



AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AHMED DRAÏA - ADRAR

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS AND ENGLISH

# Investigating Electronically-Mediated Communication among Algerian Users of Facebook

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the

Master Degree in Linguistics and Didactics

Candidate:

Taha Nadhir BENAHMED

Supervisor:

Mr. Mohamed OMARI

Examination Board:

President: Dr. Abdelhamed BESSAID

Examiner: Mr. Hassen Réda BOUKLI

Supervisor: Mr. Mohamed OMARI



TO MY FAMILY.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor and all those who helped, in many ways, in making this work possible.

## Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the linguistic features of electronically-mediated communication among Algerian users of Facebook using the following questions:

- How do Algerian Facebook users use language to satisfy communication needs?
- What are the new language strategies to which users of Facebook in Algeria resort when communicating?

The data used in this study were collected from Algerian Facebook pages. The selection of these pages was based on the number of fans and their participations.

According to the analysis of samples, Algerian Arabic is the dominant variety by which users communicate. The findings of this study show that Facebook communication among Algerians is not simply speech-like nor simply written-like, but bears both of these characteristics at the same time. A number of features were observed, such as, the use of emoticons, onomatopoeic spelling, symbolic laughter, and abbreviations. Novel terms and expressions were also observed.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**AA: Algerian Arabic**

**AIM: AOL Instant Messenger**

**AOL: America Online**

**APS: Algerian Press Service**

**AUF: Algerian Users of Facebook**

**CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States**

**CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication**

**EMAIL: Electronic Mail**

**EMC: Electronically-Mediated Communication**

**Eng: English**

**Fb: Facebook**

**FtF: Face-to-Face**

**Fr: French**

**HTTP: Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol**

**ICQ: I Seek You**

**ICT: Information and Communication Technology**

**IM: Instant Messaging**

**IRC: Internet Relay Chat**

**MSA: Modern Standard Arabic**

**MSN: Microsoft Network**

**RL: Real-Life**

**SMS: Short Message Service**

**SNS: Social Networking Site**

**Tam:** Tamazight

**WWW:** World Wide Web

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Internet users by 100 inhabitants in 2013.....	9
Figure 2. An example showing how interaction is carried out on Facebook.....	12
Figure 3. Instant messaging using Skype.....	15
Figure 4. Live chatting using IRC Messenger .....	17
Figure 5. Email communication through Live service.....	18
Figure 6. Text messaging through iMessages.....	19
Figure 7. Use of language among Algerian users of Facebook .....	40
Figure 8. French-based communication in Facebook .....	41
Figure 9. MSA-based communication in Facebook .....	42
Figure 10. English-based communication in Facebook.....	43
Figure 11. Tamazight-based communication in Facebook .....	44
Figure 12. The use of Roman and Arabic alphabets by Algerian users of Facebook.....	45
Figure 13. The use of code switching and code mixing among Algerian users of Facebook ..	51
Figure 14. The use of punctuation in comments by Algerian users of Facebook.....	56
Figure 15. The use of capitalization in comments written by Algerian users of Facebook.....	58
Figure 16. The use of syllabograms in comments written by Algerian users of Facebook.....	61
Figure 17. Keypad in an Android-based phone .....	69
Figure 18. The percentage of typos made in comments written by Algerians .....	70
Figure 19. The different kinds of typos made in comments .....	72
Figure 20. The use of smileys in comments by Algerian users of Facebook .....	73
Figure 21. The use of abbreviations in comments by Algerian users of Facebook.....	77

**List of Tables**

<b>Table 1. Five most Popular Social Networking Sites in the World .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Table 2. Differences between Speech and Writing by Crystal .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Table 3. Roman Script Used to Represent Arabic Letters .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Table 4. Roman Script Used to Represent Arabic Vowels.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 5. Other Algerian Arabic Sounds Written with Roman and Arabic Script.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 6. Examples of Syllabogrames Used by Algerian Users of Facebook .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 7. Facebook Emoticons.....</b>	<b>74</b>



## Contents

Dedication .....	i
Acknowledgments.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Abbreviations .....	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Tables .....	vii
Contents .....	viii
General Introduction .....	1
<b>Chapter One</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Introduction.....	7
1.1. Internet.....	8
1.2. Social Networking Sites.....	10
1.3. Facebook.....	11
1.4. Electronically-Mediated Communication.....	13
1.4.1. Definition .....	13
1.4.2. Previous EMC Studies .....	14
1.4.3. Modes and Forms of EMC.....	14
1.4.3.1. Synchronous EMC.....	15
1.4.3.1.1. Instant Messaging .....	15
1.4.3.1.2. Online Chat.....	16

1.4.3.2. Asynchronous EMC.....	17
1.4.3.2.1. Email.....	17
1.4.3.2.2. Short Message Service.....	18
1.4.3.3. Social Networking: Synchronous or Asynchronous? .....	20
1.5. The Impact of Technology on Language .....	20
1.6. Linguistic Features of EMC.....	25
1.6.1. Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spacing .....	26
1.6.1.1. Punctuation .....	26
1.6.1.2. Capitalization .....	27
1.6.1.3. Spacing.....	27
1.6.2. Spelling .....	28
1.6.3. Emoticons .....	29
1.6.4. Abbreviations.....	30
1.6.5. Grammatical Features .....	30
1.6.6. Neologism .....	31
1.7. Classification of EMC.....	32
1.7.1. EMC as a Register .....	32
1.7.2. EMC as a New Style .....	33
1.7.3. EMC as a Pidgin or a Creole.....	33
1.7.4. EMC as a Variety.....	34
1.8. The Linguistic Situation in Algeria.....	35

1.8.1. Algerian Arabic.....	35
1.8.2. Code Switching and Code Mixing.....	36
Chapter Summary .....	37
<b>Chapter Two.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Introduction.....	39
2.1. Use of Language .....	40
2.2. Romanized Algerian Arabic .....	45
2.2.1. Other Choices.....	50
2.3. Code Switching and Code Mixing.....	51
2.4. Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spacing .....	55
2.4.1. Punctuation .....	55
2.4.2. Capitalization.....	58
2.4.3. Spacing.....	60
2.5. Spelling .....	61
2.5.1. Onomatopoeic Spelling.....	67
2.6. Typos.....	69
2.7. Emoticons .....	73
2.8. Abbreviations.....	76
2.9. Grammatical Features .....	78
2.10. Neologism .....	78
Chapter Summary .....	83

General Conclusion.....	84
Works Cited .....	87



# General Introduction

## General Introduction

According to *ICT facts and figures*, the number of people involved in Electronically-Mediated Communication (EMC) has incredibly increased in recent years due to the evolution of the internet, especially, with social networking, which is having a great impact on language use.

The new creative ways of writing that are used when communicating through social networking have drawn our attention to make an investigation about EMC in Algeria, taking as an example Facebook comments, which represent important variations.

We have been pushed by the curiosity to know more about the phenomenon and by discovering that little is known about the linguistic features of this online social networking website (SNS) in Algeria, because the phenomenon has not yet been fully explored. In fact, the development of social networking and its increasing importance in the world have driven us to respond to calls for doing more researches on the issue.

This work utilizes Facebook (Fb) as a research context for investigation. In the last few years, the branch of linguistics dedicated to EMC, in Algeria, has focused mainly on exploring SMS language, email language, and chat language, ignoring social networking websites like Fb. In addition to that, Algerians tend to prefer using SNSs to communicate with each other, as shown by web traffic provider *Alexa*.

This research uses the term EMC, recognizing the enormous area of communication devices. EMC encompasses communication carried out using computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other handheld mobile devices, and can occur synchronously or asynchronously.

In this research, the special language situation in Algeria is presented as it is. This work covers Arabic written with Arabic and Roman alphabets. This study covers, also, EMC conducted in French and English among Algerian users of Fb. Tamazight does not take part in this research due to our incompetency in this variety.

The aim of this research is to make a linguistic examination of creative uses of language in the comments posted by Algerians on Fb, by bringing out examples of language practices, and determining the main unconventional features characterizing Fb language. The second objective of this research is to trace briefly the reasons behind this phenomenon.

The significance of this work lies in the fact that it is an attempt to push further our understanding of the phenomenon by examining different features of EMC used in languages other than English. We try, in this work, to respond to many calls for further linguistic examinations of electronically mediated communication in non-English-speaking countries. In addition, this work will, hopefully, help in shifting the discussion from being purely linguistic to other levels, as it can be considered a stepping stone for further sociolinguistic, sociological, and psychological studies – in order to shed light on the forces that shape this type of communication, and how it may affect traditional writing and even speaking.

The following questions are raised for investigation.

- How do Algerian Facebook users use language to achieve communication needs?
- What are the new language strategies to which users of Facebook in Algeria resort when communicating?

By trying to find answers to these research questions, the following hypothesis is proposed.

- EMC conditions influence language practices used by Algerian Facebook users when communicating.

This work is made up of a general introduction, two chapters, and a general conclusion.

The first chapter is devoted to the nature of EMC, where an overview about EMC and its different modes, forms, and features is provided. Discussing EMC is relevant to the

continuity of discussion about Facebook communication and the language used by its users – giving a theoretical background to the study.

The second chapter is about data analysis and findings. The samples taken from public pages in Fb are examined to see whether they match or not with the research hypothesis.

In light of the information presented in the two chapters, the general conclusion provides a generic picture of Facebook communication among Algerians.

In this study, we have recourse to one research approach which involves collecting samples from public pages in Fb and examining the findings to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon. We try to analyze different sorts of features like, letter/number homophones, misspelling or typos, punctuation, capitalization, and spacing. In this work, we try, also, to explore certain processes common in Facebook communication, such as, novel words and expressions, abbreviations, and typographic representations of extra-linguistic features. The selection of pages was based on the number of fans and their participations. In order to make sure that the comments were written by Algerian users, certain measures were taken. For example, choosing threads in which the topic is targeted for an Algerian audience, and checking certain profiles in order to be sure of the owner's origin. Most of the examples selected and shown in this study were posted using the public setting. According to article number four in section number two of Facebook statement of rights and responsibilities, when publishing contents using the Public setting, EVERYONE, including people off of Facebook, are allowed to access and use that information, and to associate it with its owner by including their name and profile picture. The collection of examples published using the private setting was conducted after obtaining owners' consent and explaining how samples will be used in the study – as states article number seven in section number five.



One of the limitations of the study is the fact that the theme of this research covers a very recent subject which has been structured in the last few years. Because of this, literature on the study of the linguistic aspects of SNSs on languages other than English is scarce. Most researches explored EMC in English-speaking countries – showing no interest in other places where other languages are the principle medium of communication. In addition to that, these works analyzed the subject from other approaches, such as identifying the sense of community in the relationship between participants in social networking.

Chapter

One

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, alongside the breath-taking advancement witnessed in computer technology and internet, electronically-mediated communication has gained an observable importance in our society. This, in fact, has led to the appearance of new forms of discourse. In this context, this chapter gives a brief description of the internet and social networking. Then, a discussion of the nature of electronically mediated communication is provided alongside its forms and features. This chapter covers also some of the ideas concerning the linguistic situation in Algeria.

## 1.1. Internet

The internet was first developed as an experimental network, in the 1960s, which quickly grew becoming the world's largest computer network. Crystal describes the internet as “an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any registered computer (or host) on one network to any host on any other network” (02).

The World Wide Web (or just WWW as commonly known) was developed in 1989 after Tim Berners-Lee and his colleagues at CERN, the European Center for Nuclear Research, created the Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which standardized communication between clients and servers. HTTP provided the basis for World Wide Web (Bray 283).

With the introduction of web browsers, the World Wide Web became more and more used. According to *ICT Facts and Figures*, over 2.7 billion people are using the internet, which corresponds to 39% of the world's population. Yet, there are still large disparities observed about the penetration of internet in different regions of the world. According to the latest statistics provided by *ICT Facts and Figures* in 2013, Europe is the region with the highest internet penetration rate in the world (75%), followed by the Americas (61%). In contrast, only 16% of Africans use the internet – half the penetration rate of Asia and the Pacific.

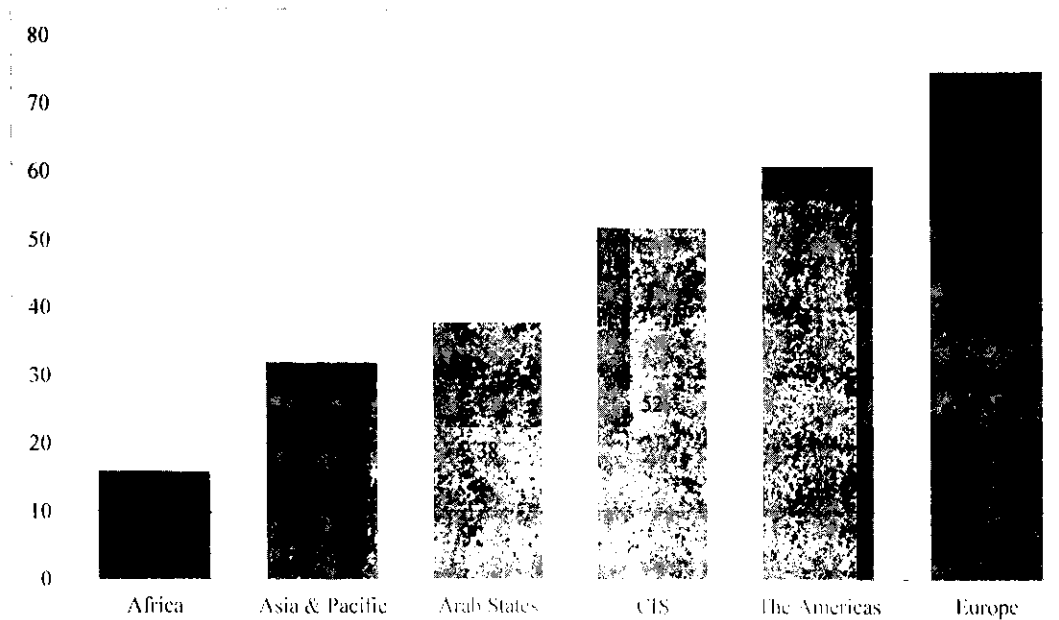


Figure 1. Internet users by 100 inhabitants in 2013. (*ICT Facts and Figures*)

In Algeria, eleven million is the overall sum of internet users, as stated by Moussa Benhamadi, the ex-Minister of Post and Information Technology and Communication, in an interview with the APS (Algerian Press Service) on the eve of the international day of telecommunication and information (El Watan 2).

Becoming important in daily life, the internet provides a wide range of services. Users access the internet to search for information and news, to consult e-mails, to send files, to buy products, to chat, and to do many other things. In the last few years, social networking has become a tendency, gaining interest among internet users. In Algeria, for example, according to *Alexa*, Facebook is the most visited website by Algerian internet users in 2013.

## 1.2. Social Networking Sites

Information and communication technologies, in the last few years, have flourished quickly creating new forms of social engagement. In this sense, Wellman writes that “When a computer network connects people, it is a social network. Just as a computer network is a set of machines connected by a set of cables, a social network is a set of people (or organization or other social entities) connected by a set of socially-meaningful relationships” (180).


Social Networking Sites (or just SNSs) are defined by Boyd and Ellison as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (211).

SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have attracted millions of users to fulfil different networking needs by providing incredibly rich communication, pictures, audio recordings, and video recordings that can be freely shared by anyone with a connection to the internet (Ryan 06).





In the last few years, some SNSs disappeared while others gained more interest. Among the top SNSs that have attracted millions of users is Facebook.

Table 1

Five most Popular Social Networking Sites in the World

Rank	Name	Logo
1	Facebook	

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2	Twitter	
3	LinkedIn	
4	Pinterest	
5	Google Plus	

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Source: Top Sites. *Alexa*. Alexa Internet, Inc. 26 Dec. 2013. Web. 26 Dec 2013.

### 1.3. Facebook

Facebook describes itself as “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers” (Mission). Founded in 2004, the mission of Fb is to give people sharing power to make the world more open and connected. In September 2013, Fb stated, in its news room page, that there were 727 million daily active users on average with 874 million monthly active users used its mobile products – approximately 80% of Fb daily active users were outside the United States and Canada.

According to *SocialBakers*, the overall sum of Fb users, in Algeria, reached 6.622.312, as of November 2013, 67% are male users and 33% female users – the largest age group is currently 18-24, followed by users in the age of 25-34.

As a social networking site, Fb combines the best of blogs, online forums and groups, photo and video sharing, and much more. In comparing Fb to other SNSs, like Myspace, Vander Veer comments by saying that “Facebook does the same stuff as Myspace, but in a cleaner, more controlled, more professional way” (01).



**Zoubir Ameur**  
March 9 ٤\*

Les Hommes 😊 في الجزائر، الكلمة الفرنسية التي مفردتها جمع هي #KaMoulahatha

Like · Comment · Share 👍 32 🗨️ 10

31 people like this.

**Sidah Hamid \*les Zommes**  
March 9 at 10:24pm · Like · 👍 2

**Soufiane Briki nta les HOMMES Zoubir 😊**  
March 9 at 10:24pm · Like · 👍 1

**El Farouk Mokrani**  
الكلمة الوحيدة التي يشددها بعض الناس يدبروا فيها ٦ حركات ليززززززوم  
March 9 at 10:29pm · Like · 👍 2

**Saimi Aissa**  
جمع التقدير  
March 9 at 10:30pm · Like · 👍 2

**Fodil Elgnawi**  
و يمكن أن تكون مذكر و مؤنث في نفس الوقت  
March 9 at 10:40pm · Like · 👍 2

**Zoubir Ameur Fodil**  
صَحَّ ههوه قالوها على الاستعادة البجاوية التي هدرت في اودان  
March 9 at 10:56pm · Like · 👍 1

**Ismail Guesmi**  
كايبة ليزوم  
March 10 at 4:48am · Like · 👍 1

Figure 2. An example showing how interaction is carried out on Facebook.



## 1.4. Electronically-Mediated Communication

### 1.4.1 Definition

EMC (Electronically-mediated communication) and CMC (Computer-mediated communication) are umbrella terms for the type of language transmitted via ICTs (Information communication Technologies). Both Terms can be used interchangeably and they encompass any communication carried out using computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other handheld mobile devices. December defines EMC as “the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages” (qtd. in Laghos et al. 161). Santoro (11) describes EMC as “. . . computer applications for direct human-to-human communication. This includes electronic mail, group conferencing systems, and interactive ‘chat’ systems. At its broadest, it can encompass virtually all computer uses.”

Thurlow et al. (15), on the other hand, suggest that the most effective way of defining EMC is by focusing on the three-core concept they suggest:

Core one: communication is a dynamic process which usually serves more than one function.

Core two: communication can never exist in a vacuum, but it is mediated through interactions between people and by means of any number of different verbal and non-verbal modes. In the case of CMC, another layer of mediation is added, which is the technological mediation.

Core three: CMC should be broad enough to include all computing technology which more explicitly facilitates human communication, as almost everything we do is in some way or another mediated by computers.

#### **1.4.2. Previous EMC Studies**

In the last few years, EMC gained popularity among researchers. In this respect, Cumming (04) comments that “With the explosive growth of the Internet to include just about anyone who is interested, researchers into Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) are beginning to notice that computer networking constitutes a new revolution in communication media, on a par with speech, writing, and print.”

A number of studies about EMC appeared in the last few years, for example, Naomi S. Baron 1984, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008, J. December 1996, 1997, Sandra Greiffenstern 2010, David Crystal 2001, 2006, 2008, Gerald M. Santoro 2001, A. J. Romiszowski 1992, J. D. Cumming 1995. Unfortunately, as Cherny states that research on “CMC has occurred on the fringes of many disciplinary traditions, often making it difficult to find previous work on the topic” (02).

In order to lay foundation of our study – since not many studies have focused on Fb and social networking in particular – it is important to discuss the different modes and forms of EMC.

#### **1.4.3. Modes and Forms of EMC**

One of the main differentiations of modes of EMC is the one between synchronous and asynchronous EMC.

### 1.4.3.1. Synchronous EMC

Synchronous EMC is communication that does require participants to be online and available at the same time in order for communication to take place successfully (Segerstad 58). Instant messaging and chat rooms, for example, are forms of synchronous EMC.

#### 1.4.3.1.1. Instant Messaging

Instant Messaging (IM) is a very popular form of synchronous EMC. Usually, there is one sender of a message and one recipient. There are several IM protocols, for example, Skype, ICQ, MSN, AIM, and Yahoo. When both users are online and logged in, they can send each other messages via their instant messenger which appear on their screen. Instant messages are often rather short and even more casual than email (Baron 13), but there is, also, the tendency of employing IM in business situations, where messages might have another linguistic style (Greiffenstern 39).

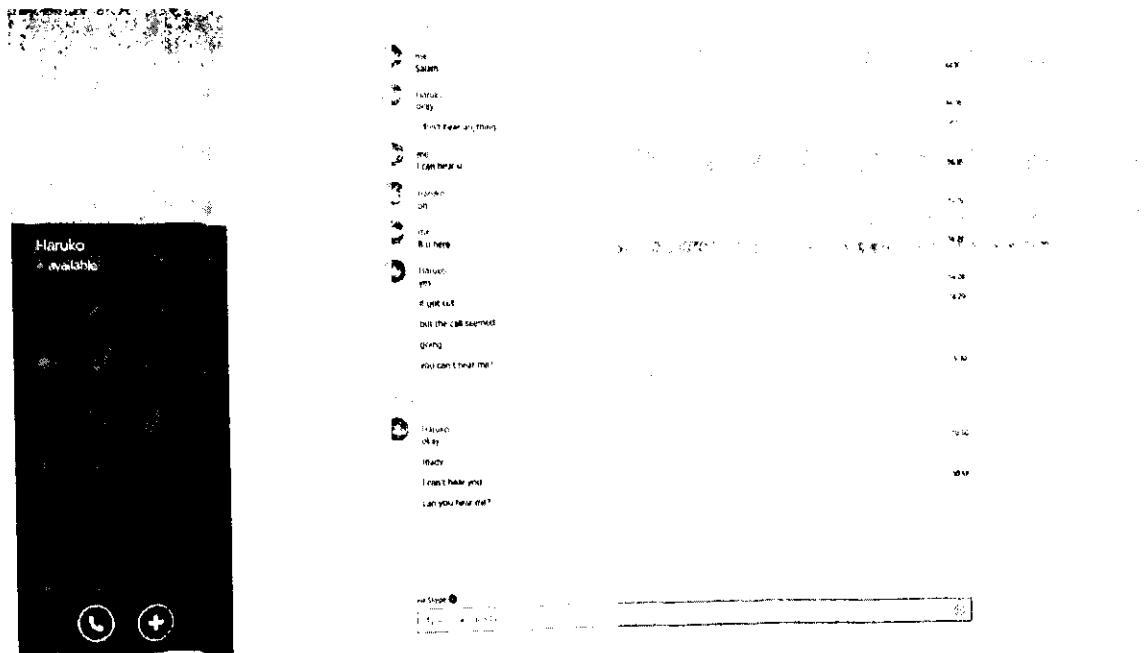


Figure 3. Instant messaging using Skype.

#### **1.4.3.1.2. Online Chat**

Online chat refers to real-time transmission of text messages from sender to receiver (Wikipedia). Al- Sa'Di and Hamdan (409) state that online chat is a simulation of real-life (RL) and face-to-face (FtF) conversations. In that sense, Peris et al. describe online chat rooms as follows:

Online chat rooms are a meeting point that allows people to communicate with other people otherwise inaccessible. This environment represents a sort of alternative pub among the different socially oriented scenarios that boost interpersonal contact a virtual realm displaying the distinctive attributes of a new communication code. As a consequence, chat users have developed their own language, a language where speed prevails over correct spelling, contributing thus to a greater interactivity. (43-44)

Users interact with each other in synchronous conversations altogether in a chat room. Their interactions are shown permanently in a scrolling screen.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is an example of one of the main systems available to users, consisting of thousands of rooms dealing with different topics (Crystal 12).

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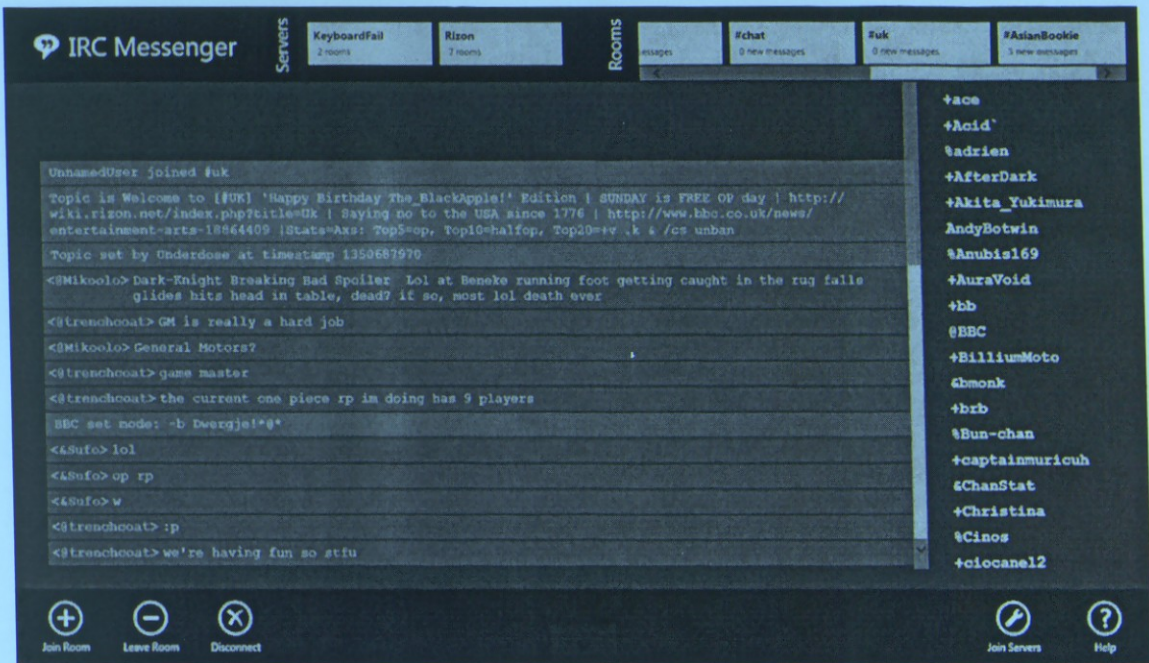


Figure 4. Live chatting using IRC Messenger.

#### 1.4.3.2. Asynchronous EMC

“Asynchronous EMC is communication that does not require participants to be online and available at the same time or place in order for communication to take place successfully” (Segerstad 58). Emails and SMSs are examples of asynchronous EMC forms.

##### 1.4.3.2.1. Email

Email communication typically takes place between parties sending messages to each other’s mailbox. This makes email less spontaneous than synchronous chat group communication (Crystal 10). Email is defined by Herring (114) as “text-based asynchronous, and involves message-by-message transmission. A distinctive feature of the e-mail message that

dates back to the early 1970s is its header, containing ‘to’, ‘from’, and subject lines.” Most Emails are not intended for public view. This influences the kind of language used.

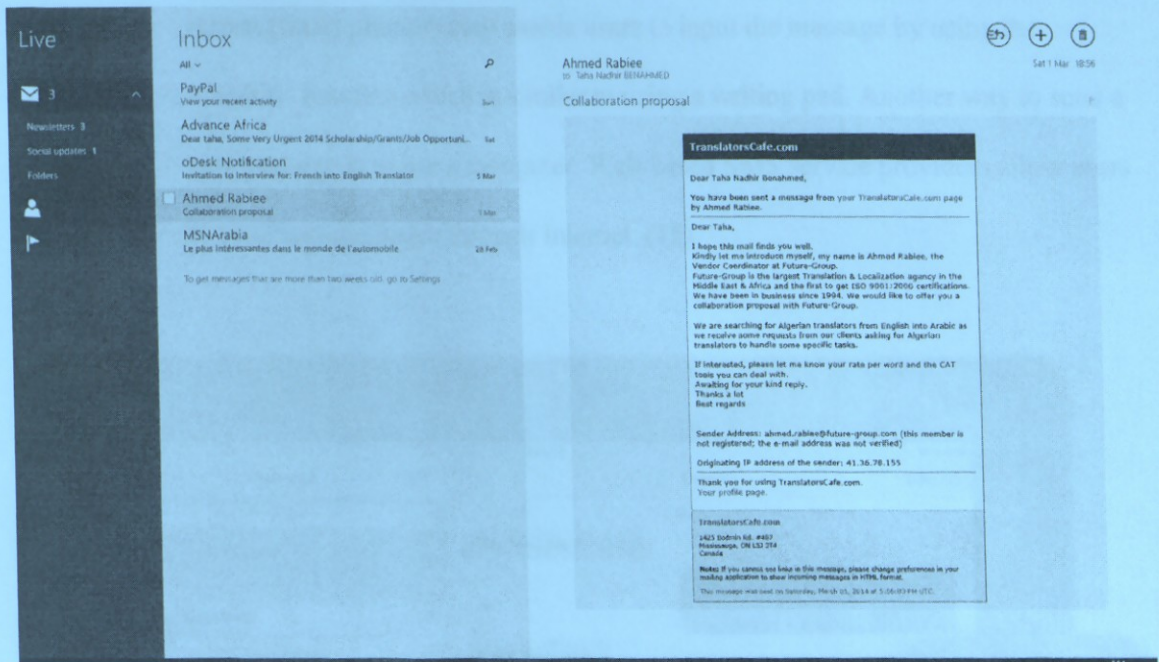


Figure 5. Email communication through Live service.

#### 1.4.3.2.2. Short Message Service

Short Message Service (or just SMS as it is commonly known) is considered an asynchronous mode of communication. It employs writing as a means of expression. The asynchronicity, according to Segerstad, allows writers time to compose and edit messages before sending them. Compared to other modes of EMC, text communication via mobile phones and tablets is more constrained vis-à-vis production and perception conditions. Most commonly, messages are limited to 160 characters in length.

Describing the way texters send their SMSs, Li states that:

One of the most common ways of sending an SMS is by typing on the keypad of the mobile phone (Segerstad 2002). Some mobile phones equipped with a touch-screen (smart phones) may enable users to input the message by using the 'Graffiti' function which is similar to using a writing pad. Another way to send a text message is to use a computer. Web-based SMS service providers allow users to send text messages through Internet. (13)

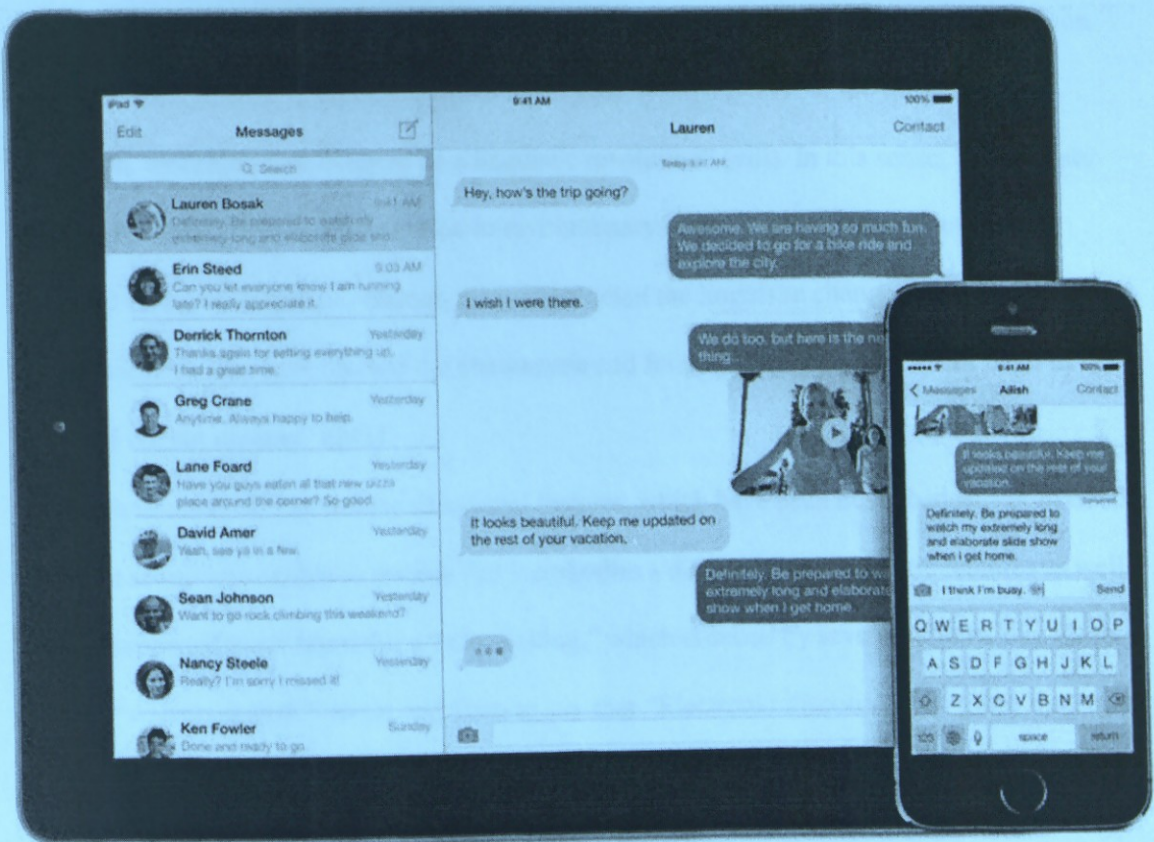


Figure 6. Text messaging through iMessages "iMessages". Apple. Apple. 2014. Web."



### 1.4.3.3. Social Networking: Synchronous or Asynchronous?

Today, SNSs are the latest mode of EMC. SNSs in particular have created unique arenas for EMC. Sites such as Fb are indicative of the new form of EMC used in different situations and under different circumstances (Greiffenstern 39-40). As mentioned earlier, interaction can occur in a number of ways on Fb. Depending on whether the interaction takes place in real time or in postponed time, Facebook can be classified as being both synchronous and asynchronous.

### 1.5. The Impact of Technology on Language

In a prescient article in 1984, Baron reflected on the possible impact of technology on language. This, in fact, is also commented by Crystal by saying that “If the Internet is a revolution, therefore, it is likely to be a linguistic revolution” (viii). In this sense, Warschauer adds: “Any medium of communication as revolutionary as the internet is bound to have a profound effect on language. Though many have noted the linguistic changes emerging in online communication, few have studied the phenomena and fewer yet have written about them in a clear and cogent manner” (241).

Because EMC has unique situational features, which have been described earlier in EMC modes, it seems reasonable to assume that it embodies a distinct set of linguistic features as well, that are supposed to set frame for a “new-writing,” which is called by several writers, like Elmer-Dewitt, “written speech.” Boyd and Brewer say that “Electronic discourse is writing that very often reads as if it were being spoken – that is, as if the sender were writing talking” (02).

What makes EMC interesting is the way it relies on characteristics belonging to both writing and speaking. Before carrying on with the characteristics of EMC language and knowing whether it should be considered closer to writing or speech, we need to be clear about the nature

of spoken and written language. In this sense, Crystal provides a summary of the chief differences between spoken and written language.

Table 2

## Differences between Speech and writing by Crystal

Speech	Writing
1. Speech is time-bound, dynamic, and transient. It is part of an interaction in which both participants are usually present, and the speaker has a particular addressee (or several addressees) in mind.	Writing is space-bound, static, and permanent. It is the result of a situation in which the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often does not know who the reader is going to be (except in a very vague sense, as in poetry).
2. There is no time-lag between production and reception, unless one is deliberately introduced by the recipient (and thus, is available for further reaction on the part of the speaker). The spontaneity and speed of most speech exchanges make it difficult to engage in complex advance planning. The pressure to think while talking promotes looser construction, repetition, rephrasing, and comment clauses (e.g. <i>you know, you see,</i>	There is always a time-lag between production and reception. Writers must anticipate its effects, as well as the problems posed by having their language read and interpreted by many recipients in diverse settings. Writing allows repeated reading and close analysis, and promotes the development of careful organization and compact expression, with often intricate sentence structure. Units of discourse (sentences, paragraphs) are usually

---

*mind you*). Intonation and pause divide long utterances into manageable chunks, but sentence boundaries are often unclear. easy to identify through punctuation and layout.

3. Because participants are typically in face-to-face interaction, they can rely on such extra linguistic cues as facial expression and gesture to aid meaning (feedback). The lexicon of speech is often characteristically vague, using words which refer directly to the situation (deictic expressions, such as *that one*, *in here*, *right now*). Lack of visual contact means that participants cannot rely on context to make their meaning clear; nor is there any immediate feedback. Most writing therefore avoids the use of deictic expressions, which are likely to be ambiguous.

4. Many words and constructions are characteristic of (especially informal) speech, such as contracted forms (*isn't*, *he's*). Lengthy co-ordinate sentences are normal, and are often of considerable complexity. There is nonsense vocabulary (e.g. *thingamajig*), obscenity, and slang, some of which does not appear in writing, or occurs only as graphic euphemism (e.g. *f\*\*\**). Some words and constructions are characteristic of writing, such as multiple instances of subordination in the same sentence, elaborately balanced syntactic patterns, and the long (often multi-page) sentences found in some legal documents. Certain items of vocabulary are never spoken, such as the longer names of chemical compounds.

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5. Speech is very suited to social or 'phatic' functions, such as passing the time of day, or any situation where casual and unplanned discourse is desirable. It is also good at expressing social relationships, and personal opinions and attitudes, due to the vast range of nuances which can be expressed by the prosody and accompanying non-verbal features.
6. There is an opportunity to rethink an utterance while the other person is listening (starting again, adding a qualification). However, errors, once spoken, cannot be withdrawn; the speaker must live with the consequences. Interruptions and overlapping speech are normal and highly audible.
7. Unique features of speech include most of the prosody. The many nuances of intonation, as well as contrasts of loudness, tempo, rhythm, pause, and other tones of voice cannot be written down with much efficiency.
- Writing is very suited to the recording of facts and the communication of ideas, and to tasks of memory and learning. Written records are easier to keep and scan, tables demonstrate relationships between things, notes and lists provide mnemonics, and text can be read at speeds which suit a person's ability to learn.
- Errors and other perceived inadequacies in our writing can be eliminated in later drafts without the reader ever knowing they were there. Interruptions, if they have occurred while writing, are also invisible in the final product.
- Unique features of writing include pages, lines, capitalization, spatial organization, and several aspects of punctuation. Only a very few graphic conventions relate to prosody, such as question marks and italics (for
-

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emphasis). Several written genres (e.g. timetables, graphs, complex formulae) cannot be read aloud efficiently, but have to be assimilated visually.

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Source: *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1995. 291. PDF file.

One has to keep in mind that there is no clear-cut distinction between written and spoken language. In this sense, Chafe comments by saying that “There are other styles of speaking which are more in the direction of writing, and other styles of writing which are more like speech”(49).

In attempting to answer the question of whether EMC should be considered as writing or speaking, many scholars have conducted researches to find out the answer.

In 1996, Collot and Belmore analyzed a substantial corpus of the language people used online by sampling nine different discussions ranging from “Science” to “Photo” to “Cooking.” By comparing these samples with pre-existing samples of the written and spoken language, they proved that electronic language carries with it characteristics of both written and spoken language, producing its own electronic Language.

In a second study, Yates compared samples of spoken and written languages with EMC samples drawn from open conferences. Three samples were compared along four continua:

- The type/token ratio (or the relationship between the numbers of different words (type) to the total number of words (token))
- Lexical density (the ratio of the lexical to grammatical items)
- The degree of personal reference

- The degree of modal auxiliary use (may, might).

From the full study, Yates concludes that EMC is neither simply speech-like nor simply written-like but is its own language.

In a third study, unlike the previous comparative studies of asynchronous EMC done by Yates and Belmore, Werry's descriptive investigation of synchronous EMC finds in EMC features that seem unique to the medium:

- High degree of addressivity
- A strong drive towards brevity and abbreviation
- Paralinguistic and prosodic cues, for example, ba-a-a-a-ad
- Text representation of virtual actions and gestures, for example, Marcia hugs Eric.

He concludes his study by saying that what he has been describing has distinctive linguistic and interactional features.

## 1.6. Linguistic Features of EMC

According to Herring:

Although computer-mediated language often contains non-standard features, only a relatively small percentage of such features appears to be errors caused by inattention or lack of knowledge of the standard language forms (see, e.g., Herring, 1998a). The majority are deliberate choices made by users to economize on typing effort, mimic spoken language features, or express themselves creatively. (05)

Communicating in an EMC environment needs strategies that manage communication problems and avoid breakdowns. Researchers have examined how communication occurs online

and came up with a set of linguistic features alternative to conventional means of communication. Most of these features are parallel in EMC done in English, French, and Arabic.

As Greiffenstern states:

It is also important to keep in mind that not everyone who communicates online uses all available features of CMC, and not all features are used in all modes of CMC... The choice of features of CMC depends on the person who uses CMC, on the mode of CMC, on the communicative goal, on the relationship of the interlocutor and other situational factors, e.g., time pressure. (45)

## **1.6.1. Punctuation, Capitalization and Spacing**

### **1.6.1.1. Punctuation**

Punctuation in EMC varies from user to user. Some use no punctuation at all while others have an exaggerated use of punctuation.

Crystal comments on the tendency to omit punctuation, where in certain situations it tends to be minimalist while completely absent in some other situations, by saying that “some do not use it at all, either as a consequence of typing speed, or through not realizing that ambiguity can be one of the consequences” (89).

On the other hand, an exaggerated use of punctuation leads to unconventional punctuation which comes in many forms:

- Repeated punctuation marks
- Mixture of punctuation marks following one another
- Space-fillers in addresses



- Symbols borrowed from programming languages

These features, according to Crystal, are of a certain expressiveness even though the range of meanings is small and restricted, for example, to emphasis, surprise, pause and puzzlement. Some new combinations of punctuation marks may extend expressiveness leading to the appearance of new values, like smileys, which will be discussed later.

#### **1.6.1.2. Capitalization**

According to Crystal, the status of capitalization varies among users. He certifies that “There is a strong tendency to use lowercase everywhere. The ‘save a keystroke’ principle is widely found . . . where whole sentences can be produced without capitals” (87).

There are, however, certain contexts where capitals are used regularly and irregularly. Some maintain correct punctuation by using one capital letter in the beginning of sentences, proper nouns, and abbreviations. But, sometimes, others tend to use extensive punctuation, for example, two capitals are used in what is known as “bicapitalization.” Some messages, wholly in capitals, are used in certain situations to add extra emphasis or to indicate that the sender is shouting.

#### **1.6.1.3. Spacing**

Apart from the use of upper and lower case letters or the use of punctuation, spacing is another feature found in the analysis of EMC language. Some users employ letter spacing in order to express loudness and clearness while others write words together without spaces separating them.

### 1.6.2. Spelling

It has often been noted that EMC is frequently non-standard, that is why it is difficult to distinguish genuine errors from deliberate deviations. Crystal comments that “Some people are happy to send messages with no revision at all, not caring if typing errors, spelling mistakes, and other anomalies are included in their messages; others take as many pains to revise their messages” (45).

Typos (misspellings of words) are a common feature in EMC. These errors, according to Crystal, would not be considered as an indication of lack of education (though they may be) but rather as a consequence of typing inaccuracy because of the rapid pace of writing.

In EMC, new spelling conventions have emerged, such as the use of non-standard homophones where a number represents the sound value of a syllable or when there is a drastic reduction in the number of characters in a word. This kind of spelling convention is called syllabogram. Syllabograms are creative and innovative adaptations of the written language to online communication (Segerstad 146).

Sometimes long strings of repeated letters are present in discussions to reflect emotional expressions and to compensate for the lack of intonation and paralinguistic cues as Werry (56-61) explains. Another kind of repetition observed in EMC is about the reduplication of words directly after each other. This kind of repetition helps to highlight emphasis.

In addition to that, EMC messages demonstrate a sharp drop in vowels, where some words or whole sentences are written with consonants only. The most likely reason for this may be attributed to the relative length of the message; the longer it gets, the more dropping is expected.

Another spelling feature exists and is related to the substitution of letters, for example, in English, there is the substitution of the letters “u” and “r” for the words “you” and “are,” and the substitution of “z” for “s” in the plural of words designating pirated software.

### 1.6.3. Emoticons

Emoticons or smileys are a well-known feature of EMC specifically used to replace its lack of different emotional facial expressions. In defining emoticons, Werry says that emoticons are “a set of codes and conventions whereby words and visual images are used to symbolize gestural qualities of face-to-face communication” (59).

Emoticons are “combinations of keyboard characters . . . typed in a sequence, on a single line, and placed after the final punctuation mark of a sentence” (Crystal 36). The best known emoticon is the smiley: :-)

EMC users have invented a great number of emoticons with the result that today there are dictionaries that list different emoticons and their meanings. There are, also, other emoticons not based on differences regarding eyes and mouth but rather focus on eyebrows, for example, ^^ (Greiffenstern 47).

In discussing the role of emoticons, Crystal argues that smileys have the role of disambiguation. He adds that “Written language has always been ambiguous, in its omission of facial expression, and in its inability to express all the intonational and other prosodic features of speech. Why did no one ever introduce smileys there? The answer must be something to do with the immediacy of Net interaction, its closeness to speech” (38).

#### 1.6.4. Abbreviations

Abbreviations are one well-known feature of EMC. They are written short forms of words, often formed using initial letters (Segerstad 72). There are abbreviations which are used only in EMC and others which are used both in EMC and in other communication mediums (Baron 22). The best known abbreviations in EMC is “LOL” which means “laughing out loud.”

There are conventional abbreviations which most people understand and other unconventional abbreviations which make it difficult for less experienced EMC users to understand their meaning, such as, “10Q” for “Thank you.”

#### 1.6.5. Grammatical Features

Grammar in CMC, according to Crystal, is characterized by colloquial and non-standard constructions, often similar to constructions found in dialects. He adds that “grammatical variation is less frequent or widespread. When it does occur, it tends to be restricted to a particular situation or group of users” (91). Crystal gives examples by saying that “For example, the phenomenon of verb reduplication... is used to express a range of functions, such as an expression of pleasure or pain, as a sarcastic or exasperated reaction, or simply as a turn-taking marker, showing that an utterance is ended” (91).

Another feature used by EMC users deals with reduced sentences, where subjects, pronouns, prepositions, possessive pronouns, and auxiliary verbs are omitted. Even subordinate clauses are reported to be fewer. This, according to Segerstad (01), is a result of fast tempo to save keystrokes and time. Segerstad calls this telegraphic Style which is characterized “. . . by short phrases with no elaborated grammar and omission of function words and other grammatical morphemes” (201).

### 1.6.6. Neologism

EMC users are continually searching for new vocabulary and expressions to describe their experiences and overcome communicative limitations. Many existing words got new meanings giving an additional perspective to something familiar (Metacalf 76), on the other hand, there are other terms which are new and emerge when something new is developed and needs to be labelled.

New terms “. . . have achieved a high enough level exposure to have made it into dictionaries but there are still plenty of people who do not understand the terms” (Geekspeak still baffles web users).

According to Metcalf (108), new words do not usually appear out of nothing, but there exist six types of sources:

- Combining: The combination of two separated words to make a new word or compound is a popular method of creating neologisms. They are often hyphenated first, but eventually end up as one word (Lan 24).

- Shifting of meaning: Some words today are used more often in computer- and internet-related settings than their original meaning, for example “to surf.”

- Shortening.

- Blending.

- Borrowing.

- Creating: a word is made up with no connection to any other.

Crystal comments on the rate of creating new terms by saying that “The rate at which they have been coining new terms and introducing playful variations into established ones has no parallel in contemporary language use” (67).

## 1.7. Classification of EMC

Because EMC is neither written nor spoken language, but shares features of both modes of communication, most researchers share the view that EMC is something different and needs a classification. So, how can EMC be classified? Is it just an accumulation of features and conventions or is it already a variety or register?

In discussing the different classifications of EMC, Greiffenstern says that “It is difficult to say what CMC is. Some already call it a new variety or register. Others say that it might become a new variety but that it is in a state of development and too early to say what it might become” (55).

### 1.7.1. EMC as a Register

According to Trudgill (110), the term register describes a language variety that is associated with a particular topic, subject or activity. In this sense Boyd and Brewer argue that “The register marks a particular communication situation as different from other situations” (29). They conclude their study by saying that “electronic conference writing is a new register in writing electronic discourse” (34). Herring and Thurlow call EMC a register in their studies when they give an overview of its characteristics.

On the other hand, some claim that EMC is not one register because it is not limited to one communicational situation. Yates comments that “the context in which CMC is used has expanded far beyond the academic-organizational uses for which it was designed” (244). Greiffenstern further adds that “Due to the fact that register is a controversial term, the classification of CMC as a register is difficult and controversial, too. If CMC can be classified as register, it certainly comprises not just one register but several” (60).

and it is on its way of becoming institutionalised. There are already dictionaries of CMC and some kind of users' guides. (66)

She concludes by saying that EMC is not a pidgin or a creole in the original sense but has characteristics which resemble those of pidgins, thus, it might be considered as a new form of pidgin.

#### 1.7.4. EMC as a Variety

Some linguists classify EMC by referring to spoken and written language. Both Baron and Segerstad state that EMC is a hybrid language variety displaying characteristics of both oral and written language.

Trudgill suggests that classifying EMC as a variety seems to be a temporary solution for many linguists because it is a neutral term referring to any kind of language - a dialect, accent, sociolect, style or register – which a linguist wants to discuss as a separate entity.

Greiffenstern further explains that EMC cannot be compared to dialects because it is not limited to a certain region, and it cannot be compared to sociolect because it is not limited to a certain class. Moreover, a variety can be distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, phonology and prosody. In this sense, Crystal states that “The lexico-graphological distinctiveness described . . . provides a solid basis for the impression I have of Netspeak as a genuine language variety” (92).

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## 1.8. The Linguistic Situation in Algeria

The complexity of Algeria's linguistic situation reflects the diversity of its population.

According to Strazny (34), this situation comprises:

- Modern standard Arabic – a simpler version of Classical Arabic – is taught at schools and used in formal meetings and in media but not used for ordinary conversation.
- Colloquial Arabic or Algerian Arabic – known as Darja – is used in everyday life, and increasingly being used in theatre and novels.
- French, which is used in both formal and informal situations, is associated with high social and educational status.
- Tamazight which is for the natural use of ethnic groups.

### 1.8.1. Algerian Arabic

According to Mohammed Benrabah (48), Algerian Arabic (AA) is the first language spoken by nearly 85% of the population. AA is spread over four major geographical areas:

- Western AA which extends from Moroccan borders to Tenes.
- Central AA which extends to Bejaia.
- Eastern AA which extends to Tunisia.
- Saharan AA.

Most of the vocabulary of AA comes from MSA, Tamazight, or French, but there are many words which originate from other languages. Mohamed Benrabah gives some examples of words brought from other sources, such as:

- Greek e.g. "Fnar" 'lighthouse.'
- Latin e.g. "Pullus" 'chick' became "flus" / "qalmun" 'hood.'

- Turkish e.g. “braniya” ‘eggplant.’
- Spanish e.g. “trabendo” ‘smuggling’ / “fechta” ‘celebration’ / “semana” ‘week.’
- Jewish e.g. “bestel” ‘a dish’ / “sourdi” ‘money’ / “babor” ‘ship.’

Stranzy further explains that the borrowed vocabulary is subject to Arabic rules of grammar and pronunciation, for example, sounds that do not exist in Arabic are substituted by Arabic sounds.

### **1.8.2. Code Switching and Code Mixing**

Many researchers explain these terms by supplying many definitions. Gumperz (59) sees code-switching as “The juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to different grammatical systems or subsystems.” He argues that code-switching not only occurs between languages, but also between dialects of the same language. In Algeria, alternating between Arabic and French is common because of the exposition to French in almost all the domains.

Bokamba tries to give a distinction between code-switching and code mixing. According to him, code switching is “the embedding or mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two codes within the same speech event across sentence boundaries, while code-mixing is the embedding or mixing of various linguistic units i.e., affixes, words, and clauses from two distinct grammatical systems or subsystems within the sentence and the same speech situation” (24).

## Chapter Summary

Since the aim of this study is to investigate the linguistic features of Facebook communication, we tried, in this chapter, to provide a theoretical background by shedding light on the nature of electronically-mediated communication through the major existing studies in the field which have provided answers to questions such as “what is EMC?”, “What are the features that make EMC distinctive from other forms of communication?”, and “how do we classify EMC?”

This part show that EMC is conducted in ways that rely on characteristics belonging to both writing and speaking – creating a new form of communication with new and unconventional features. Yet, when trying to classify this new form of communication, scholars have found difficulties in trying to decide whether it should be considered a variety, a register, or a style.

In the next chapter, we will try to find some examples that illustrate certain EMC features used by Algerian users of Facebook.

Chapter

Two

## Introduction

In this chapter, findings collected from Facebook comments written by Algerians are reported. All the samples analyzed are written in Algerian Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, French, or English. Tamazight is not included in the reported collection of samples, except one example, because of our incompetency in this variety and because of our inability to ask those who master Tamazight to collect and explain samples for us due to time limitations. By giving an explanation to the features observed in the collected examples, in this section, we try to draw a general picture about Facebook communication among Algerians. The examples shown in this chapter were chosen from popular Algerian Facebook pages. The selection of these pages was based on the number of fans and their participations. In order to make sure that the comments were written by Algerian users, certain measures were taken. For example, choosing threads in which the topic is targeted for an Algerian audience, and checking certain profiles in order to be sure of the owner's origin. Most of the examples selected and shown in this study were posted using the public setting. According to article number four in section number two of Facebook statement of rights and responsibilities, when publishing contents using the Public setting, EVERYONE, including people off of Facebook, are allowed to access and use that information, and to associate it with its owner by including their name and profile picture. The collection of examples published using the private setting was conducted after obtaining owners' consent and explaining how samples will be used in the study – as states article number seven in section number five.

## 2.1. Use of Language

In order to find evidence about the kind of varieties Algerian users of Facebook (AUF) tend to use, 900 comments were analyzed. The chart below shows the percentage of the different languages used.

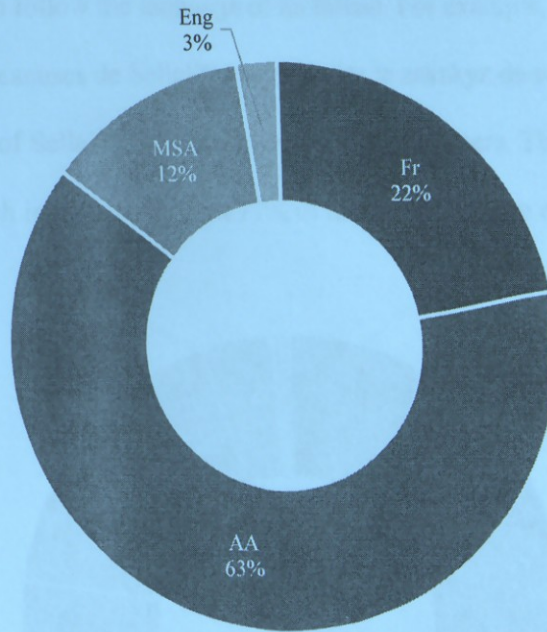


Figure 7. Use of language among Algerian users of Facebook.

AA tends to be the most used variety in comments. 63% of users express themselves in AA written with both Arabic and Roman alphabets. This can be explained by the fact that AA is widely used in daily conversations and social interactions. French comes second with 22% of users. This can be attributed to the fact that, generally, persons who make use of French in their daily life carry on this use to Fb. MSA is ranked third with 12% of users. In most cases, MSA is represented with proverbs and greetings written with both Roman and Arabic alphabets. This

unwillingness to use MSA can be explained by its degree of formality. Unlike Tamazight, which scores 0%, English comes third with 3% of users. The 20 comments observed show how English is gaining place among AUF.

What has been noticed in the analysis of comments is the way in which the language used for commenting tends to follow the language of its thread. For example, a post written in French like “vous acceptez les excuses de Sellal?” [vu zaksepte le zɛkskyz də sella:l], which means “do you accept the excuses of Sellal?”, was commented on by 396 users. The following chart shows the dominance of French in comments with 77% of users compared to other languages.

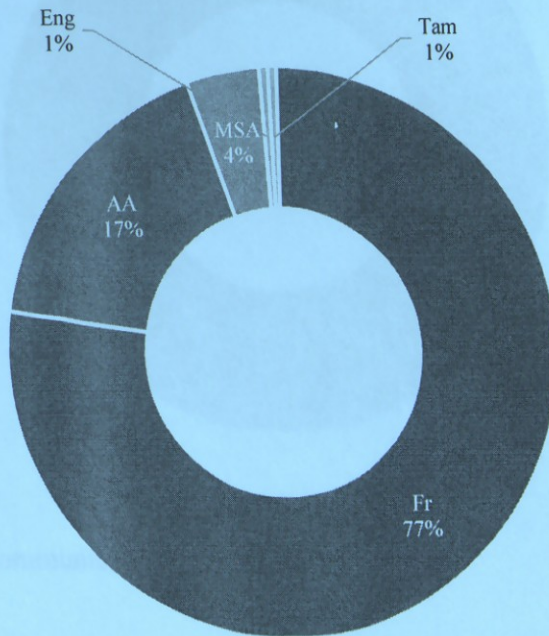


Figure 8. French-based communication in Facebook.

Another post written in MSA like “هل انت مع او ضد قرار يفرض ارتداء الحجاب الشرعي في” [hal anta maʕa aw dʕid qara:r jafridʕu irtida:ʔ] “the universities and all educational institutions through the national soil?”

alhidza:b affarfi: fi: aldza:miṣa:t wa kul almuʿassasa:ti attarbawijjati ṣabra ka:mili attura:bi alwatʿani:] ‘are you with or against a decision that imposes wearing Islamic hijab in universities and all educational institutions across the entire national territory?’, was commented 361 times. As the next chart shows, MSA is used by 57% of users.

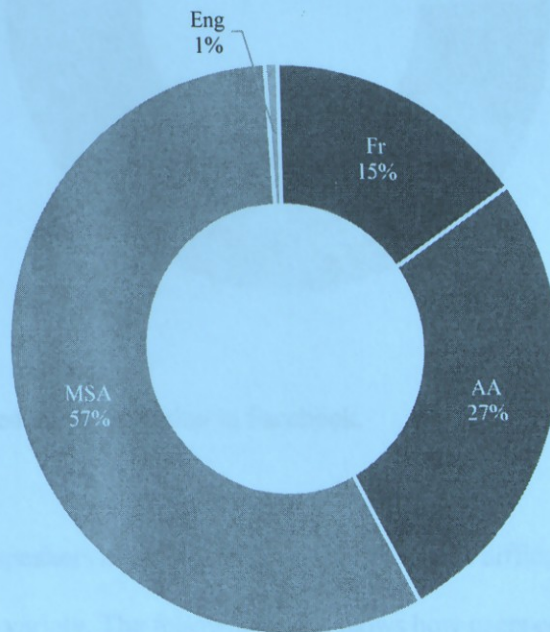


Figure 9. MSA-based communication in Facebook.

Generally, posts written in English are commented by students majoring in English or those willing to learn it. The following chart shows how this language, with 54% of users, is the most used one in the comments of a thread posted in English.



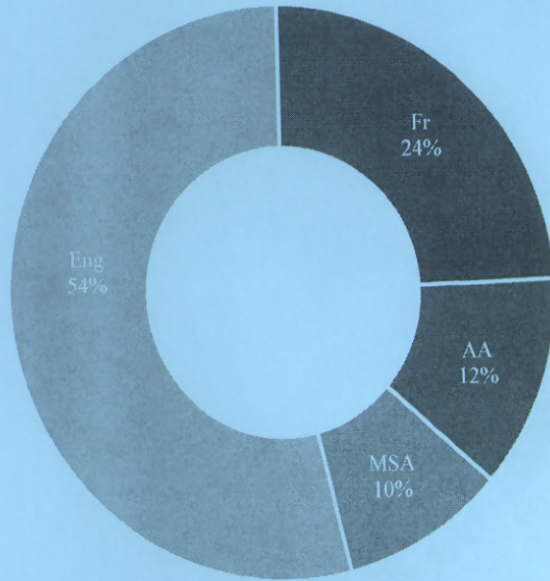


Figure 10. English-based communication in Facebook.

As Tamazight speakers are considered a minority, it was difficult to find users communicating in this variety. The following chart shows how users commented a post written in Tamazight. 35% of users commented in Tamazight while 27% used AA mainly to ask for the translation.

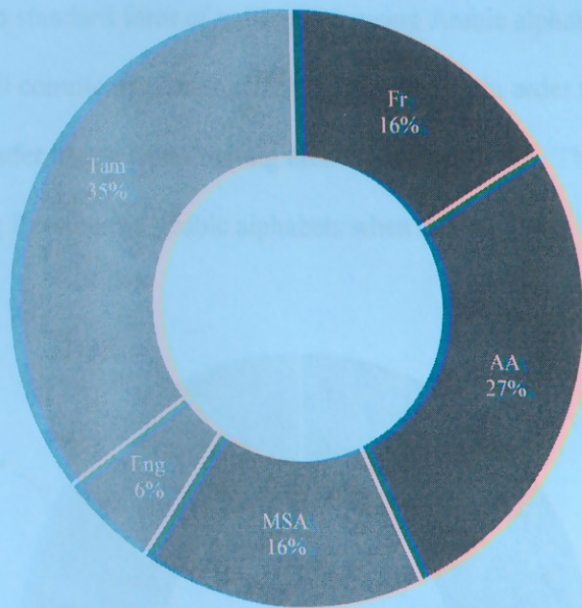


Figure 11. Tamazight-based communication in Facebook.

What we deduced from this observation is that choosing to write a post in one variety rather than another can be related to the following factors:

- The nature of the topic a post is about. MSA, for example, is generally used in religious topics.
- The location of writers of posts. In most of the cases analyzed, persons living in France, for instance, write their posts in French.

In all the analyzed cases, where the dominance of Tamazight, English, French, or MSA over languages used in commenting was observed, AA is always present. This is simply due to the fact that the posted threads were targeted for an audience of Algerian origin.

## 2.2. Romanized Algerian Arabic

Since there is no standard form of writing AA, using Arabic alphabet or Roman alphabet varies among users. 549 comments written in AA were analyzed in order to find out the kind of script that Algerians prefer to use when writing their comments in AA. The chart below shows the percentage of using Roman and Arabic alphabets when commenting.

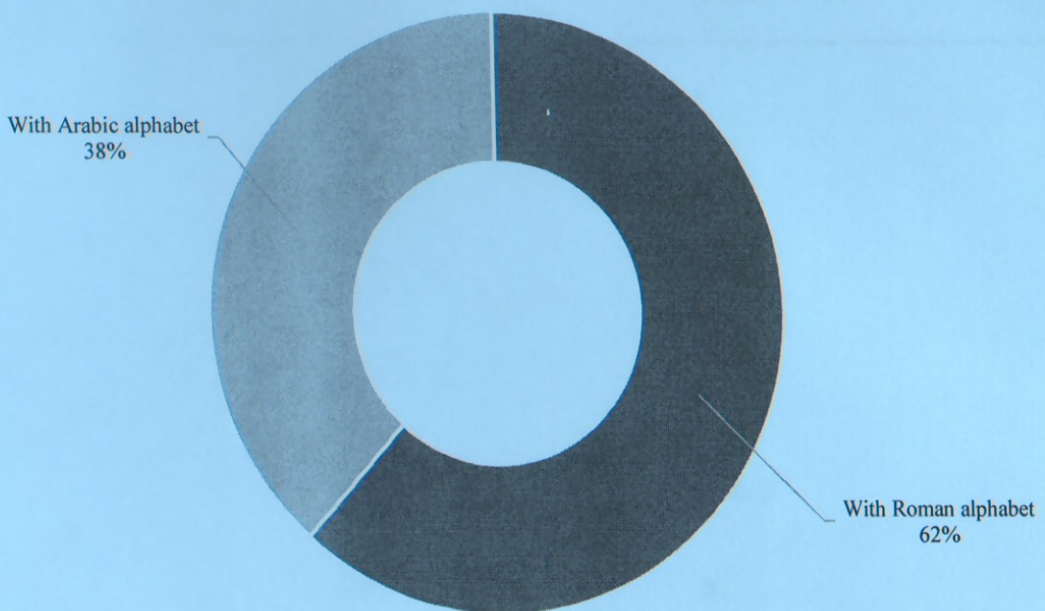


Figure 12. The use of Roman and Arabic alphabets by Algerian users of Facebook.

As shown above, there seems to be a tendency towards using Roman alphabet when commenting in AA. 62% of Algerian users prefer writing their comments with it. This can be related to the fact that, for those who most of the time type with Roman alphabet, changing the keyboard language every time a comment is needed to be written in Arabic may slow down the

typing speed. Another factor that can be attributed to this tendency is related to keyboards. Some users, especially with laptops, do not have Arabic script on their keyboards.

Table 3

## Roman Script Used to Represent Arabic Letters

Arabic letter	Sound	Roman script
ا	[ʔ]	a
ب	[b]	b
ت	[t]	t
ث	[θ]	th
ج	[ʒ, dʒ]	j, dj, g
ح	[h]	h
خ	[x]	kh
د	[d]	d
ذ	[ð]	d, dh
ر	[r]	r
ز	[z]	z

---

س	[s]	s, ss, c
ش	[ʃ]	ch, sh
ص	[sʰ]	s
ض	[dʰ]	dh, d
ط	[tʰ]	t
ظ	[ðʰ]	d, dh
ع	[ɛ]	a, i, o, u
غ	[ɣ]	gh, g
ف	[f]	f
ق	[q]	q, k
ك	[k]	k, q
ل	[l]	l
م	[m]	m
ن	[n]	n
هـ	[h]	h
و	[w]	w, ou

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ي	[j]	y
---	-----	---

Table 4

## Roman Script Used to Represent Arabic Vowels


Arabic vowel	Phonetic transcription	Roman script
اَ	[a, ʌ]	a
اُ	[u]	u
اِ	[i]	i
أَ	[ʔ]	non

Table 5

## Other Algerian Arabic Sounds Written with Roman and Arabic Script

Algerian Arabic Sound	Arabic Script	Roman Script
[g]	ق	g
[p]	ب, پ	p
[v]	ف, ف	v

The following examples show how the same comment is written with Arabic letters and with Roman letters.


 هالة بودي  
Like · Reply · a few seconds ago

الله يبارك


 Sihem Ninardji Allah ybarek 😊  
Like · Reply · 3 minutes ago

[allah jba:rk]

“May Allah give his blessings.”

 Samsam Rai Rai  
Like · Reply · 9 hours ago


يا مصرة على زمان


 Nana Nana yahasra 3la zman  
Like · Reply · 10 hours ago


[ja: hasʁe ʕla: zma:n]


“Alas! Those old good days.”


Even with the same alphabet, the following examples illustrate that the writing system of AA is not standardized. The Arabic word “ربي” [rabbi:], which means “my God,” is written differently by users, as shown in the examples below.

 Anôçcha-MinOuçhâ Kîkî nchalah ya rebi Toni Kroos  
Like · Reply · Feb 1 · March 20 at 7:59pm

 Tenn'i WiChâ aminnnnnne ya raby  
Like · Reply · Feb 1 · March 20 at 3:29pm


 Housseem Madrid nchallah ya rabi ^^  
Like · March 21 at 2:14am

 Lara Jouli hhhhhhhhhh nchh ya rabbi mrc 😊  
Like · March 22 at 4:25am

 Rima Si Youcef ameeeeeeeeeeen ya rabii k lyoum  
Like · March 20 at 6:09pm

### 2.2.1. Other Choices

As opposed to AA, MSA has a standard writing system. Yet, some users still use Roman alphabet to write their comments in MSA, as it is illustrated in the following example.

 **Lamine Torino** yoridona taghyir el 3alem wa hom 3ajizon 3an taghyir anfossihom  
Like · Reply · 5 minutes ago

[juri:du:na tayji:ra el ʕa:lam wa hum ʕa:dʕizu:na ʕan tayji:ri anfusihum]

“They want to change the world but they are unable to change themselves.”

The next examples show how Arabic letters can also substitute Roman letters to write comments in other languages, such as English and French.

 **Mustafa Boussaid**   
September 3, 2013 at 9:13am · Like · 1



[kugra:tuli:ʕn]

“Congratulations.”

 **Dalal Badi**   
February 24, 2011 at 9:22am · Like

[mi:ysi: bu:ku: u:yu:vwa:y]

“Thanks a lot. Goodbye.”

 **Sami Hamstyo**   
Like · Reply · Yesterday at 3:24pm

[bu:n afi:r]

“It is a good deal.”



### 2.3. Code Switching and Code Mixing

A number of comments were characterized by the use of two languages or two language varieties in the form of what is known as code switching and code mixing. The chart below illustrates how 12% of users used code switching in their comments while only 1% produced code mixing. A total of 378 comments were analyzed.

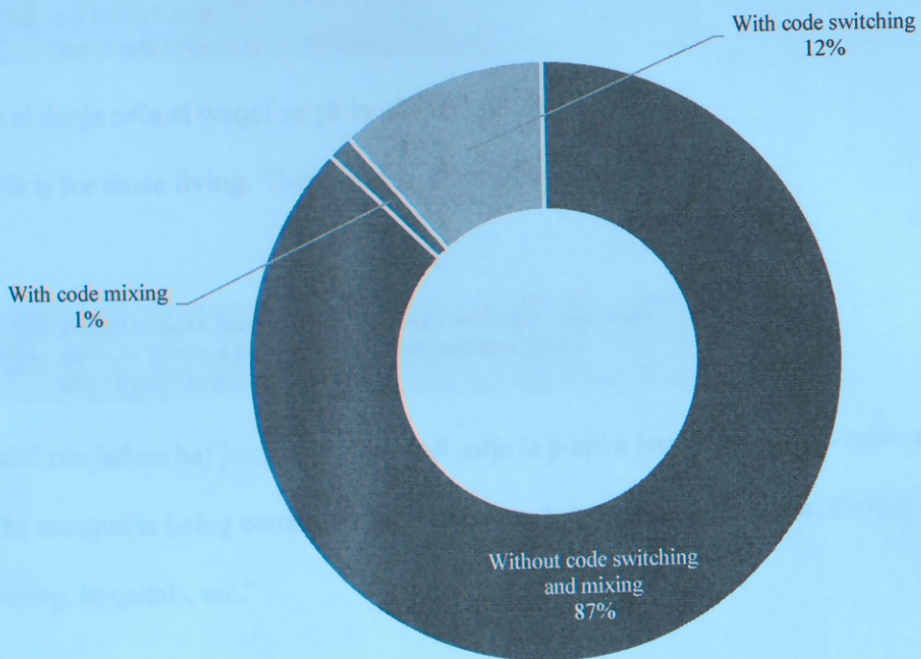




Figure 13. The use of code switching and code mixing among Algerian users of Facebook.

Here are instances where the switch from AA to French and from French to AA occurs,

 **Ryma Bourahla** hadi asameha limagination algerienne  
31 minutes ago · Like


[hadi asmha limazinasjð alʒɛʁjɛn]

“This is called the Algerian imagination.”

 **Yasmina Aballat** Ih el denia m3a el wakef , ces gens là pense  
qu'a leurs intérêt.  
Like · Reply · March 28 at 10:01pm


[i:h el denja mʃa el waqef se ʒã la pãʃ ka lœʁ zẽtœʁ]

“Life is for those living. These people think only of their interests.”

 **Wassil Renato** Jam3 rah yatbna bach izoukhou bih ...niya machi  
safya...le peuple a besoin de logements hopitaux... Exct...  
Like · Reply · 2 · 20 hours ago


[ʒamʃ rah jɛtbna baʃ jzuxu bih nija maʃi safja lə pœpl a bœzwẽ də lɔʒəmã opito ɛtsetœʁa]

“The mosque is being constructed for boasting. Intentions are not good. People are in need for housing, hospitals, etc.”

 **Amine Zaidi** Quand Une vrai Algérienne Cultivée parle: autre  
chose !! Roho Chofo Ahlem Moustaghanmi wech Tgo!!  
Like · Reply · March 28 at 11:15pm


[kã yn vœ alʒɛʁjɛn kyltivre pœʁl otrə otrə ʃoz roho ʃu:fu: ahlem mustya:nmi waʃ tgu:l]

“When a real cultivated Algerian speaks. Another thing, go check what Ahlem Moustaghanmi says.”

 **Mohamed Bouguenaya** il a raison... y a des enfant makan ni trabiya ni walou.  
Like · Reply · 13 hours ago


[il a ʁɛzɔ̃ ja de zãfũ makan ni tarbijja ni walu]

“He is right. There are children with no education.”

 **Widiiane Ali** on portait comme cela le hayek vs vs ne connaissez rien ya hasrah 3ala zaman  
Like · Reply · 13 hours ago

[ð pɔʁte kɔm sɛla lə ɥajek vu vu nə kɔnɛse ʁjɛ̃ ja ɥasrah ʃla zaman]


“We wore “hayek” like that. You know nothing. Alas! Good old days.”

 **Hafeda Marcel** Les gens qui disent des mots vulguaire 3la la femme machi 3ajal parceque 3ak tayahe l mok w khtak w martak matansache!!!!!!  
Like · Reply · about an hour ago

[le zã ki diz de mo vylgɛʁ ʃla la fam maʃi ʃazɛl paʁsɛkɛ ʃak tʻayaɥ lmok wxtek wmartek matensaf]

“People who say swear words about women are not gentlemen because you are cussing your mother your sister your wife, do not forget that.”

Switching between AA and English was also observed.

 **Bougie D'or** tahalaab min naw3” we are the world “  
Like · Reply · 1 · March 28 at 9:50pm · Edited

[taɥla:b min nawʃ wi: a:r ðə wɛ:ld]

“We are the world fawning.”

The Following examples show the switch that happens between two language varieties

AA and MSA,



**Hicham Ben**

من بنى لله مسجدا بنى الله له بيتا فى الجنة املا بهاذ المسجد الجزائريين  
كامل عندهم بيت فى الجنة انشاء الله باك غى دراهم الجزائريين هاذوا

Like · Reply · 20 hours ago

[man banæ: lillahi masdzidan banæ: allahu lahu bajtan fi lɔzane əmmala bhað elmaszid  
elzaza:irijjin ka:mel řandhum bajt fi lzanne infɑ:llə yak ʔi drahem elzaza:irijjin haðu]

“He who built a mosque for Allah, Allah would build him a house in paradise. So, with this mosque, all Algerians have a house in paradise, God willing. This is Algerians’ money.”



**Isaif R  o**

أحلى طعام هو الطعام الجزائري التقليدي الذي يطهى على نار الخشب أو  
الكائون و باوانى فخارية و الله عندو بنة هابلة

Like · Reply · 20 hours ago

[aɦlæ: tʔařa:m huwa tʔtʔařa:m aldɔzaza:iri: attaqli:di: allaði: jutʔhæ: řalæ: na:ri alxɑřabi aw  
alka:nu:ni wa biawa:ni: faxa:riye wallahi řandu: banne ha:řl ]

“The best food is the traditional Algerian food which is cooked over wood fire or brazier and with pottery. I swear it is tasty.”



**Mohamed Tayeb Oulebsir**


واش يخصك يا العربيات لخوانم. الشعب يريد العمل يريد العيش الكريم يريد  
مستشفيات متطورة يريد صناعة حقيقية يريد فلاحه قوية لا يريد تبذير المال  
العام. الدين معاملة هو الأمر بالمعروف و النهى عن المنكر لا التظاهر بأننا  
مسلمين أكثر من الغير

Like · Reply · 15 hours ago · Edited

[wa:ř jxusʔek ja: lřerja:n lxwa:tem ařřařebu juri:du lřamala juri:du alřajřa lkari:ma juri:du  
mustařřa:tin mutaʔawwire juri:du sʔina:řatan haqi:qijatan juri:du fila:řatan qawijjatan la:  
juri:du tabði:ra lma:li lřa:m addinu muřa:małe huwa lřamru bilmařru:fi wan nahju řani lmunkari  
la: attaðʔahuru biřannana: muslimi:na akθara mina lřajř]

“Oh! Poor man, why the need for rings? People want to work. They want a decent life. They want advanced hospitals. They want real industry. They want a strong agriculture. They do not want public money to be wasted. Religion is treatment it is the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice not pretending to be Muslims more than others.”

As mentioned in the first chapter, code mixing differs from code switching in that the first is all about the integration of two distinct grammatical systems under one system. The following example show how AUF produce code mixing in their comments.

 **Nahad Mess Sournéya Grey's Bon Stkahwing** 😊  
Like · Reply · 👤 1 · January 24 at 4:20pm

[bɔ̃ stqahwiŋ]

“Have a good breakfast.”

In the word “stakhwing” which means “having coffee,” we can notice how the writer added the English “ing” for to the AA word “stkahwa” to form a new word.

## 2.4. Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spacing

### 2.4.1. Punctuation

Punctuation among AUF varies from one user to another. 342 comments were analyzed. Among these, 252 users used no punctuation at all in their comments.

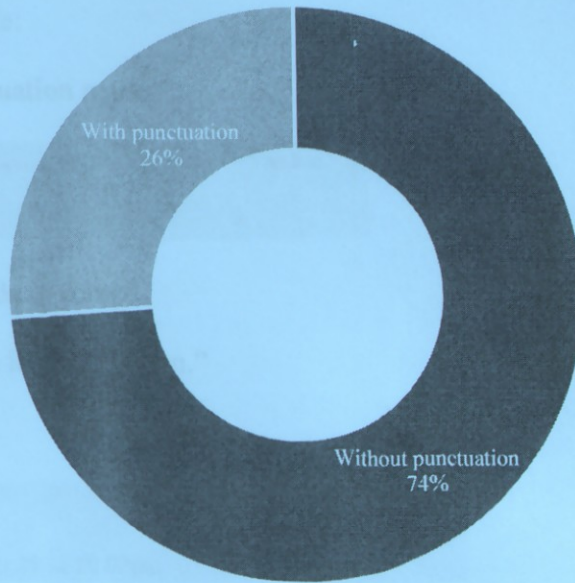
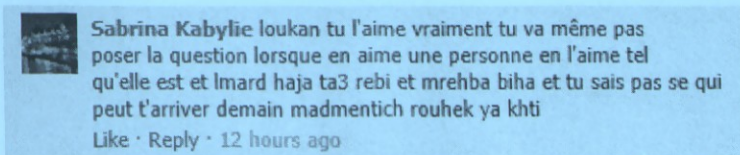


Figure 14. The use of punctuation in comments by Algerian users of Facebook.

This tendency of omitting punctuation from comments can be related to the fact that it is a consequence of fast typing. The following example illustrates how punctuation is omitted from comments.



[lukan ty lɛm vʁɛmã ty va mɛm pa poze la kɛstjɔ̃ lɔʁsk ã ɛm yn pɛʁsɔn ã lɛm tel kɛl ɛ e l'mard  
ħa:zɛ ta:ʃ rabbi: e mreħba biha e ty sɛ pa sɛ ki pɔ tãʁivɛ dãmɛ̃ madmenti:ʃ ruħek ja: xti]

“If you really love him you would not even ask the question. When we love a person, we love them for who they are. Sickness is something from God and it is welcomed. You do not know what will happen tomorrow. You are not guaranteed tomorrow my sister.”


On the other hand, exaggerated use of punctuation by other users leads to unconventional punctuation, for example:

- Repeated punctuation marks.

 **Fouzi Zaimen** pardon ..... certains hommes \*\*\* au lieu de " les Hommes  
12 hours ago

[pɑrdɔ̃ sɛʁtɛ̃ zɑm o ljø də le zɑm]

“Excuse me, some men instead of men.”

 **AmAr Lb** التي تحبها قاسدك؟؟؟؟؟؟؟؟  
Like · Reply · March 11 at 10:02pm

[allati: tuħibbuha: qasduk]

“You mean the one you love?”


- Mixture of punctuation marks following one another.

 **Wawa Rana** wech hada ?? !!!!!  
Like · 14 hours ago

[weʃ ha:da]

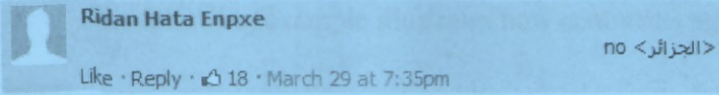
“What is this?”

- Symbols borrowed from programming languages like “#” and “<>”

 **Mohammed Rid** #العنسة الـمـي #التي تحبك فيـها #العرب غير #خـليها  
و هـ ر ب  
November 23, 2010 at 9:22pm

[lʃɑfsɛ li jtabʃu:k fi:ha: lʃrab yi:r xalli:ha: whrub ]

“Stop doing a thing when people imitate you.”



[alʒaza:ʔir nəʊ]

“Algeria, no.”

This use of different punctuations used when commenting are of a certain expressiveness for example to show emphasis or surprise.

#### 2.4.2. Capitalization

In terms of capitalization, the tendency goes towards using lowercase letters only. This can be applicable to only comments written with Roman alphabets. A total of 270 comments were analyzed. The following chart shows that 70% of users wrote their comments using only lowercase letters.

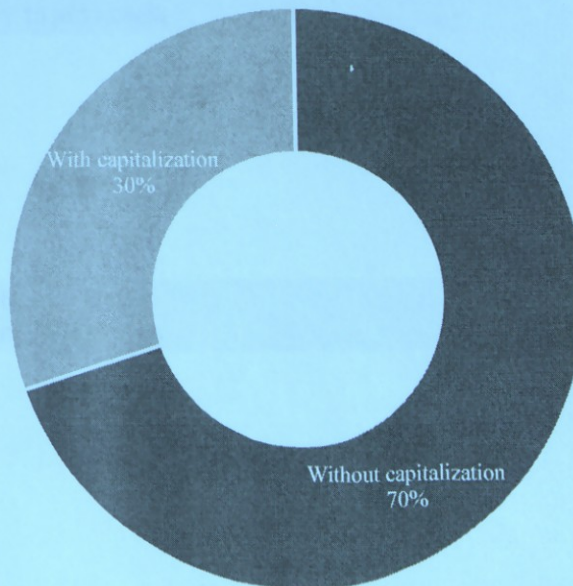



Figure 15. The use of capitalization in comments written by Algerian users of Facebook.




The following example illustrates how comments are written with only non-capitalized letters.

 **Nina Richi** c pas facile.. mais par le temps on peut nchallah  
Like · Reply · 2 · March 14 at 1:01pm

[sɛ pa fasil mɛ pax lə tã ð pø nʃa:llah]


“It is not easy, but with time we can, if God wills it.”

The following examples show the use of upper-case letters only.

 **Nacer Beng** VENDEUR DE ZRODIA  
Like · Reply · January 14 at 9:22pm


[vãdœx də zrɔdija]

“Carrot seller.”

 **Yamina Ci Bon** HEFFAR LE9BOR  
Like · Reply · January 15 at 11:08am

[heffa:r lqbu:r]


“Gravedigger.”

 **Ham Za** EN PRISON  
Like · Reply · January 14 at 9:19pm

[ã prizɔ]

“In prison.”

An unconventional mixture of lower-case with capitals can be illustrated in the following example.

 **Wis Sam el zalt w tfar3i:n %MDRRRRRRRRRRRRR**  
Like Reply · January 18 at 10:09am


[el zalt<sup>ʕ</sup> w tfarʕi:n]


“Poverty and haughtiness.”

While the use of lowercase letters may be related to the “save keystroke” principle, the different examples showing unconventional use of capitalization, on the other hand, illustrate how emphasis is expressed.

### 2.4.3. Spacing

The following examples illustrate the omission of blank space between words.

 **Amila Minoucha aminaaminaaminaaminaamina**  
Like Reply · 1 18 hours ago


 **Tarek Abas**  
Like Reply · February 17 at 1:57pm

اشارة

[inʕa:llah]

Instead of writing “إن شاء الله”, which means “if Allah wills it”, the writer of this comment omitted all blank spaces between the three words.

The next example, shows how letter spacing is produced in comments.

 **Nassro Dali Mohammed**  
ب الطبع ارفض ذلك . لكن يمكن ان نضع قلوبين ننص على منع ذلك . يمنع منعنا بقنا اي سب لو شتم ل اي رمز من رموز الديانات .  
November 26, 2013 at 11:28pm Like · 2

[bit<sup>ʕ</sup>ʕab<sup>ʕ</sup> arfud<sup>ʕ</sup>u ðalika la:kin jumkinu an nad<sup>ʕ</sup>aʕa qawa:ni:na tanus<sup>ʕ</sup>ʕu ʕla: manʕi ðalika  
jumnaʕu ajju sabbin aw fatmin li ajji ramzin min rumu:zi addija:na:ti]

“Of course, I reject it. But, we can put laws that prevent it. It is strictly prohibited to insult or curse any religious symbols.”

## 2.5. Spelling

In this section, examples related to different forms of unconventional spelling are shown. Among these new spelling conventions are syllabograms. In 336 comments written with Roman alphabet, non-standard homophones were produced in 186 comments.

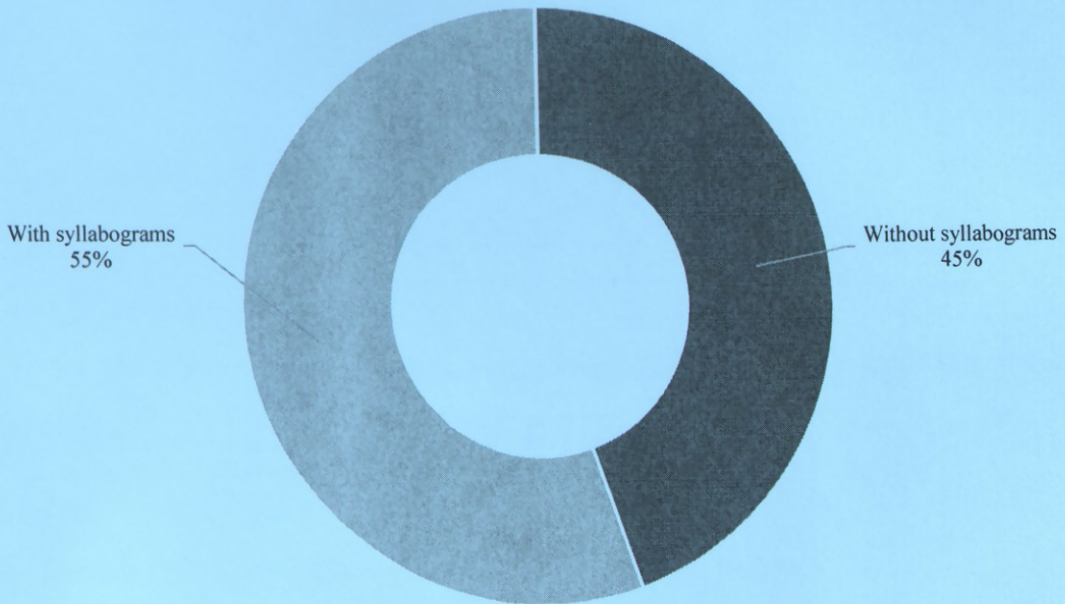


Figure 16. The use of syllabograms in comments written by Algerian users of Facebook.


Numbers used in AA written with Roman alphabets to represent Arabic sounds are shown in the table below.

Table 6

## Examples of Syllabograms Used by Algerian Users of Facebook

Number used	Arabic sound represented
2	[ʔ]
3	[ʕ]
5	[x]
6	[tʕ]
7	[ħ]
9	[q]


The following is an example of how the number three is used to represent the sound [ʕ].

 Rima Rimoch kayén lirahom 3aychin m3a waldihom wb3ad  
3lihom 3aychin ghorabaé  
Like · Reply · 🔄 3 · 11 hours ago

[kajen lirahum ʕajʕi:n mʕa wa:ldihum wbʕa:d ʕli:hum ʕajʕi:n ɣura:baʔ]

“There are those living with their parents and not close to them. They are living as strangers.”

Another example shows how the number 9 represents the sound [q].

 Amine Mitchou meskina ... Allah yahdi ma khle9  
Like · Reply · 🔄 1 · 10 hours ago

[meski:nɛ allah jehdi ma: xlaq]

“Poor she. May Allah guide whom he creates.”

Other examples show how numbers in French are also used to replace sounds.



**Zizou Anoucha b1 sur**  
Like · Reply · March 23 at 10:29pm

[bjɛ̃ syʁ]

“Of course.”



**Belkacem Belka bon8 khou**  
8 hours ago · Like

[bɔ̃n\_ɲi xu]

“Good night brother.”

Other symbols were also observed to be used in order to replace sounds and even words.



**Princissa Sourma Fleur @demain inchh**  
8 hours ago · Like · 1

[a dɛmɛ̃ inʃallah ]

“See you tomorrow, if Allah wills it.”

In this example, we can see that the symbol “@” substitutes the French “à” in the first word “à demain.”




**Shayah Jehs'on Mr6 mmm,ke Dieu vous protege,bn8 e rev b1,a+**  
(~ ~ ~)  
Like · Reply · April 12, 2013 at 8:14pm

[mɛʁ.si kə djø vu pʁɔtɛʒ bɔ̃n\_ɲi e ʁɛv bjɛ̃ a plys]

“Thank you. May God protect you. Good night and dream well. See you.”


This example shows how “+” is used to replace the word “plus” in order to save time.

Another unconventional feature in spelling is about the use of repeated letters in the form of long strings. This kind of repetition is used to show the tone of the voice. For example,

 **Hamza Nechem** match fo~~~~~  
May 13, 2012 at 5:06pm · Like

[matʃ fɔʃ]


“Good match.”

 **Nini Clever**  
Like · Reply · March 11 at 7:24pm

و احذر منها

[wa:k minha:]


“Be careful.”

 **Asia Patchika** kkkkaaaayyyynnnnaaa  
Like · Reply · March 17 at 3:28pm



[ka:jna:]

“It exists.”

 **Chanez Levy** weeeeeeeeeééééé trop grv  
nakraaaaaaaaaaaaaaha 😊 pffffff  
Like · Reply · 1 · March 11 at 7:21pm

[we tʁo grɑv nakrahha:]

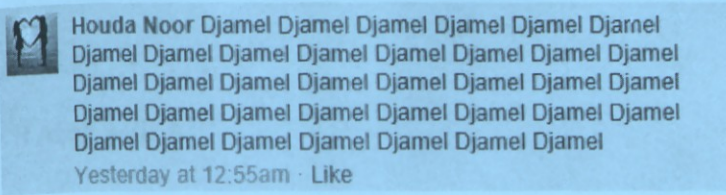
“Yes, too serious. I hate it.”

Another kind of repetition observed in comments is about the recurrence of a word several times.

 **Abdallah Kahal**  
Like · Reply · March 22 at 5:33pm

طع طع طع

[tʰaʕ]



[dzama:l]

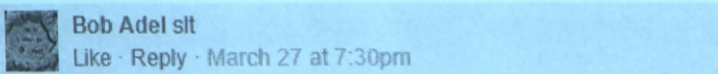


[alla:h alla:h ʕli:k xu:ja: ra:ʔiʕe ra:ʔiʕe ra:ʔiʕe taħjjatu taqdi:rin lak]

“This is wonderful my brother. Respect for you.”

In addition to the previous features, another unconventional way of writing comments among AUF is the omission of vowels. The following examples show how words are written by means of using consonants only.

Another irregular spelling feature is the replacement of vowels by the letter 'y'.



[saly]

“Hello.”

 **Prime Rose nchih**   3 · March 21 at 9:44pm




[ɲʃa:llah]

“If Allah wills it.”

 **An Is bnjrr**   · March 20 at 7:13am

[bɔ̃ʒuʁ]

“Good morning.”

 **Yasmina Mina pas moi prsq j'ai étudié le nv système**   1 · 11 hours ago

[pa mwa paʁskə ʒe etydje læ nuvo sistəm]

“Not me, because I studied in the new system.”

 **Imanus Mimicha jdr**   · 12 hours ago

[ʒadɔʁ]

“I love it.”

Another irregular spelling feature is the replacement of words by one or two letters only.


 **Khayrou Bent Chiekh C GRV**   · March 28 at 9:46pm

[se gʁav]

“This is Serious.”




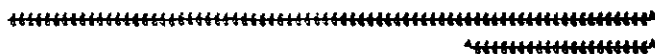
This example illustrates how the letter “c” replaces the French word “c’est” which means “this is.”

 **Ahmed Fergani dd pour Tendresse Djazairia**  
Like · Reply · 1 March 6 at 7:59pm


The letters “dd” in this case replace the French word “dédicace” which means dedication.


### 2.5.1. Onomatopoeic Spelling

Onomatopoeic spelling refers to the way in which users try to imitate the sounds they are making.


 **Amal Loro**  
  
Like · Reply · March 17 at 11:45am

This is a one well known example that indicates laughter. There are different other variants that represent laughter in Fb communication. For example,

 **Samy B. Mathers Hahaha hool**  
Like · Reply · March 27 at 10:09pm

 **Ebtihal Baba-xp Fünqky Güft**  
Like · Reply · 2 November 12, 2013 at 9:48pm

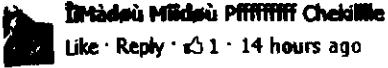
 

 **Abdesslam Khoukhou**  
Like · Reply · 4 hrs

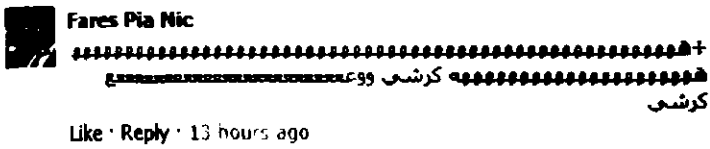


 **Lazen Lammari Amine hkhkhkhkhkh**  
Like · Reply · 17 hours ago

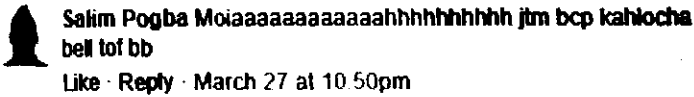
The following examples illustrate other onomatopoeic spellings.



This example shows how “pffffff” represents the sentiment of being disgusted.



“وو عرشى” in this example represents pain.



The sound of kissing is generally represented as shown in this example.



This example illustrates how the strong feeling of being surprised and pleased is expressed in Fb.

## 2.6. Typos

Misspelling of words (or typos as commonly known) is a common feature that many AUF produce when writing their comments. Since most AUF are educated, typos are mostly a result of fast typing. The Following figure shows an example of a small keypad. Composing messages and comments with it may result in producing typos.

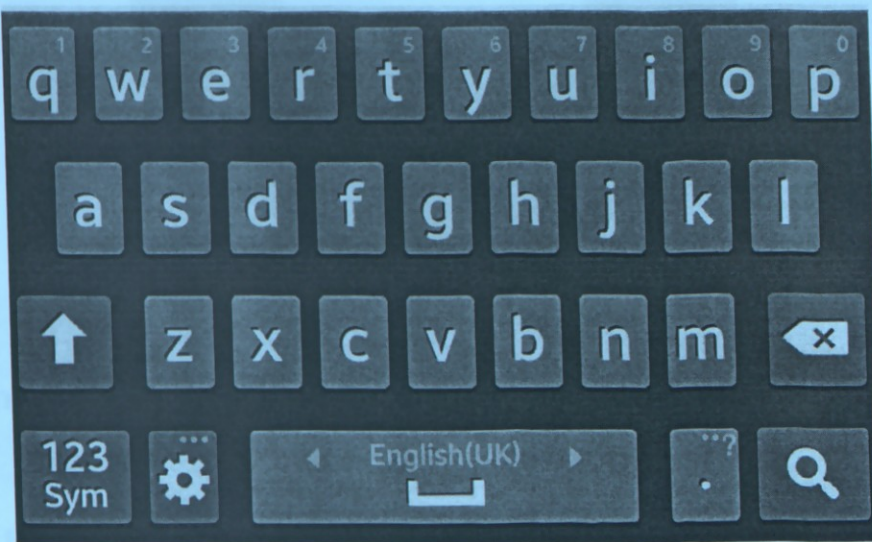


Figure 17. Keypad in an Android-based phone.

Not paying attention and verifying the correctness of written words may result in writing comments in a way that is non-standard.

The following chart illustrates the percentage of typos made by AUF when commenting. A total of 240 comments were analyzed. 10% of these comments were found to contain typos.

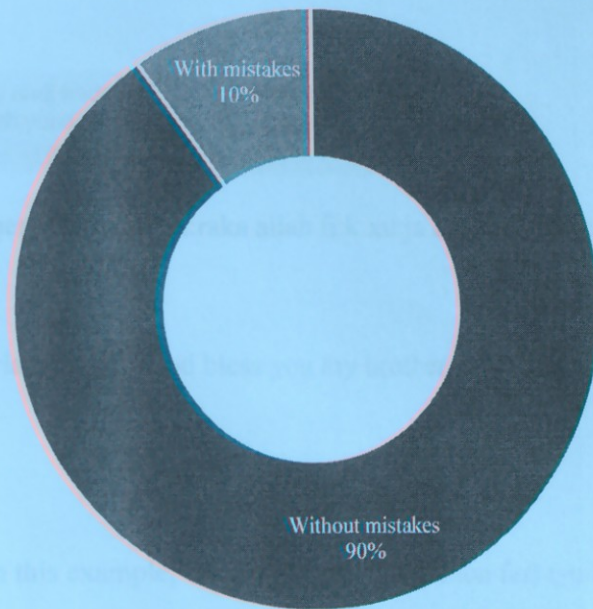
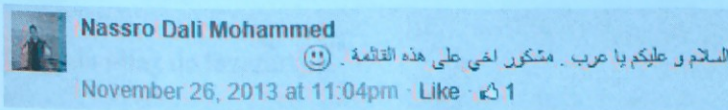


Figure 18. The percentage of typos made in comments written by Algerians.

The following examples show the different kinds of typos made in comments written by AUF:


- Insertion: in this example, we can notice the insertion of the letter “و” between “السلام” and “عليكم”



[essala:mu ʕalajku:m ja: ʕarab maʃku:r axi: ʕala: ha:ðhi alqa:ʔimə]

“Peace be upon you Arabs. Thank you for the list my brother.”

- Inversion: instead of writing “algerien,” the writer in this example inverted the first two letters.

 **Gladiateur** Həɖjəb hədi hədrə tə3 les ləʒerjen tə3 səh bəɾək  
aləh fik khouya .eləh yəhdinə bə3dnə ləbə3d !! amin yə rəb  
March 24 at 2:36pm · Like · 🔄 1

[ha:ðl hədrə təʃ le zəlʒerjɛ təʃ sʰəh bə:rəkə alləh fik xu:ʒə alləh jəhdi:nə: bəʃadʰnə: ləbəʃdʰ ə:mi:n  
jə: rəb]

“This is the way Algerians speak. God bless you my brother. May Allah guide us to the right path. Amen.”

- Substitution: in this example, we can observe a common fast typing mistake which occurs when a letter substitutes another because of the two keys being one next the other. Instead of writing “shukran” [ʃukran], which means “thank you”, “j” in this case substitutes “h.”

 **Ridan Hata** Enpxe sjukran  
Like · Reply · 🔄 9 · 12 hours ago


- Omission: in this example, we can see how the letter “t” in the word “est” is omitted. The apostrophe between “C” and “est” is also left out.

 **Nassima Djerrah** Ces pas le village de tazarart  
Like · Reply · 21 hours ago

[se pə lə viləʒ də tazarart]

“This is not the village of Tazarart.”

- Repetition: in this example the French word “et” is repeated twice.

 **Tahar Akchiche** sinon tə3 hətə bərk , wənəwəssou 3lə jəime  
et et les commentaires tə3 səhite  
November 8, 2013 at 1:37pm · Like · 🔄 1

[sinð taʃ ha:t bark wnhawsu: ʃl:a zɛm e e le kɔmãtɛʁ taʃ s'ahhi:t]

“Just give us. We want thanking likes and comments.”

The chart below shows the kind of typos most AUF make.

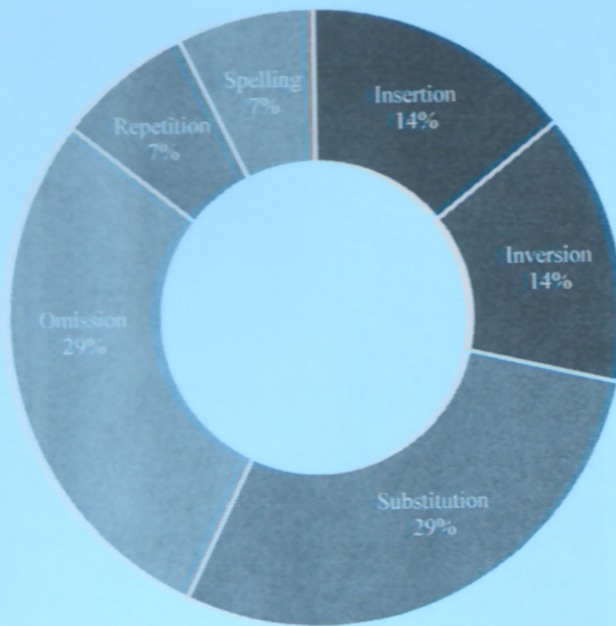


Figure 19. The different kinds of typos made in comments.

As we can see, substitution and omission typos are the most produced typos with 58% of users. These results prove that fast typing is the main reason why most typos are made.

Repetition, in certain cases, may be considered as an emphasis marker.

## 2.7. Emoticons

Emoticons or smileys are one of the most famous EMC features. AUF are no different from other users who try to symbolize their different facial expressions graphically when writing. The chart below shows the percentage of smileys introduced in a total of 1047 comments.

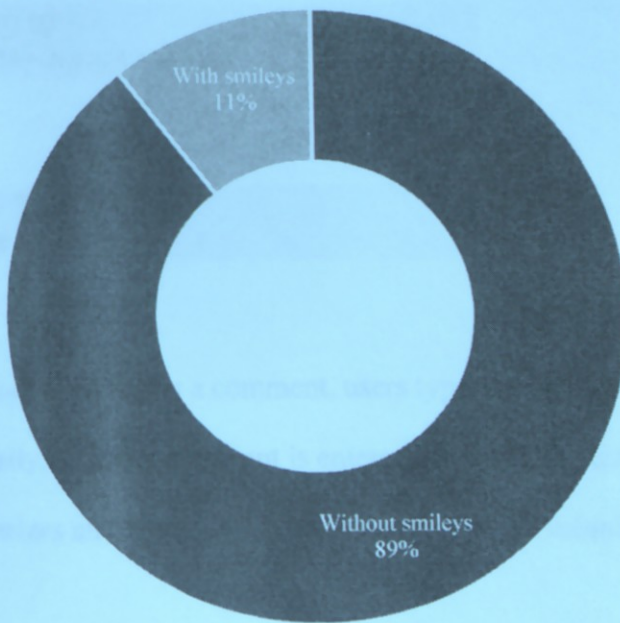




Figure 20. The use of smileys in comments by Algerian users of Facebook.


Using emoticons when writing comments can preserve effort and space during a communication and can compensate for the loss of expressing emotional features when writing. The following examples illustrate how emoticons are used in Fb comments by Algerians. They can be used at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of comments. Certain users comment with only emoticons.

 Sissi Sonia Anissa Sabine Sarah cha ndirtek à madame 😏  
 mdrri ghir wlidek li nedh 🤪 niahaahaha 😏 Looooooooooooo  
 Like · Reply · 🔄 1 March 6 at 4:54pm · Edited

[fa ndi:rlk a madam yi:r wli:dk li nddi:h]

“What do you want me to do ma’am. Your son is mine.”

 Mohamed Amine ❤️❤️  
 Like · Reply · 🔄 1 March 6 at 4:45pm

 Khiereddine Rouis 😏❤️😏😏😏  
 Like · Reply · Yesterday at 12:19am

In order to include a smiley in a comment, users type a certain code in a sequence on a single line. Automatically, after the comment is entered, the code changes to a smiley face. The following table summarizes all Fb emoticons with their codes and meanings.

















Table 7

Facebook Emoticons

Emoticon	Shortcut code	meaning
😊	:)	Smiling, happy
😞	:(	Sad
😜	:P	Joking, naughty
😄	:D	Very happy










---

	:O	Surprised
	;)	Winking
	8)	Glasses
	8	Sunglasses, cool
	>:(	Angry
	:/	Annoyed, unsure
	:'(	Crying
	3:)	Devil, naughty
	O:)	Angel, innocence
	:*	Kiss
	^_^	Kiki (extremely happy)
	-_-	Getting irate, bored
	o.O	Confused
	>:O	Upset
	:v	Pacman
	:3	Curly lips

---

---

	(y)	Like, thumbs up
	<3	Love
	(^^)	Shark, danger
	<(")	Penguin, cuteness
	: ]	Robot, reserved
	:putnam:	Chris Putnam, intelligence
	:poop:	poop


---

## 2.8. Abbreviations



When it comes to the use of abbreviations, most users include them to save time and space. As shown in the examples below, abbreviations take up less space and time to write.

 **Ammar Ammar lol**  
Like · Reply · 2 · 13 hours ago

“lol” stands for “laughin out loud.”

 **Adel Doudou mdr**  
Like · Reply · 6 hours ago

“mdr” is the French version of “lol.” It stands for “mort de rire.”

 **Amina Simsian b1 hmd hhhhh**  
June 6, 2012 at 11:47pm · Like ·  1

“hmd” is the kind of abbreviation used by Algerians for “الحمد لله” [alhamdu lillah], which means “thank God.”



Fouad Aristoo OMG

Like · Reply · 17 hours ago

“OMG” stands for “oh my God.”

In trying to find out the percentage of using abbreviations among AUF, 326 comments were analyzed. The chart below shows the results found.

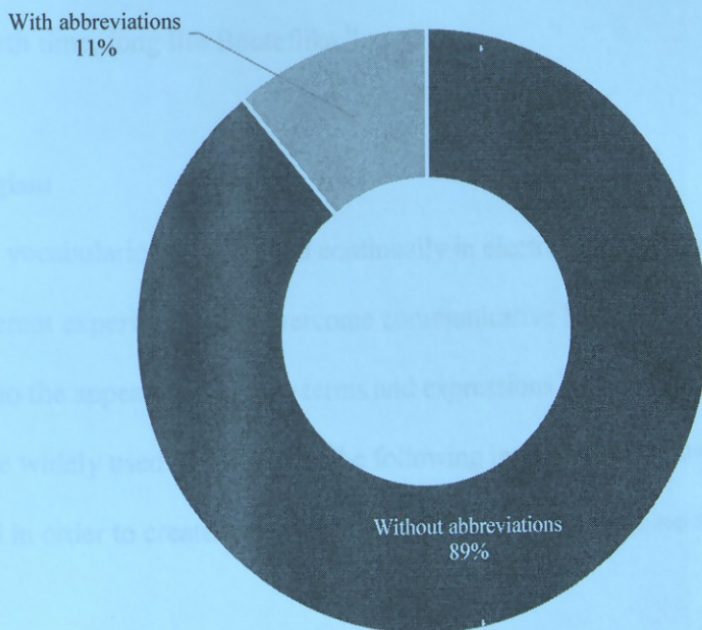


Figure 21. The use of abbreviations in comments by Algerian users of Facebook.

## 2.9. Grammatical Features

Comments written by AUF contain some deviations from standard grammar. This can be explained by the fast tempo with which comments are written.

For examples, the omission of function words is a common feature.



Imi Nounoussa 4em foi boutfli9a vive

Like · Reply · 2 · March 8 at 1:05pm

[katʁijcm fwa butfliqa viv]

“For the fourth time, long life Bouteflika.”

## 2.10. Neologism

New vocabularies are invented continually in electronically-mediated communication to express different experiences and overcome communicative limitations. Algerians have also contributed to the appearance of new terms and expressions and the revival of old ones which have become widely used in daily life. The following instances show how language is manipulated in order to create words and expressions that have become so popular among AUF.

One of the most famous terms that went viral on Fb is the word “فقاقير” [faqaqi:r]. This word, uttered by the Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal, is the origin of a new plural form. For example,



Abdou Lantrape

مطاطير

Like · Reply · 2 · November 16, 2013 at 10:54pm

Normally the plural form of the word “مطر” [matʔar], which means “rain,” is “امطار” [amtʔa:r], but with this new tendency, the plural is “مطاطير” [matʔatʔi:r]. The examples below show how this new plural pattern is formed for other words.



Rà Ouf

Like · Reply · 1 · November 16, 2013 at 10:58pm

الفضائير

[alxadʕadʕi:r] instead of “الخضر” [alxudʕr].



Nissòu Thiàm 7ajajir

Like · Reply · November 17, 2013 at 8:35pm

[ħazəzi:r] instead of “أحجار” [ahdʒa:r], which means “rocks.”



Princess Djwaher khababiz

Like · Reply · 1 · November 16, 2013 at 11:04pm

[xababi:z] instead of “خبازون” [xabbazu:n], which means “bakers.”



Amanda Blida

Like · Reply · 1 · November 17, 2013 at 7:36am

اهداف

[hadadi:f] instead of “أهداف” [ahda:f], which means “goals.”

The word “موسطاشة” [mu:stʕa:fɛ] is another product made by Algerian Fb users. The letter “ة” in Arabic, used to show feminine nouns, is added to the borrowed French word “moustache” to form a new word which means “non-attractive girl.”



Kamel Yahia

Like · Reply · March 10 at 10:02pm

فتى موسطاشة

[anti: mu:stʕa:fɛ]

“You are ugly.”

The word “حلاب” [halla:b] in the west of Algeria refers to oil smugglers. In other parts of the country, this word refers to someone with knowledge showing a novice person things he does not know. Yet, in Facebook, the meaning of this word shifted to a new one, which refers to any person who would do anything for a lady to get a positive reaction from her. The following examples show how the word “حلاب” is used in one of the most famous expressions invented by AUF, which is “حلاب من نوع” [halla:b min nawʕ].



**Ayachi Abdéràhmàné**

Like · Reply · March 13 at 9:34pm

حلاب من نوع جمال

[halla:b min nawʕ ʕamma:l]

“This “حلاب” [halla:b] is a porter.”



**Skikda Didine**

Like · Reply · February 19 at 1:35pm

حلاب من نوع رفع الثقال

[halla:b min nawʕ rafʕ alaθqa:l]

“This “حلاب” is a weight lifter.”



**Samado Soso halab min nawʕ port mento**

Like · Reply · October 23, 2013 at 8:40pm

[halla:b min nawʕ pɔʕtmāto]

“This “حلاب” is a portemanteau.”

The expression “شبعوتونا” [ʕabbaʕtu:na:], which means “we are fed up,” has also become an essential part of comments written by Algerians. Its use is illustrated in the following examples.



**Loyal Dz**

Like · Reply · 2 · February 2 at 3:01pm

شبعوتونا مقروط 😊

[ʃabbaʃtu:na: maqru:tʃ]

“We are fed up with ‘مقروط’.”



Aissa Tiffour

تعبونا كذب

Like Reply · February 3 at 11:56am

[ʃabbaʃtu:na: kɔb]

“We are fed up with lies.”

This example shows how the popular saying “غريبة كرة القدم” [ɣari:bɛ krat alqadam], which means “how strange football is,” has become widely used among Algerian Fb users. This has led to the invention of different expressions by substituting the word foot with other words like,



Souma Florà Layt ghariba kurat super glue O\_o

July 16, 2012 at 8:20pm · Like · 1

[ɣari:bɛ krat sypɛɣ gly]

“How strange super glue ball is.”



Amine ghariba koura ch3ar 😊

March 18, 2013 at 7:00pm · Like · 3

[ɣari:bɛ krat ʃʃar]

“How strange hair ball is.”

One of the expressions that AUF invented is “لا أستطيع إحتلال شعب” [la: astaʔo:ʃu ihtila:la ʃaʃb], which means “I cannot conquer a people who. . . .” This expression has become so popular that hundreds of pages dedicated to it have been created. The association of this expression with the historical character of Adolf Hitler shows how Algerian humor works. The following examples illustrate the use of this expression in Fb by Algerians.



MîsTêr-Yôù Zooûgâatagâh

لا استطيع احتلال شعب بسبب حجره كيما نكلو

Like Reply 1 · June 7, 2013 at 4:23pm

[la: astatʕo:ʕu ihtila:la faʕbin jseb hazrɛ ki:ma tʕaklu]

“I cannot conquer people who trip over a rock and curse it.”



Luca Ucciz

لا استطيع احتلال شعب نصف يوم على الفيس بوك والنص اثنى نوم

Like Reply · June 7, 2013 at 10:04pm

[la: astatʕo:ʕu ihtila:la faʕbin nisʕf jawm ʕala alfisbu:k wa nnusʕ atta:ni: nu:m]

“I cannot conquer people who spend half a day on Facebook and the other half sleeping.”

“من أنتم” [man antum], “هرمنا من أجل هذه اللحظة التاريخية” [harimna: min aʒl ha:ðihi allahðʕe atta:ri:xijzɛ], and “قلبي الصغير لا يتحمل” [qalbi: asʕsʕayi:r la: jatahammal] are examples of borrowed expressions that went viral among AUF.



زيتب احمد

من أنتم ؟؟؟؟؟؟ ولا زال السؤال حطرا يبحث عن الجواب للتلفي

Like Reply · February 23 at 1:13pm

[man antum wa la: za:la assuʔa:l ha:ʔiran jabhθu ʕan alʒawa:bi affa:fi:]

“Who are you? And, still, the question is looking for the answer.”



Khaled Fcim

هرمنا من أجل هذه اللحظة التاريخية

Like Reply · February 2 at 4:23pm

[harimna: min aʒl ha:ðihi allahðʕe atta:ri:xijzɛ]

“We have aged waiting for this historic moment.”



Mālêk Fāshîon Lōvêûr ClâSsê

قلبي الصغير لا يتحمل 😊

Like · Reply · March 27 at 11:14pm

[qalbi: asʕsʕayi:r la: jatahammal]

“My little heart cannot support this.”



## **Chapter Summary**

The reported findings in this chapter help in understanding the features of communication between AUF. Features such as the omission of punctuation and capitalization were found in high frequencies. The use of only lowercase letters is not common in traditional writing, yet, many examples were found to be written in such an unconventional way. Abbreviations were also observed in many examples, referring to shortened ordinary expressions. Emoticons appeared in many examples, adding a sense of speech-like interaction to messages. Onomatopoeic expressions were used as frequent as emoticons. Many new terms were created and new meanings added to other words.

All these features, which show how language form is manipulated among users of Facebook, seem to be the result of many factors like the medium used when writing and the nature of the topic being discussed.

The analysis of all the features discussed in this chapter help in drawing a general picture of EMC among Algerian users of Facebook.



General  
Conclusion

## General Conclusion

In trying to test the hypothesis proposed about EMC conditions that influence language practices used by AUF when communicating, the following questions were raised for investigation:

- How do Algerian Facebook users use language to achieve communication needs?
- What are the new language strategies to which users of Facebook in Algeria resort when communicating?

These questions were answered by showing that technology does, indeed, have an impact on language practices. Adapting language, because of the medium where it is used, results in using different strategies to achieve communication needs. This study shows that the kind of strategies used by Algerians, when communicating through Fb, are brought from the characteristics of written and spoken language. As stated in the theoretical part of this research, the particularity of Fb, as a medium of communication, lies in the ability given to users to interact with each other synchronically and asynchronously. This is why, we cannot consider Fb communication as being simply speech-like or simply written-like.

When communicating, AUF can make the conversation seem more like speech by using certain features, such as, emoticons, symbolic laughter, and onomatopoeic spelling. These features may reflect the emotional state of the interlocutor, the form of the utterance (statement, question, or command), and the presence of irony or sarcasm, emphasis, contrast, and focus – in order to help interlocutors compensate for the missing expressions in EMC which, in contrary, are present in face-to-face conversations.

Despite the high frequency of certain speech-like features, many ordinary writing features were observed, such as, the use of punctuation and capitalization, the use of

abbreviations and respecting grammatical rules. Many new terms were created in new ways, but some terms were observed to be quite ordinary and can be used in a conventional manner.

As far as the results of the analysis of language variety use are concerned, we observed that AA is the dominant variety used in communication, with 62% of users using Roman alphabet to represent it, and 87% of the comments containing no code switching or code mixing. The AA used in Fb has established its own conventions in an unplanned way, and even though Algerian varieties have been absent from the circle of written literature, they are becoming increasingly written through this ubiquitous medium of communication by its different users. Mostari comments on this issue in her work on Algerian texting by saying: “Thanks to mobile phones, these local varieties may gain a higher status in the Algerian linguistic ecology” (385).

This study, provides opportunities for deeper investigations in other topics and fields, yet, Because of time limits, we were not able to expand the description of EMC among AUF. Even though more than 5000 comments were analyzed, there are still things to be discussed. Other Algerian varieties should be included in future researches alongside the impact of EMC on everyday language. The range of sources should, also, be expanded to other social networking sites and forums.

Works



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## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة الخصائص اللغوية للتواصل الإلكتروني بين مستخدمي الفايسبوك الجزائريين و

ذلك بطرح الأسئلة التالية:

- كيف يستعمل مستخدموا الفايسبوك الجزائريون اللغة لتحقيق احتياجات التواصل؟

- ما هي الإستراتيجيات التي يلجأ إليها مستخدموا الفايسبوك الجزائريون أثناء التواصل؟

تم جمع البيانات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة من صفحات الفايسبوك الجزائرية. كما أستند اختيار هاته الصفحات

على عدد المعجبين و مشاركاتهم.

وفقا لتحليل العينات المستعملة في هاته الدراسة نجد اللهجة الجزائرية هي المسيطرة أثناء التواصل. كما أظهرت

النتائج أيضا أن التواصل بين مستخدمي الفايسبوك الجزائريين يجمع بين خصائص الكلام و الكتابة في نفس الوقت. وقد تم

ملاحظة و تسجيل العديد من الميزات كاستعمال الأيقونات الانفعالية و محاكاة الأصوات و الضحك و كذا الاختصارات.

كما لوحظ أيضا استخدام كلمات و عبارات جديدة.

## Résumé

Cette étude a pour objective d'examiner les caractéristiques linguistiques de la communication virtuelle entre les utilisateurs algériens de Facebook en posant les questions suivantes :

- Comment les utilisateurs algériens de Facebook utilisent la langue pour atteindre les besoins de communication?
- Quelles sont les nouvelles stratégies linguistiques auxquelles les utilisateurs de Facebook en Algérie ont recours lorsqu'ils communiquent?

Les données utilisées dans cette étude ont été prélevées à partir de pages Facebook algériennes. Le choix de ces pages a été basé sur le nombre de ses partisans et de leur participation.

Selon l'analyse des échantillons pris, l'arabe algérien est la variété dominante avec lequel les utilisateurs communiquent. L'analyse des résultats ont également indiqué que la communication entre les Algériens sur Facebook n'est pas simplement comme la parole ni simplement comme l'écrit, mais porte les deux caractéristiques en même temps. Un certain nombre de caractéristiques ont été observés, tels que l'utilisation des émoticônes, d'orthographe onomatopées, des rires, et des abréviations. Des nouveaux Termes et expressions ont également été observés.