

Silent Communication Relationships in the Algerian Family Their Current Reality, Causes, and Possible Remedies: A Field Study

Benaissa Khaled

Degree: Lecturer (B)

Specialty: Educational Sciences, Guidance and Counseling

Yahla Farès University, Médéa (YFUM), Algeria

Benaissa.khaled@univ-medea.dz

Omar Hacini

Degree: Lecturer (B)

Specialty: Family sociology and social work

Yahla Farès University, Médéa (YFUM), Algeria

hacini.omar@univ-medea.dz

Received: 08/02/ 2026;

Accepted: 28/07/2026;

Published:30/09/2026

Abstract

This field study examines the rise of *silent communication within Algerian families in the context of the widespread use of social-media platforms*. From a sociological perspective, the study focuses on family interactions increasingly marked by limited face-to-face dialogue, withdrawal, and the substitution of symbols or digitally mediated exchanges for spoken conversation.

The researchers seek to identify the principal conditions that have contributed to this phenomenon, assess the risks it poses to family relationships, and suggest possible ways of addressing it. A case-study approach was applied to a sample of Algerian families, and the paper concludes by presenting the principal findings derived from the field investigation.

Keywords: communication relationships; silence; family; social media; family interaction...

Introduction

Communication is one of the defining features of human social life. Human relationships cannot emerge or endure without communicative exchange, because communication provides the foundation through which people form bonds, negotiate meanings, and organize collective life. Across historical periods, communicative relationships have changed alongside broader transformations in society. These changes accelerated with the growth of knowledge, information technologies, modern media, and the successive industrial and digital revolutions that reshaped the means through which individuals interact.

These technologies have entered societies in general and family life in particular, including Algerian society and the Algerian household. Their expansion has generated new patterns of social and domestic interaction, one of which is “silent communication”: family members remain physically present in the same household yet interact less through direct conversation and increasingly through screens, signs, abbreviated symbols, or minimal responses. The visibility of this pattern prompted the

researchers to investigate its causes, consequences, and possible remedies through a field study involving a sample of families (Hassini, n.d., n.p.).

1. Research Problematic

Silent communication is presented in this study as a relatively recent social phenomenon that has become more visible with developments in information and communication technologies. As these technologies entered most Algerian homes, they increasingly influenced how members of the same family communicated with one another.

The intensive use of digital communication devices and social-media platforms has encouraged interaction in which direct speech is reduced or displaced. The study associates this pattern with communicative isolation: individuals may remain connected to distant networks while becoming less available for meaningful interaction with those who share their immediate domestic environment.

This observation led the researchers to examine “silent communication relationships in the Algerian family and their spread alongside social-media use” through the following central question (Hassini, n.d., n.p.):

What risks do silent communication relationships pose to the Algerian family in the context of the widespread use of social media?

2. Research Questions

- What risks do silent communication relationships create for the Algerian family?
- Do the types of risk threatening family communication under conditions of silent communication differ according to gender?

3. Research Hypotheses

- Silent communication relationships expose the Algerian family to identifiable risks.
- The types of risk threatening family communication in the context of silent interaction differ according to gender.

Research Objectives

- To identify the principal risks that silent communication relationships create for Algerian families.
- To determine whether gender-based differences exist in the types of risk affecting communication when silent interaction becomes widespread within the family.

4. Significance of the Study

4.1 Theoretical Significance

The study seeks to contribute to Algerian sociological research on family communication by identifying the principal risks associated with silent communicative relationships inside the household.

4.2 Practical Significance

At the practical level, the study aims to draw the attention of sociologists, family sociologists, social workers, and other professionals to the obstacles facing face-to-face communication in Algerian families.

The spread of silent interaction may threaten the social, psychological, and health-related well-being of family members when digitally mediated communication displaces direct dialogue. Recognizing these difficulties is therefore an initial step toward developing appropriate forms of intervention and prevention.

5. Scope of the Study

- ***Human scope:*** the study involved 70 families.
- ***Geographical scope:*** the city of Médéa, in Médéa Province, Algeria.
- ***Temporal scope:*** July and August 2025.

6. Previous Studies

To the researchers' knowledge, this is the first study specifically devoted to silent communication relationships in the Algerian family and to their expansion in the context of widespread social-media use.

7. Definition of Key Concepts

7.1 Communication Relationships

Charles Horton Cooley defines communication as the mechanism through which human relationships come into existence and develop. It encompasses mental symbols and the means by which they are transmitted across space and preserved over time, including facial expressions, bodily postures, gestures, tone of voice, spoken words, writing, and printed materials (Hamdawi, 2015, p.10).

7.2 Silence

Silence refers to a state in which a person refrains from speaking or producing sound, either completely or partially. It may be voluntary or imposed, and its meaning varies according to the social and situational context (Wikipedia, 2025). In this study, however, silence does not simply mean the absence of sound; it refers more broadly to a weakened pattern of direct family dialogue.

7.3 Family

The family is a social group whose core consists of a woman and a man joined in a legally recognized marriage and their children. It may extend horizontally or vertically to include grandparents, grandchildren, and other relatives who share a household, interact face to face, and organize their lives around affection, compassion, sacrifice, care, reciprocity, and the socialization of children (Morsi, 2003, p.10).

Theoretical Framework

8. Types of Language and Spoken or Silent Communication Systems

In its broadest sense, language is any means through which feelings and ideas are expressed, social interaction is achieved, collective life is organized, and reality is described. Crying and laughter can communicate pain or joy; a handshake may symbolize an agreement; a clenched fist may signal aggression or a desire for retaliation; and traffic officers use conventional gestures to regulate the movement of vehicles.

Language, in this inclusive sense, therefore extends beyond spoken words. In its narrower sense, language refers to speech. Spoken language is treated as the primary linguistic form because it

carries emotional nuance, implication, and expressive detail that other systems may not convey with the same precision.

Across time, vocal language developed into complex systems in which rhythm, pauses, stress, intonation, and emotion enrich meaning. Speech is closely connected to thought, even though words often refer to broad categories rather than to the full uniqueness of personal experience. The word “mother,” for example, names a general social category, while the individual and emotional dimensions of motherhood remain much richer than the term itself.

Spoken language performs a central role in communication among different groups in society when a willing speaker, a receptive listener, and a clear verbal message are present. Other forms of language, including specialized sign systems, may be less accessible to people who have not learned them or who doubt their ability to express complex ideas and emotions.

The source text also argues that the increasing dominance of visual material can weaken verbal vocabulary and contribute to poorer command of grammar, morphology, and precise expression.

Early humans used gestures alongside vocal sounds to communicate their needs, but the relative space occupied by gesture is said to have declined as spoken language developed. Some countries and educational centers continue to use sign-based methods when teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing learners. The text nevertheless maintains that purely descriptive gestures may not always be sufficient for communicating the full range of scientific and abstract knowledge.

A single gesture may convey several meanings, making interpretation dependent on context. Spoken language, by contrast, can generate a wide range of meanings through a limited set of sounds governed by grammatical and morphological rules. It can articulate psychological states and sophisticated intellectual creations, while also translating many nonverbal forms into intelligible verbal meanings.

Although speech appears relatively late in a child’s development because it requires neurological and cognitive maturation, it is preceded by other expressive forms such as smiling, frowning, blushing, and trembling hands.

Facial expressions can communicate emotional states with considerable immediacy, while gestures may reveal aspects of personality and feeling. Such systems still require learning, interpretation, and, in some cases, specialized education. Families should recognize a child’s right to benefit from multiple modes of communication so that expression develops as part of broader personal maturation. The source summarizes this point through the claim that relying on only one language or communicative mode restricts development and that a child’s expressive repertoire should be enriched through varied forms (Iron, 2026, n.p.).

For deaf and hard-of-hearing children who retain some auditory capacity, the source recommends early intervention to develop residual hearing, expand vocabulary, and support speech production. It describes verbal language as a structured set of sound signals connected through temporal and spatial relationships and closely linked to thought. From this perspective, words render thought socially communicable through the capacities of speech and action.

If the principal difficulty faced by people with hearing impairments is understood as a problem of communication, then weak spoken-communication skills may also affect knowledge acquisition, social life, and educational attainment. Teaching speech and spoken interaction is therefore presented as a central educational objective in the cited discussion (Iron, 2026, n.p.).

Jean Piaget is invoked to support the argument that intelligence cannot fully mature without verbal language, because language gives thought a social form. Heard words stimulate attention, facilitate the exchange of information, and encourage reflective thinking.

Nonverbal communication may remain ambiguous when its symbols are not shared or sufficiently elaborated. Dialogue with children can support learning while simultaneously developing thought, personality, and vocabulary. The linguist George Galichet is cited as arguing that developing a child's spoken language and perception provides models for effective conversation with others. Spoken language, on this account, facilitates social integration and interaction; without it, adaptation and participation may be severely constrained (Iron, 2026, n.p.).

Family guidance also plays an important role in renewing communication among household members. Responsive interaction can help identify the pressures experienced by each person, clarify the nature of particular problems, and develop ways of avoiding or managing them through purposeful dialogue. Such communication is most effective within a family system characterized by mutual understanding and sound parental guidance.

Fieldwork Procedures

9. Research Method

The researchers selected the case-study method as the approach most suited to the aims of the study. Data were collected and analyzed statistically through correlational procedures and tests of difference.

10. Population and Sample

The study reports a sample drawn from 70 families and comprising 170 respondents: 100 males and 70 females. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents within these households. The gender composition reported by the researchers is shown below.

Table 1. Characteristics of the study sample by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	100	58.82%
Female	70	41.18%
Total	80*	100%

* **Editorial flag:** Table 1 shows that the study sample consisted of 170 individuals from 70 families: 100 males (58.82%) and 70 females (41.18%).

The following figure illustrates the distribution of the study sample according to gender:

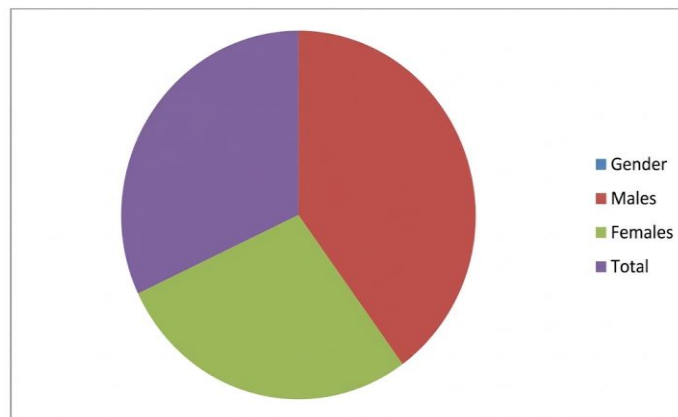


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by gender (prepared by the researchers, 2025).

11. Research Instrument and Its Sociological-Communicative Properties

The two researchers designed a questionnaire specifically for this study, entitled “Silent Communication Relationships in the Algerian Family: Their Current Reality, Causes, and Possible Remedies—A Field Study.” In its final form, the instrument was organized into the following components:

- **Part One** collected respondents’ general background and demographic information.
- **Parts Two and Three** contained items intended to measure the level of silent communication in the participating Algerian families. The source states that these sections included 66 items distributed across four main dimensions: **isolation, the use of communicative symbols, difficulty engaging in dialogue, and unwillingness to speak.**

Some questionnaire items were adapted to a binary response format (yes/no), scored (1–2). Other items used a three-point response format (always/sometimes/rarely), scored (1–3), in accordance with the aims of the study.

During analysis, the three-point responses were converted into a binary scale to simplify interpretation. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded so that all items followed the same direction. These were items 1–5 in Part Two and items 4, 9, 13, 16, and 17 in Part Three. The resulting binary coding was interpreted as follows:

- 1 = no silence present.
- 2 = silence present.

The following table presents the nature of the instrument items and their distribution across the study dimensions.

Table 2. Distribution of instrument items across the main dimensions

Dimension	Three-point items (sometimes/rarely/alw ays)	Binary items in Part Two (yes/no)	Total
Isolation	1–2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27	14
Use of symbols	3–4	7, 28	4
Difficulty of dialogue	—	6, 8, 10, 29	4
Unwillingness to speak	—	9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 30, 31	13
Total	8*	31	35

* **Editorial flag:** the item numbers shown in the three-point column account for four items rather than eight. The source also describes the complete instrument as containing 66 items, while this table totals 35. These discrepancies require verification.

The following figure illustrates the distribution of the research instrument items across its main dimensions:

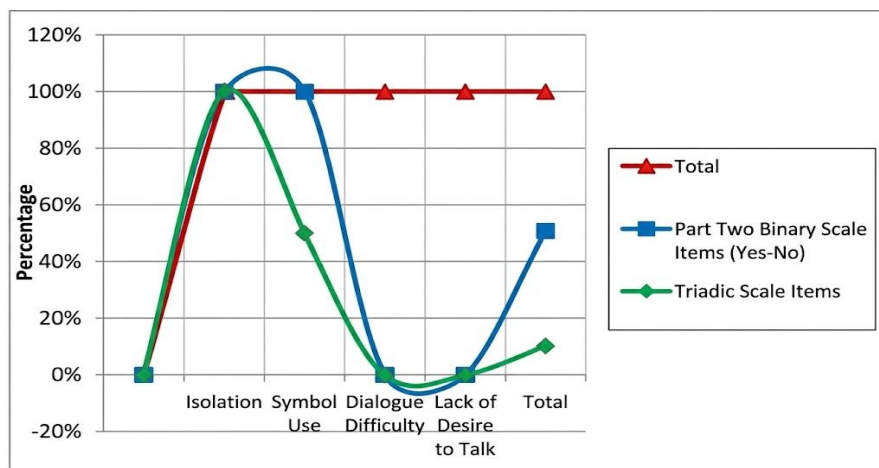


Figure 2. Distribution of questionnaire items across the principal dimensions (prepared by the researchers, 2025).

Statistical Procedures

To test the study hypotheses, the researchers used **SPSS** to calculate and apply the following statistics:

- **Arithmetic mean and standard deviation.**
- **The Spearman–Brown formula.**

- **Independent-samples t tests** to identify statistically significant differences attributed to gender and silent communication.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

Results for the First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that silent communication relationships create risks for the Algerian family. To examine this proposition, the researchers calculated means and standard deviations for respondents' assessments of silent communication in their families.

Table 3. Difficulties facing families in direct communication amid the spread of social media in Algeria

Study Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Isolation	1.67	0.27
Use of symbols	1.79	0.20
Difficulty of dialogue	1.67	0.29
Unwillingness to speak	1.40	0.23

Table 3 shows that the use of symbols received the highest mean score, at 1.79. The source interprets this result as indicating that Algerian families readily engage in silent interaction through the use of symbols.

Isolation and difficulty of dialogue produced identical mean scores of 1.67, suggesting a comparable level of concern in both dimensions. Unwillingness to speak recorded the lowest mean, at 1.40, which the study interprets as evidence of reduced interest in direct verbal exchange within the family.

The following figure illustrates the distribution of the research instrument items across its main dimensions:

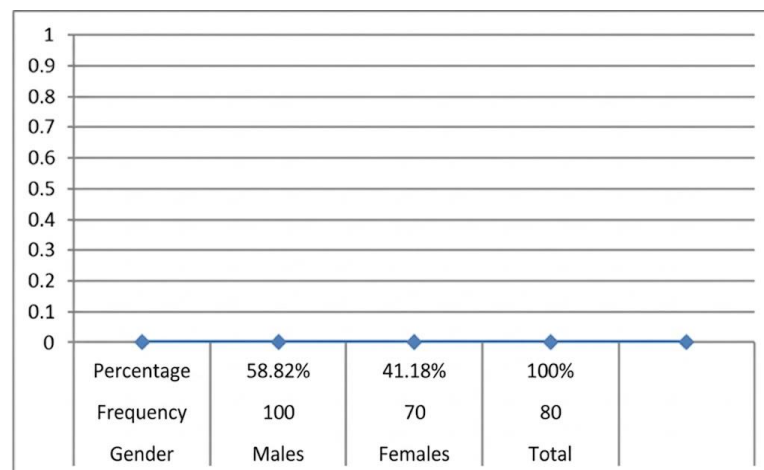


Figure 3. Distribution of the instrument's principal dimensions (prepared by the researchers, 2025).

Results for the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis proposes that the types of risk threatening family communication under conditions of silent interaction differ by gender.

Table 4. Gender differences in the difficulties facing direct family communication in Algeria

Difficulty	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Significance
Isolation	Male	1.60	0.19	−2.20	Significant
Isolation	Female	1.65	0.15		
Use of symbols	Male	1.62	0.20	−1.65	Significant
Use of symbols	Female	1.70	0.22		
Difficulty of dialogue	Male	1.58	0.31	−0.79	Not significant
Difficulty of dialogue	Female	1.60	0.29		
Unwillingness to speak	Male	1.47	0.22	−2.34	Significant
Unwillingness to speak	Female	1.50	0.27		

According to the researchers, statistically significant gender differences at the 0.05 level were found for isolation, use of symbols, and unwillingness to speak. The respective t values were −2.20, −1.65, and −2.34, with higher reported means among female respondents.

No statistically significant gender difference was found for difficulty of dialogue, for which the t value was −0.79 at the 0.05 level. The source text refers in this passage to differences based on an “experience” variable; because the table and hypothesis concern gender, this appears to be a drafting error.

The following figure illustrates the distribution of the research instrument items across its main dimensions according to gender:

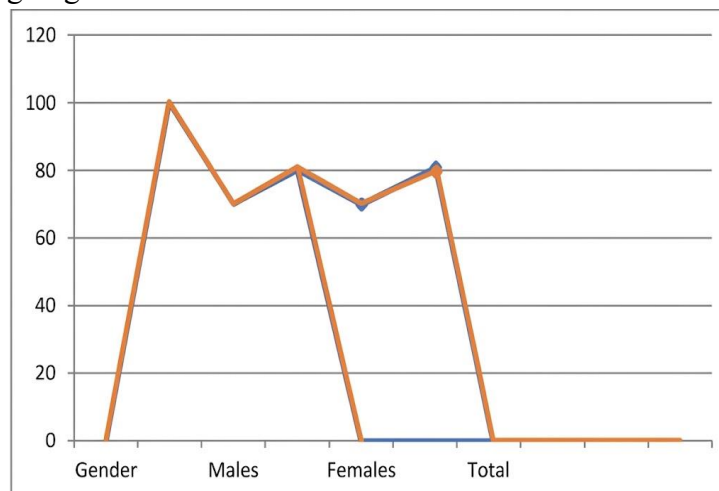


Figure 4. Distribution of the principal dimensions by gender (prepared by the researchers, 2025).

Interpretation of Findings

First Hypothesis

The highest mean recorded in the study was 1.79 for the use of symbols in silent communication. The researchers interpret this as evidence that symbolic interaction has become widespread in the participating Algerian families. They attribute this pattern to the nature of digitally mediated communication, which frequently relies on icons, abbreviations, reactions, and other nonverbal signs.

In their interpretation, excessive dependence on such forms can weaken trust, social cohesion, and psychological comfort by displacing natural, direct interaction among family members, irrespective of gender. The researchers therefore regard the first hypothesis as supported.

The lowest mean, 1.40, was recorded for unwillingness to speak. The study links this result to communicative fragility produced by habitual reliance on silent interaction. In sociological terms, routine withdrawal from conversation may weaken reciprocal attention and reduce the density of everyday family interaction. The researchers again interpret this finding as supporting the first hypothesis.

Second Hypothesis

The findings for the second hypothesis indicate statistically significant differences between male and female responses in several dimensions of silent communication associated with social-media use.

The study concludes that both men and women use these media, but that their reported exposure or responses to particular communication difficulties vary by gender. Difficulty of dialogue was the only dimension for which the reported gender difference was not statistically significant.

Conclusion

This study, entitled “Silent Communication Relationships in the Algerian Family: Their Current Reality, Causes, and Possible Remedies—A Field Study,” sought to clarify the nature of silent interaction inside Algerian households. The topic is sociologically important because it concerns transformations in everyday family life under the growing influence of social-media platforms. The researchers argue that intensive use of these platforms by both men and women has encouraged a mode of co-presence in which household members may remain physically close while speaking less and interacting increasingly through devices, symbols, or minimal verbal exchange.

Recommendations

- Reduce excessive use of communication technologies that encourage silent interaction and communicative isolation within the household.
- Raise awareness of the risks that persistent silent communication may pose to family relationships, particularly the isolation of people who live under the same roof.
- Restore the value of natural, face-to-face communication and direct family dialogue, which form an essential basis of family cohesion. This requires setting meaningful limits on social-media use when it displaces shared conversation.

References and Sources

Main Issues of Pedagogy and Psychology (MIOPAP)

ISSN: 1829-1295

Volume-4, Issue-2 (July – December 2026)

- Iron, A. (2026). *Challenging behaviors among children and adolescents with disabilities*.
- Hamdawi, Jamil. (2015). *Linguistic communication*. Al-Muthaqqaf Library, Australia.
- Morsi, Kamel. (2003). *The family: Definition, functions, and forms*. Dar Al-Ilm.
- Hassini, Omar. (2025). Lecturer, Dr. Yahia Fares University of Médéa, Department of Sociology, Demography and Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Médéa, Algeria.
- Iron Deficiency. (2026). *Anemia detection in children with Down syndrome*.
- Iron. (2026). *Inclusive education in Iowa: A model of collaboration, support, and high expectations*.
- Wikipedia. (2025). “*Silence*.” Accessed July 16, 2025. www.wikipedia.org.