

The Influence of Product Gender on Frequency of Code-switching in Online Advertisements: A Study on the Saudi Digital Marketing Platform *Maroof*

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Abstract

Code-switching can be a successful marketing strategy in online advertisements even when the targeted audience is monolingual. Yet, little research was conducted on its frequency or attitudes towards it, especially in the Middle Eastern context. Additionally, most current research on code-switching is on bilingual communities. Such gaps in the literature contribute to the significance of the current study. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to investigate whether gender is a factor influencing both the frequency and the preferences of code-switching in online written advertisements listed on *Maroof*, a Saudi governmental platform for verifying local online shops. Two questions were formulated to determine if code-switching frequency in advertisements for male and female products is statistically different and to check whether the targeted recipients have different code-choice preferences depending on the gender for which the product is made. A textual analysis and an online questionnaire were employed to answer these research questions. Fifty randomly selected online shops containing products for women were compared with fifty other shops advertising men's products. The advertisements were mostly Arabic monolingual for both groups (82% in men's products and 76% in women's products). However, the group of women's products had a significantly higher frequency of code-switching, with a p-value of 0.46. A questionnaire completed by 936 Saudi respondents revealed that English monolingual advertisements are favored by a considerable number of respondents, despite their complete absence in the sampled advertisements. The questionnaire also revealed that code-switching preferences seem to be influenced by linguistic constraints.

Keywords: advertisement, Arabic, code-switching, digital marketing, gender

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Introduction

The alternation between two or more languages in one setting is a widely attested phenomenon in the speech of bilinguals. Hence, most of the studies on this feature have been conducted on the verbal communication of people who speak more than one language, mostly in educational settings. Code-switching, however, is not limited to these circumstances and indeed exists in other forms of communication, such as writing, and in domains other than the two which have attracted the attention of the majority of researchers thus far, education and the media. Some settings in which code-switching is used, such as advertising and code-switching in writing and by monolinguals, remain in need of further investigation, especially in less-studied cultures.

Therefore, the current study attempts to bridge this gap by investigating the code choice and code-switching practices of Saudi online shop owners. More specifically, the study examines if there are differences in the frequency of code-switching, and whether or not these differences are statistically different in the products advertised for men and the products advertised for women in a sample of 100 online shops listed on the Saudi digital platform *Maroof*. Moreover, the current study attempts to discover whether the code-switching preferences of the targeted audience are influenced by the gender for which the product is advertised. Therefore, the study will address the two research questions below:

- 1- How significant is the difference in the frequency of code-switching between products advertised for men and products advertised for women?
- 2- How different are advertisement recipients' code choice preferences for male and female products?

In the following sections, a review of the related literature is provided, and then the methodology implemented in the study is laid out. This is followed by a display of the results, which are discussed in more detail in a subsequent section. The study concludes with implications and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Studies on Code-switching and Code Choice by Arabic Speakers

The phenomenon of switching between two registers of Arabic (i.e., Modern Standard Arabic and Arabic vernacular varieties) has been investigated in several studies. For example, Ismail (2012) conducted a quantitative analysis of male versus female code choices between standard and nonstandard Arabic varieties spoken in Saudi Arabia in academic settings. Contrary to the reports of more standard features in the speech of females in traditional sociolinguistic works, such as Labov (1972), Trudgill (1974) and (1986), Tagliamonte (2012), Ismail showed that her female participants used fewer Standard Arabic linguistic features than her male participants. One possible explanation for this pattern is that the male participants use more formal features as a sign of adhering to the local social boundaries between men and women. Different findings have been reported in other studies. For instance, Abd-El-Jawad (1981) reported that both his male and female participants preferred prestigious forms of Arabic. Further studies on code choice between the two registers of Arabic can be found in Abu-Melhim (1991), Albirini (2011), Saeed (1997), and Soliman (2008). Choosing and/or switching between two codes of Arabic, however, is beyond the scope of the current study. Hence, more focus will be paid to studies on switching between Arabic and English in the remainder of this subsection.

Safi (1992) explored the Arabic-English code-switching functions among Saudi students in the United States. Her findings suggest that Arabic is used for functions pertaining to identity and solidarity, such as religion and patriotism. The sampled participants switched to English when they had more discussions about their areas of specialty and expressed personal opinions. Ismail (2015) investigated the frequency and types of code-switching by young Saudi bilingual speakers. The female speakers in her sample code-switched between Arabic and English more often than their male counterparts. Use of code-switching same-sex conversations while avoiding it in mixed-sex ones for convergence or divergence reasons led to the conclusion that code-switching is influenced by the cultural norms in which gender segregation influences linguistic behavior in mixed sex conversations. Alatawi (2015) explored code-switching between Arabic and English in Arabic TV programs belonging to four genres (religious, fashion, medicine, and entertainment). The findings suggest that code-switching occurs in the genre of fashion, medicine, and entertainment but not in the religious program sampled in her study. An obvious explanation for the absence of code-switching in the religious program is that its hosts and guests are Arabic monolinguals. Furthermore, the pace of language shift in the domain of religion is slow. Hence, one would expect fewer code-switching instances in this domain (see Ding & Goh, 2020; Holmes & Wilson, 2017). Alatawi (2015) reported several code-switching functions in these shows, including semantic accuracy, repetition for clarification, showing modernity, and accommodation to expected audience. Functions of code-switching by Arabic speakers have also been investigated in a number of other studies, such as Alsalami (2021), Alaslal (2018), Albirini (2016), Alfaifi (2013), and Eldin (2014). It should be noted, however, that in most of these studies, the investigation took place in educational settings or in the media domain. Very little attention has been given to the frequency and functions of code-switching by Arabic speakers in advertisements. Hence, the current study looks at code-switching in a neglected area by researchers despite being a domain of language use where code-switching is frequent.

Attitudes towards code-switching among Arabic speakers have been examined in several studies. For instance, Omar and Ilyas (2018) found that younger and more educated Arabic speakers were more tolerant of code-switching than older and less educated sampled members. In a study about the attitudes of Saudi teachers towards code-switching in in-class interactions, Binmahboob (2020) found that English language teachers perceive code-switching as a barrier to second language acquisition and are hence more inclined towards disallowing it in class. Another study on educational settings was conducted by Alenezi (2016), who compared the attitudes of Saudi male and female students towards Arabic-English code-switching. His findings suggest that both males and females preferred code-switching in class, as it facilitates language learning. Although these two studies show an interesting conflict in the attitudes of teachers versus students towards the use of code-switching in class, it should be noted that attitudes towards code-switching may differ when it occurs in other domains, such as the domain under investigation (i.e., advertisement). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous work has attempted to investigate the attitudes of Saudi speakers towards code-switching in advertisements and business transactions. It is indeed illuminating to investigate attitudes towards code-switching in cultures which remain under-researched. Therefore, the current study aims to bridge this gap by addressing code-switching and code-choice by Saudi advertisers.

Code-switching in Advertisements

Investigating the frequency, functions, motives, and attitudes towards code-switching in advertisements can be informative to linguists as well as marketers. In a study about the impact of code-switching on bilingual consumers' persuasion, Luna and Peracchio (2005) investigated whether switching from the majority language to the minority language and vice versa in advertisements would have an impact on the consumers' evaluation of the products. Their findings indicate that switching from the minority language to the majority language leads to more positive evaluations of the products. When the advertisement contains code-switching from the minority to the majority language, more negative evaluations of the product were given. Other positive impacts of using code-switching have been reported by Kuo, Hou, and Hsieh (2021). The findings of their study suggest that using netizen language (i.e., terms used by active internet users) has overall positive effects on Facebook ads, even for brands with a negative image. The functions and motivations for code-switching in advertisements have been investigated in some studies. For instance, Banatao and Malenab-Temporal (2018) analyzed code-switching in TV advertisements in two networks based in the Philippines. Their examination of the advertisements sampled in their study revealed that code-switching serves many functions, such as advising, describing, explaining, and illustrating. Their analysis also revealed that advertisers use code-switching for other functions, such as language economy, euphemism, and portrayal of multiple identities. It should be noted here that Lin, Wang, and Hsieh (2017) suggested that the research findings of studies conducted on bilingual speakers cannot be applied to monolingual speakers. The findings of their study suggest that customers prefer advertising local brands without the use of codeswitching. Global brands, however, showed a different pattern. Monolingual customers show more preference for code-switched advertisements that contain words with which they are familiar. In other words, the authors' polled monolingual customers only preferred code-switching in global brands, and their preference was influenced by their familiarity with the code-switched words from the foreign language. Hence, it would be interesting to further investigate advertisements directed to a mostly monolingual audience, such as the population of the current study.

Gender and Attitudes towards Code-switching

The current study investigates the frequency and attitudes of a sample comprising males and females towards code-switching in advertisements. This area of sociolinguistic research has received relatively little attention in the literature. Most gender-conditioned comparisons of code-switching have focused on the issue of language and identity (e.g., Babou, 2021; Farida, Pandhiani, & Buriro, 2018; Finnis, 2014). Language and gender variationist accounts of code-switching also include syntactic structures (e.g., Gulzar, Farooq & Umer, 2013), frequency (Bardaweel & Rabbah, 2022; Rabbani & Mushtaq, 2012), and attitudes (Alsalamy, 2021). None of these studies, however, have addressed the topic under investigation (i.e., variation in the frequency of and attitudes towards code-switching in advertisements). This lack exists despite the high frequency of code-switching in commercials and the seemingly different functions code-switching serves in these advertisements.

In addition, these frequencies and attitudes can be influenced by sociocultural factors, thereby adding more support for the significance of the current study. Indeed, sociocultural factors such as religion, economic status, education, openness to the outer world, etc., can have a considerable impact on the frequency of and attitudes towards code-switching in different cultures. Hence, the current study attempts to bridge this gap in the literature by investigating the frequency

of Arabic-English code-switching in the descriptions of businesses and products of products and services directed to males and females by Saudi entrepreneurs, as well as the attitudes of males and females towards the use of code-switching in advertisements.

Method

As discussed in the introductory section above, the current study aims to compare the frequency of code-switching in products directed to females with those in products directed to males. In addition, the study aims to investigate the attitudes of Saudi males and females towards code-switching in advertisements. To achieve this aim, a textual analysis of written advertisements was made, and a questionnaire was distributed to a sample of Saudi participants. These two research tools are discussed in detail below.

Research Tools

A textual analysis of Advertised products in one hundred randomly selected online shops was made to determine if there are significant differences in code-switching in these online shops between women's products (e.g., make-up, women's shoes, clothes, and accessories) and men's products (men's clothes, shoes, and accessories). Fifty online shops selling women's products and services and fifty online shops selling men's goods and services were included in the analysis. Products that can be advertised for both males and females (e.g., instant coffee, car accessories, and printing services) were excluded from the analysis. Based on the research questions laid out in the introductory section above, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: There is a difference in the frequency of code-switching between products advertised for men and products advertised for women.

H₀: There is no difference in the frequency of code-switching between products advertised for men and products advertised for women.

The one hundred websites sampled in the study are all included in *Marrof.sa*, a local website for verifying Saudi online shops monitored by the Saudi Ministry of Commerce. The website categorizes online shops into various categories, such as women's products, academic services, real estate, home décor, etc. These categories will be utilized for a stratified sampling of data. For instance, the fifty online shops selling women's products and services are all listed under the same category (i.e., women's products). Hence, the first online shop in this category will be included in the analysis, and then a regular interval will be chosen (every fifth online shop in the list). The descriptions of products sold in each online shop will be classified as either Arabic monolingual, English monolingual, bilingual, or containing code-switching. The data will then be analyzed quantitatively using a chi-square test to determine the frequency of code-switching in the sampled advertisements and whether there are statistically significant differences between the products advertised to males and females at a *p-value* of .05. It should be noted that determining the gender of the shop owner is beyond the focus of the current study, as the focus is on the language used for advertising for gendered products, whether by a female or a male entrepreneur. In addition to the comparison between the two frequencies above, the code-switched advertisements will be classified according to the framework proposed by Luna and Peracchio (2005), which classifies code-switched advertisements (aka slogans) as either starting with a majority language and then switching to a minority language, or vice versa. The framework

suggests that advertisements starting with a minority language and then switching to a majority language are more convincing to audiences.

Regarding the attitudes towards code-switching in advertisements in online marketing, a questionnaire was designed to measure the respondents' attitudes towards the use of code-switching in advertised items for males and females. The first part of the questionnaire elicits demographic information (age, gender, level of education, and residency). The second part contains self-rated English proficiency scores on a scale ranging from one to five. The third part asks participants about the rate of recurrence of code-switching in their daily speech on a scale from one (never) to five (always). It should be noted here that the self-rating of English proficiency or the frequency of code-switching are by no means conceived of as accurate data but rather as indicators that measure questionnaire respondents' proficiency or frequency of code-switching based on naturally occurring data are hard to achieve using a questionnaire. The third part of the questionnaire also contained three multiple-choice questions, in which participants were asked to choose between the best ways to advertise three products: a coffee cup, a men's t-shirt, and a women's face mask. The first item can be advertised to both males and females, whereas the second and the third items are more gender specific. This can indicate whether the respondents see that code-switched advertisements are more acceptable if directed to females or vice versa. In each of these items, the choices were between an Arabic description of the product, an English description, and a code-switched description. Since there can be many ways to advertise three items, the respondents could write their advertisements if they were not pleased with any of the given choices.

Participants

In addition to the quantitative textual analysis of advertisements listed on *Maroof*, the data were triangulated by investigating the code-choice preferences of the targeted audience of online shops. Therefore, a sample of 936 participants from various age groups, areas of residency in Saudi Arabia, levels of education, and English proficiency levels filled out an online questionnaire. Convenience sampling was employed to approach as many Saudi participants as possible via WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire was distributed in the academic year 2021-22 and was completed voluntarily and anonymously by the participants. The number of females in the sample is slightly higher than the number of males: 543 (58%) vs. 393 (42%). The participants came from different age groups: 23.5% were 18 to 25 years old, 26.4% were between 26 and 35 years old, 24.8% ranged between 36 and 45 years old, 20.4% were between 46 and 59, and 4.9% were 60 or above. Regarding the area of residency in Saudi Arabia, nearly half the participants (47.3%) were from the Eastern Province. The rest of the participants came from other Saudi provinces (26.7% from the Central Province, 9.8% from the Northern Province, 8.8% from the Western Province, and 4.8% from the Southern Province). Regarding the level of education, 24.1% had completed their secondary education at the time they completed the questionnaire, whereas 38% had completed an undergraduate degree, and 28% had completed a postgraduate degree. Hence, all participants can be classified as well-educated. This is due to the decision to collect data from participants who are eighteen or older. At this age, it is extremely rare for Saudis not to have completed their secondary education. Table 1 below summarises the demographic data of the participants.

Table 1. *Participants' demographic data*

Category	Number of participants/Percentage					
	Females: 543 (58%)			Males: 393 (42%)		
Age group	18-25 220 (23.5%)	26-35 247 (26.4%)	36-45 232 (24.8%)	46-59 191 (20.4%)	60 and over 46 (4.9%)	
Province	Central 250 (26.7%)	Eastern 443 (47.3%)	Western 82 (8.8%)	Northern 92 (9.8%)	Southern 45 (4.8%)	Abroad 24 (2.6%)
Education	Secondary 226 (24.1%)	BA 356 (38%)		Higher 341 (36.4%)		Other 13 (1.3%)
English level	1 (low) 120 (12.8%)	2 155 (16.6%)	3 225 (24%)	4 173 (18.5%)	5 (high) 263 (28.1%)	

Results

As detailed above, the data analyzed in the current study include an examination of one hundred slogans in Saudi online shops. The study also analyses questionnaire respondents' language preferences for advertised products.

Advertisements Analysis

The first dataset compares advertised women's and men's products in a Saudi national platform for verified online shops (Maroof.sa). Table two below provides a summary of the frequency and types of code-switching in each category. Note that AM stands for Arabic monolingual advertisement, EM stands for English monolingual advertisement, and CS stands for code-switched advertisement (English to Arabic: E-A; Arabic to English: A-E).

Table 2. *Frequency of code-switching in ads for women's and men's products*

Category	AM	EM	CS		Total
			E-A	A-E	
Women's products	38 (76%)	0	3 (6%)	9 (18%)	50
Men's products	41 (82%)	0	1 (2%)	8 (16%)	50

In products advertised for both men and women, there is a tendency for more use of Arabic only. This is expected, given that the online shop owners are mostly Arabic monolinguals and that the targeted audience of these advertisements is also mostly Arabic monolinguals. This also explains the complete absence of English-only advertisements in both sets of data. Code-switching, however, is not uncommon, as it appeared in 24% of advertisements for women's products and 18% of advertisements for men's products. Below are examples of code-switched examples from the data:

1. حقائب جلدیه وکفرات هواتف

Haqaib jildiyyah wa coverat hawatef
Bags leather and cover.pl phones

Leather bags and phone covers

In this example, the shop owner is advertising leather bags for women and phone covers. The advertisement starts in Arabic, switches to English, and then switches back to Arabic. This example of code-switching also shows that code-switching can occur at the morphological level, as the Arabic feminine plural marker was added to the English code-switched word *cover*. It should be noted that this is not an instance of using a borrowed word, as there is an Arabic equivalent that could have been used in this advertisement (i.e., *ghitaa'*). The second example below shows another less frequent type of code-switching, which starts with English:

2. إي أي ديزاينز للتصاميم النسائية العصرية
 EA designs li.t.tasamim al.nisa'iyah al.'asriyah
 EA designs for.the.designs the. women the.contemporary
EA designs for women's contemporary designs.

The example above starts with an English phrase (the shop name) and then describes the services provided by the shop in Arabic.

As for the shop names, Twenty percent of women's shops had names containing code-switching, while only 14% of the men's shops included code-switching. The remainder of the shops are either Arabic monolinguals or English monolinguals (see Table three below). The difference between the two groups in terms of code-switching is also significant at a p-value of 0.12. Hence, the current study provides further evidence of the influence of gender on the frequency of code-switching.

Table 3. Frequency of code-switching in ads for women's and men's online shop names

Category	AM	EM	CS		Total
			E-A	A-E	
Women's shops	20 (40%)	20 (40%)	4 (8%)	6 (12%)	50
Men's shops	33 (66%)	10 (20%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	50

A more detailed discussion on code-switching in the advertised products is provided in the discussion section below.

Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire elicited the participants' demographic data. A relatively large number of participants reported being advanced learners of English (28.1%), upper-intermediate learners (18.5%), or intermediate learners (24%). Hence, it was not surprising that the polled sample reported frequent use of code-switching in their daily interactions. Thirty-seven percent of the sample reported that they sometimes switch between Arabic and English in their speech, while 12% reported they frequently code-switch when they speak. Finally, 9% of the respondents stated that they always code-switch between Arabic and English.

Collecting data from various age groups and people belonging to various levels of education, proficiency levels, and areas of residence in Saudi Arabia provides a better representation of the entire population. It should be noted, however, that some of the reported results above, namely, the frequency of code-switching and English proficiency, are only conceived of as indicators rather than accurate measures of either English proficiency, which

require sitting for proficiency tests, or code-switching frequency, which involves collecting naturally occurring data. This was difficult to perform on the sample given its large size. In addition, the goal of the study is not to determine the English proficiency levels or the frequency of code-switching by the participants but rather to determine their attitudes towards this phenomenon.

Thus, the second section of the questionnaire is more relevant to the research questions of the current study as it aimed to see what the sampled participants prefer for male and female products. The first question asked the participants about the best way to advertise a men's sports t-shirt. The participants were given three options to choose from. In addition, there is a blank space where they can write their own advertisement. The first option was a code-switched advertisement, where the Arabic word 'qamis' was replaced with its English equivalent *t-shirt*. This option was the most preferred. It was chosen by 43.8% of the sample. The second option was an Arabic-only advertisement, which translates to English as 'men's t-shirt'. This option was preferred by 29.3% of the sample. The third option was an English-only advertisement, which was preferred by 25.3% of the sample. For the women's product (i.e., a women's face mask), 63% of the sample preferred the Arabic-only option, while 18.4% and 16% preferred two code-switched options. The third question was about a product that can be advertised for both males and females (a pistachio-flavored coffee). The purpose of asking about this product was to use it as a benchmark for the comparison between the other two products. The English-only option was preferred by more than half of the participants (53.8%), while the Arabic-only option was preferred by 22.1% of the sample, and the code-switched option was preferred by 21.1% of the sample. Table four summarizes the participants' preferences.

Table 4. *Participants' preferences in advertisements*

	Women's product	Men's product	Control product
EM	0.1%	25.3%	53.8%
AM	63.5%	29.3%	22.1%
CS (English to Arabic)	34.4%	43.8%	21.1%

The section above displayed the results of the study. In summary, Arabic was the most used language in advertisements made for both males and females. No English monolingual advertisements were found in the sample. However, Arabic-English code-switching was not uncommon in advertisements targeting both sociolinguistic groups under investigation. Code-switching was found to be higher in advertisements targeting females. The polled advertisers' slightly inclined preference towards code-switching in females' products was contrary to the sampled respondents' preference for code-switching in males' products among a choice between three made-up advertisements. The section below discusses these findings in more detail.

Discussion

The current study aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference between the frequency of code-switching in products advertised for men and women in Saudi online shops. The first research question asks whether there is a significant difference in the frequency of code-switching between the products advertised for men and the products advertised for women. It was hypothesized that there is a difference between the two groups because many studies in the literature confirm that code-switching is conditioned by gender (e.g. Babou, 2021; Bardaweel &

Rabbah, 2022; Farida, Pandhiani, & Buriro, 2018; Ismail, 2012). Table two above shows that both products of males and females in the sample are mostly advertised using Arabic only. However, the rate of Arabic-only advertisements is greater in men's products, at 82% of the total number of advertisements. This means that only 18% of products advertised for males are code-switched. Products advertised for women, on the other hand, showed a different pattern, with more tendency for code-switching (76% Arabic monolingual advertisements versus 24% code-switched ones). One interesting finding is that none of the 100 advertisements included in the analysis was English monolingual. A chi-square independent test shows that the difference between advertisements in the two groups is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.46. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the frequency of code-switching in advertisements for men and women is rejected.

The second research question asked if there are differences in code choice between male and female products among the targeted audience of online advertisements. Some interesting findings emerged in the participants' responses to the questionnaire. First, despite the complete absence of English monolingual advertisements in the analysed sample, respondents seem not to object to, even if they did not favor, English monolingual advertisements. Indeed, 53.8% of the sample preferred an English monolingual advertisement for a cup of coffee, while 25.3% of the sample preferred an English monolingual ad for men's products. The women's product, however, showed a different pattern, i.e., disfavoring an English monolingual ad for the women's product (0.1%). One likely reason for this difference is that the product (a women's face mask) seems to be a 'fixed phrase' in the Arabic language, thereby making it an unsuitable candidate for code-switching. This perhaps explains why the Arabic monolingual option for the women's product was preferred by as many as 63.5% of the sample, much more than the men's product (29.3%) and the control product (22.1%). Another finding of the questionnaire that contradicts the behavior of the advertisers of online shops is the participants' high degree of preference for code-switched advertisements of the sampled men's product (43.8%), compared with 34.4% for the women's products and 21.1 for the control product.

This inconsistency between the observed advertisements and the sampled participants' preferences calls for the production of advertisements that are in line with the targeted population's preferences. Another useful implication is to consider linguistic constraints to code-switching when making advertisements. Indeed, despite the overall tendency towards code-switching in women's data, both in the current study and in other studies reported in the literature review above, the polled sample preferred an Arabic monolingual advertisement for women's face masks due to the linguistic constraint of producing this phrase in the Arabic language as one chunk.

Although careful measures were taken during the data collection stage of the current study, there are a few limitations that could not be overcome. For instance, the identity of shop owners cannot be identified. Some of the online shops advertising female products could have been made by males and vice versa. Yet, even in such atypical cases, the data is still acceptable because the focus is on code choice relevant to the product, not on the linguistic preferences of the shop owner. Another limitation was pertinent to measuring the exact English proficiency level of the participants, which cannot be determined accurately without conducting English proficiency tests. Instead, the respondents were asked to rate their English levels which can only be taken as an indication of their levels. Another limitation is that observations of real language use are more

accurate than the self-reflections of code-switching frequencies used in the questionnaire. Hence, the self-reports of the frequency of code-switching reported by the sample by no means reflect an actual representation of the frequency of code-switching. The respondents' answers were only conceived of as an indication to help in comparing the observed data (the sampled shops) with the code-switching practices of the public (educated Saudis).

Conclusion

The current study aimed to determine whether there is a difference in the frequency of code-switching in two samples of products advertised for men and women. The study also aimed to determine whether the preferences of the targeted audience are conditioned by the gender of the targeted audience of the product. An analysis of one hundred online shops revealed that the frequency of code-switching is higher in the products advertised for women than those advertised for men. The difference is statistically significant, both for the advertised products and for shop names. The questionnaire showed that English monolingual advertisements are acceptable, especially in products for men. The questionnaire also revealed the importance of considering linguistic constraints to code-switching in advertisements. Future studies are recommended to consider code-switching as verbal advertisements in social media platforms, especially Snapchat and Instagram. Both platforms seem to be preferred venues for online advertisers and thus good candidates for studying code-switching in advertisements communicated verbally.

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