, quand je vais me marier avec un Chaoui **te3na** 😅💧 DZ
    [Me, when I marry one of our Chaoui 😅💧 DZ]
(3) Quand t'as la piscine pour toi seule au **bled**, mais que tu dois bronzer habillée pacq **hnaya** les zhommes »
    [When you have the pool all to yourself back home, but you have to sunbathe fully dressed because, you know, the men are around.]
(4) **Salam alykoum** la famille ! j'espère que vous allez bien !
    [Peace be upon you family! I hope you're all doing well!]

In these utterances, switching to Algerian dialect (teana, hnaya) and the use of cultural symbols (ᴅᴢ flag, community-related emojis) create an in-group effect. Here, code-switching is not intended to clarify the message but rather signals implicit belonging and presupposes an audience that shares the same cultural references. As Gumperz (1982) emphasizes, this type of usage activates a "we-code," distinct from standard French, which is perceived as a "they-code" associated with outsiders. The use of ritualized greeting formulas (salam alykoum la famille) situates the message within a communal interactional frame, reinforcing the symbolic closeness between speaker and audience.

Other sequences reflect an explicit assertion of dual cultural belonging, combining French and Arabic to simultaneously claim both identity poles of the diaspora:

(1) On est un couple mixte, bien sûr que je vais parler en arabe à mes enfants, ***bech mayensaouech beli houma jazayréine.*** »
[We are a mixed couple, of course I'm going to speak Arabic to my children, so that they don't forget that they are Algerian.]
(2) Je suis la vraie tiktokeuse chaouia ᴅᴢ😊
[I'm the real Chaouia TikToker ᴅᴢ😊]

In these cases, French serves as the language of argumentation, while Arabic becomes a vehicle for affect and cultural memory. Code-switching does not respond to a need for lexical clarification but fulfills a symbolic function of identity marking. Saying "bech mayensaouech beli houma jazayréine" (so that they don't forget that they are Algerian) gives the utterance an emotive and communal value that goes beyond its informational content. The speaker thus mobilizes both repertoires to make her dual belonging visible, in a gesture that legitimizes a bicultural identity (Rampton, 1995; Boukhris, 2023).

Finally, some creators resort to code-switching for humorous and revalorizing purposes, playing with the discursive features of Arabic to ironically deconstruct linguistic stereotypes:

(1) en Algérie, c'est jamais de notre faute, rien n'est jamais de notre faute, et ça ça s'entend même de la façon dont on parle, même les tournures de phrases, même la grammaire, la syntaxe des mots, elle est faite de sorte à ce qu'on soit responsable de rien, toujours la faute de l'extérieur, voilà par exemple en français tu rates ton train, tu n'es pas à l'heure tu dis « j'ai raté mon train », en Algérie, on dit pas ça, on dit « ***rah aliya*** train », ça veut dire le train est parti devant moi, c'est le train qui est parti, c'est pas moi, c'est de la faute du train en fait
[In Algeria, it's never our fault, nothing is ever our fault, and you can even hear it in the way we speak, in our sentence structures, our grammar, the syntax of our words. It's constructed so that we're never responsible for anything; it's always someone else's fault. For example, in French, if you miss your train and you're late, you say, "I missed my train." In Algeria, we don't say that. We say,

"The train went ahead of me" which literally means "the train went ahead of me", it's the train that left, not me; the fault lies with the train.]

(2) Chez nous on ne dit pas, voici mon adresse et appelle moi quand t'es là. Chez nous on dit : ***ki tfout hadik rond-point tkemel nichen, nichen, nichen hadik dakhla louwla, zawja,*** non ***; telta, lala ; rabaa hadik hiya***.
[When you pass that roundabout, keep going and count the entrances: the first one, no; the second one, no; the third one, no; the fourth one, that's the one.]

These excerpts mimic the discursive logics of Algerian speech to create a comic effect. This ironic stance does not aim to ridicule the language, but to transform it into a creative and valorizing resource, what Androutsopoulos (2015) describes as positive ethnic stylization. By presenting these forms in a playful register, speakers defuse the stigmas associated with the minoritized language and contribute to its symbolic revalorization in the digital space.

Thus, code-switching in this corpus appears as a performative tool for affiliation, legitimization, and self-stylization, allowing young Franco-Algerians to make their multiple belongings visible while reversing the implicit hierarchies between standard French and Arabic.

3.1.3. Multimodal Stylization in the Construction of Franco-Algerian Identity

The multimodal analysis of the corpus shows that identity construction does not rely solely on language, but draws on a set of combined semiotic resources that contribute to creating a recognizable diasporic aesthetic. These visual and auditory elements reinforce the symbolic value of bilingual discourse and amplify its communal reach.

Videos featuring code-switching are frequently accompanied by music of Algerian origin (raï, chaâbi, Algerian rap) or by emblematic tracks from the diasporic repertoire, thereby situating the discourse within a shared cultural universe (Androutsopoulos, 2015). Similarly, many creators insert filters and visual effects in the colors of the Algerian flag (green, white, red) or display the flag DZ directly in the background or as an emoji in their captions. This iconography is further reinforced by the intensive use of community hashtags (#dzpower, #bledien, #doubleculture, #teamdz), which function as markers of ethnic indexicality (Varis & Wang, 2011), facilitating the recognizability and circulation of content within the community.

A first set of photos illustrates this explicit use of national emblems. The three examples above ostentatiously mobilize visual and iconographic symbols directly associated with Algeria, thereby contributing to a frontal staging of national and diasporic belonging. The first image shows a young woman posing at an event organized by the Algerian Embassy in France, dressed in a bright red gown that contrasts with the Algerian flag placed beside her. The caption "Tahia bladi mon amour DZ ❤" ("Long live my country, my love") expresses a declaration of affection for the homeland, combining French and Algerian Arabic dialect and thus intertwining national symbols with diasporic emotion. The second image highlights a traditional market in Ghardaïa, accompanied by the caption "One of the most beautiful cities in Algeria DZ." Here, the showcasing of an emblematic landscape of Algerian heritage emphasizes territorial rootedness and a desire for visual transmission of the culture of origin, reinforced by hashtags (#algeria #ghardaia #sahara) that enhance community recognizability (Varis & Wang, 2011). The third image depicts a group of young men brandishing the Algerian flag in public space in France, while wearing the national football team jerseys. The caption "ONE TWO THREE DZ ❤," the rallying cry of Algerian supporters, reactivates a shared diasporic repertoire and functions as a marker of communal solidarity (Androutsopoulos, 2015). In these three cases, creators display the visual signs of their Algerian belonging in a direct and explicit way, contributing to what Thurlow and Jaworski (2017) describe as a "multimodal stylization of self," in which national identity is rendered visible and valorized in the digital space.

However, other publications in the corpus highlight a different modality of identity stylization, less focused on explicit national emblems than on implicit and aesthetic cultural signs. These contents rely on the activation of sartorial, culinary, and heritage codes which, without directly mobilizing the flag or slogans, nevertheless point to a shared Algerian belonging.

The first image illustrates the Amazigh New Year, with a young woman dressed in a Kabyle gown adorned with colorful embroidery, extending her greetings in Tamazight ("Assegas amegaz"). The choice of traditional clothing and jewelry functions here as symbolic markers of belonging, reinterpreted within TikTok's aesthetic framework. The second post highlights a woman dressed in the Chedda of Tlemcen, a sumptuous traditional costume inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, characterized by its golden embroidery, ornaments, and ceremonial dimension. She is holding a dish of Algiers-style Rechta, a traditional meal often prepared during religious and family celebrations. The association between the patrimonial attire and the emblematic dish stages a cultural identity doubly embodied, through both gastronomy and dress, and reflects a diasporic desire to preserve and revalorize a heritage that is at once everyday and prestigious. Finally, the third image features a woman wearing the traditional white haïk, posing in the Casbah of Algiers in front of a sculpted doorway. The interplay of ancestral clothing and a heritage setting functions as a mnemonic icon, evoking the historical depth of Algerian culture and its visual transmission.

In these three examples, Algerian belonging is stylized through objects, gestures, and settings that do not rely on explicit national emblems. Culture is expressed otherwise through fabrics, colors, dishes, and ritualized postures. In doing so, creators stage an implicit, aesthetic, and creative diasporic identity, where the ordinary (the meal, the clothing, the street) is elevated to the status of a shared symbol and reinvested in the digital space.

3.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Among the 162 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 110 identified as Franco-Algerian, with this sub-sample forming the core of our analysis. These results provide a better understanding of the practices, motivations, and linguistic representations of young people of Algerian descent who are active on TikTok.

3.2.1. Socio-Demographic Profile

In order to better understand the characteristics of the sample, we present below the distribution of respondents according to age, gender, and level of education.

Table 2. Profiles of Franco-Algerian respondents

Variables	Categories	Percentage
Age	18-21 years	46 %
	22-25 years	39 %
	26-30 years	15 %
Gender	Female	59 %
	Male	41 %
Level of education	Secondary education	72 %
	Higher education	21 %
	Other	7 %

The sample is characterized by its youth, with a large proportion of respondents between 18 and 25 years old (85%). Women are more represented (59%) than men (41%). In terms of education, a clear majority of respondents report being enrolled in secondary education (72%), while 21% are pursuing higher education. A small minority (7%) falls into other categories of educational background.

3.2.2. Use of TikTok

Almost all respondents use TikTok on a daily basis, with a high level of exposure. More than half also identify as content creators.

Table 3. Reported use of TikTok

Variables	Categories	Percentage
Frequency of use	Daily	87 %
	Several times a week	10 %
	Occasional	3 %
Estimated daily time	Less than 1 hour	28 %
	1–2 hours	49 %
	More than 2 hours	23 %
Content publication	Yes	57 %
	No	43 %

The results show a very intensive use of TikTok among respondents. Nearly nine out of ten use the platform daily, with only a small minority reporting occasional use. In terms of exposure time, almost half (49%) spend between one and two hours per day on TikTok, while nearly a quarter (23%) exceed two hours of daily use, indicating strong engagement. Moreover, more than half of respondents (57%) go beyond passive consumption and publish their own content, confirming that TikTok is not only a space for entertainment but also a participatory platform where users actively contribute.

3.2.3. Language practices

In order to better understand the reasons guiding the linguistic practices of young Franco-Algerians on TikTok, the following table presents the main reported motivations for the use of Arabic.

Table 4. Languages used in TikTok posts

Declared languages	Percentage
French + Algerian Arabic	78 %
French only	18 %
Arabic only	0 %
French + Arabic + others (English, Kabyle)	4 %

The results confirm that the overwhelming majority of respondents (78%) combine French and Algerian Arabic in their TikTok publications, which illustrates the centrality of code-switching in diasporic discourse. The exclusive use of French is reported by 18% of respondents, a significantly higher proportion than those who rely solely on Arabic, which is absent from the data (0%). A small minority (4%) declare using a mix of French, Arabic, and other languages such as English or Kabyle. These figures highlight both the predominance of bilingual practices and the marginalization of Arabic when not combined with French, pointing to the hybrid and dynamic nature of linguistic expression among young Franco-Algerians on TikTok.

3.2.4. Motivations associated with the use of Arabic

In order to better understand the reasons guiding the linguistic practices of young Franco-Algerians on TikTok, the following table presents the main reported motivations for the use of Arabic.

Table 5. Motivations for using Arabic

Motivation	Percentage
To assert one's cultural identity and origins	78 %
To create closeness with the audience	62 %
To be perceived as authentic	59 %
To stand out in the TikTok algorithm	21 %
To produce a comic / aesthetic affect	18 %

The results indicate that the use of Arabic on TikTok is primarily motivated by identity-related concerns. Indeed, 78% of respondents report using it to assert their cultural identity and origins. This dimension is reinforced by the desire to create closeness with the audience (62%) and to be perceived as authentic (59%), two motivations that reflect a search for legitimacy within the online diasporic space. More strategic uses appear to be in the minority, with only 21% mentioning the wish to stand out in the TikTok algorithm, and 18% indicating the use of Arabic to produce a comic or aesthetic effect. These findings

confirm that the language functions mainly as an identity and relational marker, rather than as a tool of media or stylistic differentiation.

The analysis of the open-ended questionnaire responses shows that the use of Arabic among young Franco-Algerians is not the result of a mere linguistic automatism, but rather a conscious choice strongly infused with identity, affective, and social values. Far from being confined to domestic or family use, Arabic plays a central role in how these young people construct and express their cultural belonging on social media. The responses highlight that the language is invested with a plural symbolic dimension, it serves to assert Algerian origins and pride, to maintain a bond with the community of belonging, and to showcase a Franco-Algerian dual culture experienced as complementary. These different motivations emerge consistently across the discourses analyzed.

(1) I am very interested in Arabic because it is the language of my origins, and it is thanks to it that I truly feel Algerian.
(2) Speaking Arabic shows that I have Arab origins. For me, Arabic is a source of pride, a reminder of who I am.
(3) Being Franco-Algerian, for me, goes hand in hand with knowing at least a minimum of dialect, and even trying to improve it.

These statements highlight that Arabic is perceived as a language of identity anchoring. Participants associate its use with an explicit acknowledgment of their Algerian origins and with a strong sense of cultural pride. Speaking Arabic thus becomes a symbolic act of self-assertion, allowing them to maintain continuity with their family and national history while legitimizing their belonging to the Franco-Algerian diaspora.

(1) For me, speaking Arabic, even just a few words, feels like keeping a direct link with my parents and grandparents.
(2) When I mix French and Arabic, I feel like I'm showing my true identity, the one that brings my two cultures together.
(3) Arabic is not just a language, it's also a way of staying connected to my roots and not forgetting where I come from.

In this case, Arabic is described as a vehicle of family and cultural continuity. It allows young Franco-Algerians to keep alive the memory of previous generations while asserting a hybrid identity. The use of Arabic is not limited to a tool of communication; it carries a strong affective and symbolic value, embodying transmission, loyalty to one's origins, and the expression of a dual cultural belonging.

(4) Speaking Arabic and French at the same time is a way of highlighting this dual culture that is part of our everyday life.
(5) Using both languages allows me to show that I can move between two worlds without difficulty, as a reflection of my life between France and Algeria.
(6) Mixing the two languages is my way of affirming that I am French but that my Algerian roots are still present and part of who I am.

These testimonies reveal that the use of Arabic is also a strategy for valuing a bicultural identity that is openly embraced. Far from being experienced as incompatible, the two languages are seen as complementary and as reflecting the daily reality of their migratory journey. The alternation between French and Arabic thus becomes a tool for staging this dual belonging, which is presented as an asset rather than a contradiction.

4. Discussion

The joint analysis of the TikTok corpus and the survey conducted with 110 young Franco-Algerians highlights an intensive and deliberate use of code-switching as a tool for identity construction. The creators navigate between French and Algerian Arabic with a fluency that suggests a deep integration of this multilingual repertoire into their daily digital practices. Within the corpus, intraphrastic code-switching overwhelmingly dominates (84% of the videos), while interphrasal switching, more marked, appears in 42% of cases. This trend is echoed in self-reported data, nearly two-thirds of respondents (67%) state that they switch spontaneously, without conscious effort. This concordance suggests that, for these young people, linguistic hybridity is no longer perceived as a transgression but as a normalized and legitimate form of communication (Auer, 1998; Androutsopoulos, 2015).

This hybridity carries strong symbolic value. Switching to Algerian Arabic often occurs in moments of camaraderie, emotion, or self-irony, functioning as a "we-code" (Gumperz, 1982) signaling belonging to a group that shares common experiences and references. This communal dimension, already evident in the humorous sequences of the corpus, is fully confirmed in the survey: 78% report using Arabic to assert their identity and origins, and 71% consider that it strengthens their sense of belonging. In this sense, code-switching is not merely an expressive tool; it becomes an identity emblem, a means of making visible and legitimizing a dual belonging that is often rendered invisible in the public sphere (Rampton, 1995).

Open-ended responses from the survey confirm this role as a resource for intra-community rapport. Several young people state that "speaking like this shows who we really are" or that "mixing the two languages is being oneself, between the two cultures." These statements align with observations from the corpus, where switches are often mobilized to create a sense of closeness with an audience perceived as sharing the same diasporic experience. This appropriation of a minoritized code as a positive marker overturns implicit linguistic hierarchies and aligns with the idea of ethnic stylization proposed by Rampton (1995).

Identity performance, however, does not rely solely on language. The analyzed videos frequently combine the use of Arabic with visual and auditory symbols: Algerian flags, tricolor filters, emojis, community hashtags (#dz, #algerie), and raï or chaâbi music. These elements construct an immediately recognizable diasporic aesthetic, reinforcing the identity value of bilingual discourse. Even though the survey did not specifically address this multimodal dimension, several respondents mentioned that they "always add emojis or music from back home" to "show [their] roots" or "let people immediately know that [they are] of Algerian origin." These practices confirm that identity is co-constructed

through a coherent set of multimodal signs, as highlighted by Varis and Wang (2011) and Thurlow & Jaworski (2017).

Overall, the results show that young Franco-Algerians mobilize code-switching and multimodality not to compensate for linguistic insecurity, but as a strategy for asserting a legitimate bicultural identity in a globalized digital space. They use TikTok as a space of appropriation, where Arabic, often minoritized in institutional spaces, becomes a resource for self-valorization and community visibility (Androutsopoulos, 2015). This dynamic illustrates a positive reconfiguration of dual belonging, where language, image, and sound are articulated to assert a diasporic presence confidently in the digital sphere.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the role of linguistic hybridity in the identity construction of young Franco-Algerians on TikTok, combining a qualitative content analysis with a survey. Examination of the corpus revealed a strong presence of code-switching, primarily in its intraphrastic form, as well as a close integration of linguistic, visual, and auditory resources. Survey data confirmed this trend, showing that the majority of respondents perceive the combined use of French and Arabic as a spontaneous, legitimate practice that constitutes an integral part of their identity.

These results highlight that code-switching does not reflect linguistic insecurity but rather a deliberate identity choice, functioning as a "we-code" marker of communal belonging within the Franco-Algerian diaspora. The analyzed productions also demonstrate that the construction of this identity is not based solely on language but on a coherent multimodal ensemble, mobilizing symbols, music, hashtags, and visual effects that contribute to displaying a recognizable and valorized diasporic aesthetic.

In this sense, TikTok emerges as a space of appropriation and visibility, where young Franco-Algerians transform a minoritized language in the public sphere into a legitimate resource for self-stylization and collective valorization. These findings align with recent research on online identity performativity and confirm that digital platforms constitute privileged spaces for expressing diasporic subjectivities. They show that linguistic hybridity and multimodality are not merely stylistic features but powerful tools for recognition, affirmation, and legitimization of dual belonging in a transnational context.

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