

Blending Identities in the Age of Globalization: A Conceptual Blending Theory Perspective on Moroccan Youth Culture

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Abstract:

Intercultural communication functions as a foundational element for shaping both personal identities and societal identities in the interconnected universe of globalization. Digital platforms enable rising interaction between worldwide influences and traditional heritage leading young individuals to combine diverse cultural conceptual areas. This paper uses Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) to study how Moroccan youth blend their identities through digital settings and explains the underlying mental operations. The research examines the self-expression methods Moroccan social media users create by adopting elements from Arabic, Tamazight, French and English linguistic systems. The research expands its analysis to explore identity blending practices between Moroccan youth and other countries that include France and Turkey. This study examines Moroccan social media discourse to reveal how local cultural influences get integrated cognitively with global elements to develop fresh social meanings. The research examines how global youth combine cultural elements through coherent communicative systems as they handle globalization. The paper demonstrates that evaluating these mental processes leads to a better grasp of how language combines with identity and world connectivity. Research findings establish the essential role of CBT to understand modern intercultural dialogue and provide valuable principles for educational development and digital communication skills and international partnership activities in the present century.

Keywords: Conceptual Blending, globalization, multilingualism, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

Globalization drives fast changes in Morocco's national cultural context because of its multi-directional language development. The symbolic nature of languages goes beyond transmission because it serves as a tool for people to communicate their cultural expression while forming new identity coalitions. Youth identities in Morocco develop through the collision of Arabic with Tamazight as well as French and English languages because of historic colonial influence and today's international currents (Abdellatif El Moutadayene, 2022). Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) provides a strong method for studying how people synthesize cultural and linguistic elements to build new interpretations in this particular environment. According to CBT explains how people utilize multiple mental spaces in their minds to both develop and share new ideas. The analysis of intercultural communication usually involves these mental spaces which tightly relate to separate cultural frameworks alongside linguistic systems. Digital media showcases emergent structures such as new cultural identities and hybrid



expressions and fused ideologies because global and local elements continuously clash (Coulson & Pascual, 2020).

This research describes the ways through which Moroccan youth construct conceptual blends on Instagram and TikTok alongside YouTube. The research analyzes Moroccan user identity formations based on the blend of regional cultural elements and worldwide expressions to identify similarities with French and Turkish cultural integration processes. The study explores both mental processes and communication patterns through which young people in multiple language communities experience and practice globalization.

2. Literature Review

The study of language interaction with culture and identity remains the main focus of sociolinguistics together with intercultural communication research during periods of globalization and multilingualism. Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) is now widely used for understanding how people unite different mental spaces from language-based sources with cultural experiences and social circumstances to develop new meanings alongside mixed identities (Hind SETTOU & AOMARI, 2024). The theory proves highly valuable for studying conditional meaning creation through the combination of various cultural contexts in multilingual settings.

According to CBT theory people use unique "mental spaces" while communicating including native cultural elements as well as foreign language usages and social media discourses which they combine to generate complete ideas (Jebbour, 2019). Speakers from multilingual settings enable meaning creation through hybrid communication methods that emerge between cultures while preserving social context. CBT provides an effective method for understanding identity negotiation because these mental constructs bring together cultural values together with social roles and political weights.

Morocco's linguistic environment combines four primary languages which consist of Darija Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight Amazigh languages and French together with enhancing usage of English. The combination of indigenous along with colonial and world languages in Morocco provides an excellent environment to study conceptual blending. Moroccan youth blend languages for practical purposes and to reflect their personal identities and resistance against societal norms (Iazzetta, 2023). People frequently use Darija-French code-switching primarily in urban environments to display their background as well as their family status or their adoption of modern perspectives.

Research conducted in Morocco about code-switching and language hybrid practices demonstrates the powerful symbolic meanings language holds. The colonial ties of French persist in the minds of Moroccans who connect it to academic splendor and professional depth (Khoumssi, 2020). The revival of the Tamazight language during recent times enables people to display their native ethnicity while celebrating cultural traditions. The youth population in Morocco has chosen English to represent global modernity and digital culture since they watch content through platforms including TikTok and Instagram and YouTube (Knapton et al., 2021).



The research field about CBT applications to analyze Moroccan social life language and cultural code combinations remains underdeveloped despite existing academic work on Moroccan linguistic patterns. Sociolinguistic studies show which languages are selected while CBT explains the procedures underlying how speakers mix these components to develop hybrid cultural significations. Pot et al. (2018) implements CBT to investigate Moroccan digital discourse through which youth layer cultural indicators derived from traditional Arabic expressions and Islamic texts with western cultural references to generate humorous content along with critical analysis and social group solidarity.

Though CBT provides a powerful model of analyzing the process of such linguistic and cultural mixing processes in the mentalizing system, the question of how identity is manifested and performed on the digital landscapes needs an interdisciplinary investigation. According to Pot et al. (2018), cultural identity is not natural but it is an ongoing process of production and reproduction in the form of representation. This negotiation and re-negotiation are described as a vibrant domain of a social media platform (Mustapha Aabi, 2020). Social media encourages emerging linguistic creativity practices and the performativity of identity. They highlight how the youth is using language, images and digital device to portray complex identities. This is especially noticeable in multilingual communities, where code-switching and visual-symbolic mixing is not limited to any domain but rather considered a strategic resource in the processes of meaning-making. To elaborate further, concept of translanguaging practice elaborates our notions of communication to the extent wherein the users take upon themselves to utilize a complete semiotic repertoire comprising images, hashtags, music, and emojis to communicate cultural meaning. In this regard, Moroccan youth resort to linguistic and symbolic mixing to indicate a multiplicity of identities, which could be recognized at local and global levels.

This research develops an essential framework for understanding Moroccan youth social identity because it uses Conceptual Blending Theory to examine cultural trends specific to youth in global media environments. Young Moroccans express creativity through language which allows them to establish their position within a global environment through CBT's detailed perspective.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

An exploratory qualitative method serves this study because it enables researchers to discover new patterns that emerge when people create their personal interpretations from natural interactions. The study makes use of qualitative research methods to understand the processes through which people develop identity in challenging social contexts (Miller et al., 2023). Using CBT theory enables researchers to study both textual structures and meaningful content found within social media texts that include language with symbols and visual elements and contextual information.

3.2 Participants

The research selected participants through purposive sampling because they were all involved with multilingual and online cultural content consumption practices. Ten members of the Moroccan youth



population (between the ages of 18 and 25 years old) participated in interviews between January and February 2025 for this study. These participants had different linguistic backgrounds with Arabic, Tamazight, French and English as their primary language usage. Ten university students from Rabat, Casablanca, and Marrakesh maintained regular usage of digital content on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube platforms. The research participants received direct messages on social media then provide their voluntary agreement to participate. The study worked towards bringing participants from different linguistic backgrounds who actively discussed identity topics to show diverse views regarding code-blending methods.

3.3 Collection of data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 people, 10 members of the Moroccan youth and 10 university students between the ages 18 and 25 years old residing in metropolitan areas including Casablanca, Rabat, and Marrakesh. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a variety of linguistic origins, educational levels, and vocations. A range of multilingual experiences and identity conversations were recorded using this sampling technique (Salah Ben Hammou & Abdelaziz Kesbi, 2023). Interviews was place in the participants' selected language(s), allowing natural language mixing to happen throughout conversation. Each 30 to 60 minutes interview was recorded on audio with participant consent.

Aiming to gather knowledge on language use in daily life, language preferences in different contexts family, school, workplace experiences with code-switching, and opinions on cultural identity, the interview questions where Participants were also asked to reflect on the meanings they associate with different languages and how they combine these languages to more accurately express themselves (Dressman, 2019).

The research project obtained data from two distinct sources.

1. The research gathered 100 available TikTok and Instagram videos from November 2024 until January 2025. The selected videos made use of the hashtags “MoroccanVibes” “BerberQueen” “CasablancaStyle” “DarijaHumor”. The collected videos contained language mixtures and cultural elements such as religious phrases and traditional attires along with Western music.
2. The researcher conducted ten open-ended interviews in a combination of English French and Darija based on participant selection. The recorded interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes by participant consent. The research examined how people select their communication languages in addition to understanding their cultural ties and multilingual abilities together with their sense of dual identity.

Interview questions included:

1. How do you use Moroccan traditions and global trends (such as fashion, music or language) when creating your social media content?



2. Why do people choose to speak in Darija, French, English or a combination when speaking online through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram?
3. Could you talk about how your image is different, depending on where you share and the cultural aspects you choose in those places?

3.4 Data analysis

Researchers applied thematic discourse analysis principles to conduct their evaluation based on CBT concepts. Multiple stages made up the analytic process which followed certain important steps.

3.4.1 Transcription and coding

NVivo was used to analyze the interviews in the process of transcription and detection of themes. A deductive inductive coding procedure was adhered to. The original coding scheme was that based on Conceptual Blending Theory, in particular, the identification of input spaces, cross-space mapping, and emergent meaning. Inductive codes have arisen around such topics as platform-specific identity changes, religious-cultural blending, and worldwide style adjustment. The dataset provided in social-media was subjected to the thematic discourse analysis (TDA), which was not exactly multimodal, as it considered visual and textual fusion, paying attention to captions, hashtags, emojis, and side images as textual-semiotic composites. Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) was taken into account; the framework of CBT pays more attention to cognition and linguistic processes, as opposed to multimodal sequencing. Therefore, TDA was found more affable with the major purpose of the study (SLIMANI & IGUIDER, 2024).

A TikTok video showing a user in a Moroccan djellaba singing American rap music was first assigned to this category.

- Input Space 1: Traditional Moroccan dress and culture
- Input Space 2: Globalized American hip-hop culture
- Blended space: A blended space emerges to create a new Moroccan-American urban identity.

Conceptual Blending Mapping

The researchers analyzed each post together with interview responses through CBT's four-space model.

1. Input Space 1 – Local cultural identity (e.g., Islamic phrases, Amazigh symbols)
2. Input Space 2 – Globalized or foreign influence (e.g., American slang, French fashion)
3. Generic Space – Shared communicative structure (e.g., youth vernacular, social media genre)
4. The Blended Space contains modern identity expressions that combine new terms with visual aesthetics.



The authors relied on the analytical method to identify when elements between input spaces matched metaphorically and symbolically while studying the outcome of these connections creating new meanings (Hind SETTOU & AOMARI, 2024).

3.4.2 Thematic patterns and interpretation

The data received an analysis through the CBT framework and resulted in five thematic patterns that represented most of the information.

- Fashion and Aesthetics: Fusion of Amazigh patterns with Western streetwear
- Linguistic Play: Use of multiple languages in a single sentence or joke
- Cultural Hybridity: Juxtaposition of religious content with pop culture references

Users employ digital activism through global discourse platforms (memes and satire) to generate local criticism of issues. The strategic selection of language enables users to show their allegiance to both worldwide and domestic social groups. The analysis of each theme adhered to the blending explanation model of CBT instead of simplifying the contents through code-switching analysis. A caption such as "Inshallah I glow up like Zendaya" was understood through CBT as a blended cognitive expression of Islamic hopes and Western pop culture stardom which created a new symbolic representation of personal growth aspirations.

3.5 Validation

The researcher used participant interview responses to validate the content analysis interpretations for greater trustworthiness. The participant stated "Using English slang means more about finding language that fits my feelings rather than being foreign." The study provided evidence about intentional language mixing which reinforced the superiority of CBT approaches beyond sociolinguistic theories (Farghal et al., 2023).

The analysis procedure fulfilled qualitative rigor standards by using member verifications for credibility and detailed contextual explanations for transferability and researcher reflexivity and clear analysis documentation for dependability (Epepe et al., 2018).

4. Results

The current section includes research findings which stem from examine social media text through discourse analysis and interviews with Moroccan youth. The analysis centers on brain-driven and social aspects of multicultural and multilingual fusion via Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT). The research results become enriched through a cultural contrast between Moroccan identity blending and youth cultural trends in France and Turkey.



4.1 Language blending patterns on social media

Social media data from 120 Moroccan TikTok and Instagram posts indicates that linguistic combination occurs regularly between Arabic, French and English languages. Social media users predominantly merged Arabic with French during their postings, seconded by Arabic-English, Arabic-Tamazight and French-English combinations. Social media interactions reflect three historical and present circumstances regarding Morocco: its colonial history and current school language use and its increased global visibility.

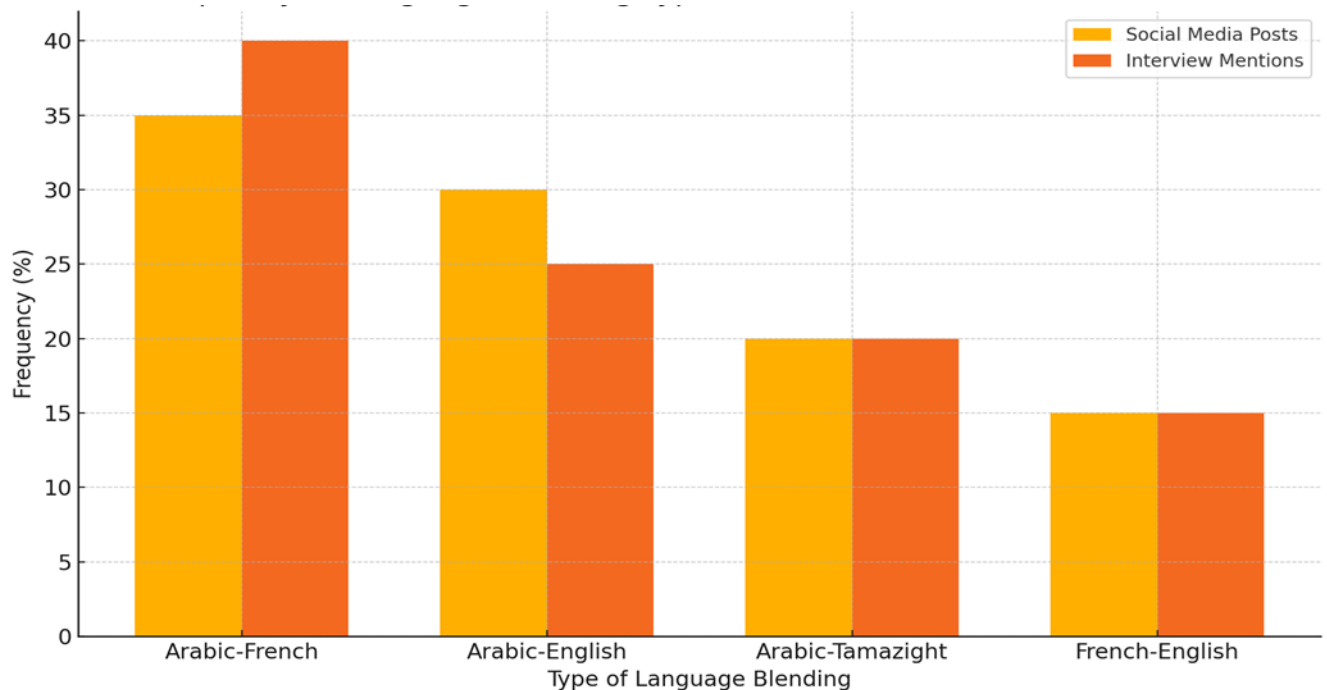


Figure 1. Frequency of Language Blending Types in Moroccan Youth Communication

One of Figure 1 presents the counts of blending types from social media content analysis combined with interview results.

Key Observations:

- Social media posts and interview responses demonstrate Arabic-French blending as the leading linguistic pattern which signals its transformation into everyday informal communication.
- Social media users opted for Arabic-English textual interactions at a rate of 30% although this blend ranked only at 25% in interviews thereby reflective of its symbolic symbolism for modern identity representation and cultural belonging.
- Every interviewee who identified themselves as Amazigh used Arabic-Tamazight linguistic combinations as a way to affirm their Amazigh ethnic roots.

- Urban youth who received education in both French and English began using this language combination in their speech.
- Language mixes between Arabic and various other languages show more than simple vocabulary combination since they incorporate cultural symbols together with social values and idiomatic expressions.

4.2 Themes of cultural identity from interviews

The research based on 20 Moroccan youth participants 10 members of the Moroccan youth and 10 university students (divided by between 18- and 25 years of age) in Casablanca and Rabat areas identified identity motifs through language usage patterns.

Table 1. Themes of Cultural Identity

| Theme | Description | Illustrative Quote |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Hybrid Identity | Youth expressed simultaneous affiliation with local and global cultures | "I speak French at school, Darija with friends, and English online—it's all me." |
| Cultural Authenticity | Use of Tamazight and Arabic reflected a desire to remain connected to roots | "My mom makes me speak Tamazight—it's who I am." |
| Modern Global Identity | English use was linked to pop culture, self-branding, and aspirations | "English makes me feel connected with the world." |
| Social Signaling | Code-switching used to signal group membership or social status | "When I post in French, it shows I'm educated." |

Research reveals through these themes that language transcends its basic communication role to become an essential resource for identity formation and social interaction.

Cross-Cultural Comparison

The study analyzed Moroccan youth identity fusion through a comparison of communication methods against those employed by French and Turkish youth by using secondary research and selected discourse data.

Table 2. Cross Cultural Comparison

| Cultural Context | Dominant Language Blend | Cultural Themes | Identity Expression Style |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Moroccan Youth (Social Media) | Arabic-French-English | Tradition vs Modernity, Religious Identity | Code-switching, Visual memes |
| French Youth (Social Media) | French-English | Secularism, Youth Subculture | Sarcasm, Hashtag activism |
| Turkish Youth (Social Media) | Turkish-English | Nationalism, Westernization | Mixed scripts, National symbols |



- The three cultures blend languages within their interaction but their core cultural motivations and mental frameworks operate differently.
- Through language blending Moroccan youth seek to connect their historic colonial relationships with present-day religious commitment while pursuing global interests.
- Young individuals in France use the English language to oppose standard political discourse and express their personal independence.
- Turkish youth combine visual and scripts when they integrate state values with global youth culture and demonstrate robust national-symbolic attachments.

Conceptual Blending in Practice

The identification patterns of Moroccan youth emerge from blending cultural spaces that include:

- Local tradition (Darija, Tamazight, religion),
- Institutional frameworks (French education),
- Global discourse (English pop culture, social media norms).

New integrated mental spaces formed from multiple input spaces allow youth to move between difficult social situations without falling into rigid categories. A video on TikTok uses Darija spoken with French slang terms while displaying imagery of Moroccan tea customs to show cross-space mapping (Abdellatif El Moutadayene, 2022).

The findings indicate Moroccan youth construct innovative methods to harmonize their multiple cultural ties through language as both mental and social connection means. The blended communication patterns they use represent their personal identity development as well as major social arrangements influenced by cultural globalization and educational norms and digital media trends.

5. Discussion

This paper illustrates how the young people in Morocco mobilise social media as both cognitive and cultural space to make hybrid identities. Although previous theories like code-switching still explain surface-type linguistic replacing, a more in-depth explanation of forms linguistic, cultural and symbolic inputs on young people in order to construct completely new identity forms is given by Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT). The synthesis will be greater than the sum of the parts, it will entail emergent meanings that are beyond the underlying units. CBT allows viewing the notion of identity construction as the active cognitive mechanism; in it, input spaces (e.g. Moroccan traditional values, global youth culture, platform aesthetics) interact through cross-space mapping, creating new, bridged identities. These identities are not enacted but rather conceived by the mind and this is what Iazzetta (2023) refers to as the fluid and always changing face of identity. Not only use of emojis, hashtags, or using local slang in posts are a gesture of preference, but are indicative of cultural niche-seeking locally and globally.



In addition, the thematic coding revealed consistent trends in the presentation of identity in different platforms. Instagram was frequently what might be called a curated, cosmopolitan identity and TikTok was more free, experimental expression. Such differences demonstrate that identity mixing is context-specific, which once again confirms the argument that identity is performed within particular socio-digital scenarios. These results are in line with Dressman, (2029), who believe that social media allows performing a new kind of identity negotiation by means of linguistic and symbolic accounts. The youth in Morocco were more fluid in the incorporation of religious and secular image unlike their French and Turkish counterparts. This observation demonstrates the fact that Morocco is relatively pluralistic in its cultural background in which hybridity is not only tolerated but also held in some urban contexts. French and Turkish children, in turn, tended to move in more fixed linguistic or ideological borders. Hence, the input space structure and elasticity of different cultures play a great role in producing the blends (Aziz Moummou & Fathi, 2024).

6. Conclusion

Researchers examined Moroccan youth cultural identity blending through the application of Conceptual Blending Theory on social media communication. The research discovered that TikTok and Instagram work as platforms for amusement but serve equally well as spaces where people build their identities through the combination of worldwide and local cultural content. The authors showed that young Moroccan people use blended linguistic practices and cultural mixed-elements to handle the effects of globalization. Young Moroccans participate similarly in cultural blending yet they differ through distinctive linguistic diversity and historical factors which characterize their social practices. The evaluation of CBT demonstrated its ability to track dynamic thinking processes which occur when individuals blend their identities. Future research needs to study digital environments beyond social media and analyze comparative influences in both gaming and AI-assisted content and the African and Asian cultural contexts. Educational leaders and policymakers need to appreciate blended identities as tools for creative self-expression and human agency within global environments.

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