



# The Impact of Language Choice in Advertising on Egyptian Consumers' Purchase Intention: A Comparative Analysis of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and English Advertisements

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## Abstract

The language used in advertising is not merely aesthetic; it also signals identity, conveys sociological meanings, and positions brands in the marketplace. In Egypt, advertisers frequently alternate between Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) and English when promoting consumer goods in competitive markets. This integrative literature review examines purchase intention among Egyptian consumers in relation to the use of ECA versus English as the primary advertising language. It explores the psychological and contextual factors that shape how language choice in advertising affects Egyptian consumers' purchasing decisions. The review synthesizes empirical evidence from experimental studies, content analyses of advertising messages, and theory-driven research on how advertising language influences purchasing intent and related evaluative outcomes. Across the evidence base, English-language advertisements appear to be more influential on purchase intention than ECA advertisements in specific contexts (e.g., high-status products, urban educated consumers), even though consumer attitudes toward the product and the ad itself may not always differ strongly across languages. At the same time, ECA advertisements play a central role in Egyptian advertising practice and cultural communication, especially in mass-market campaigns and relational branding, where accessibility and social proximity are crucial. The review further highlights how variables such as symbolic value, trust, cultural sensitivity, and consumer profiles (education level, language proficiency, socioeconomic status) interact with language choice to shape purchase intention. Rather than supporting the universal superiority of either language, the review proposes a contingency framework specifying when and why each language variety is likely to be effective. These findings underscore the need for Egyptian brand managers to treat language as a strategic

element of advertising design, aligning it carefully with target segments, product categories, and positioning goals.

## **Subject Areas**

Business Communication

## **Keywords**

Language Choice, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, English Advertising, Purchase Intention, Egypt, Integrative Literature Review

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background and Theoretical Framework**

The advertising message is not only influenced by the advertising message itself or by the physical appearance or design of the product, but also by the language used to convey these notions. The meaning of an advertisement, as interpreted by consumers, revolves around the language used. The language used within advertising messages becomes significant as it creates meaning regarding consumers' social identity and their association with the product. These might be conditioned by the variety used: Modern Standard Arabic, representing a formal written standard; Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), the most common spoken form in Egypt; or English, carrying social meanings connected to globalization and status. This continuum relates directly to the use of formality versus informality in producing effective advertisements in Egypt, a choice that carries significant social implications. Many linguists suggest that the nature of Arabic diglossia is not simply one of a "high" variety versus a "low" variety but is more of a continuum along which speakers and writers can negotiate context, identity, and audience expectations. It is within this continuum that advertisers have scope to create advertisements which can have significant commercial implications based on the choice of the language they have selected in using to produce their advertisements. Pimentel [1] notes that Egyptian advertising requires advertisers to design messages that meet commercial, informational, and ideological aims while also matching the language norms and sociolinguistic expectations of the intended audience. When creating advertisements, advertisers should consider not only whether the language conveys the intended message but also whether the wording is accessible to the intended audience, since a written style that seems clear to one group may be unclear or difficult for another. In academic writing, forms that follow formal standards may be preferred over other forms, such as informal variants, Because the writing is shaped by aesthetic aims, it may need a specific type of language to work well while still remaining accessible to its audience [1]. As competition in this market increases, advertisers are likely to make more deliberate language choices, and many will continue to test new wording practices [1]. English can also be seen to

be utilized within Egyptian advertisements, not necessarily as a literal language but on symbolic grounds. For example, English may connote aspects such as modernity, global orientation, prestige, and professional expertise. English was found by Y Nasaralla [2] to connote accessibility to medical information in Egypt. Though this study was carried out in the context of healthcare communication, this can generally point to English connoting aspects of status and credibility in publicity. These may also influence aspects of how a consumer processes the information and shall do so, in turn, in affective and behavioral ways. On the other hand, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is important in relation to the concept of accessibility and social proximity. While classical forms of Arabic come with power and authority, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is used in social interactions and helps reduce psychological distance between consumers and the brands being advertised. This is in line with the assertion that viewers tend to realize languages that come across as natural and easy to understand. In theory, language choice is considered an accommodation strategy because it provides advertisers with an avenue for accommodation, considering the audience's language and social needs.

### **1.2. Theoretical Perspective: Language Choice as Accommodation and Symbolic Positioning**

There are two major functions of language in Egyptian marketing, and these basically represent two sides of a process of convergence: one related to satisfying audience communicational requirements, and the other to attaining prestige, global identity/authenticity by means of symbolic representation. One particular language related theory, which has gained popularity in understanding consumer response through the instrumentality of language, and which could be applied to comprehend consumer response to advertising language strategies/models, is Communication Accommodation Theory. It was argued in this theory that consumers generally view advertisers who appeal to them in their native language favorably due to the positive advantage it presents in terms of emotional resonance and acceptance by potential consumers. On the contrary, it was argued in n Koslow *et al.* [3] that using and being associated with one language only had a negative consequence on advertising appeal, and this also shows a mixed emotional response to language in branding and advertising generally in terms of consumer values concerning competence and/or inclusion/exclusion. Koslow *et al.* examined Spanish-speaking advertisements in the United States and could have some implications in terms of understanding consumer values concerning Egypt. In Egypt, English can be a symbol of symbolic capital and therefore be linked to the upper social classes and global spaces such as travel and migration. On the contrary, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is related to authenticity and emotional connection with the local community. However, rather than asking which of the two languages has overall stronger persuasiveness, we need to ask how and when the symbolic value of the two languages affects product attributes, target consumer profiles, and brand images in terms of purchase intention.

### 1.3. Empirical Motivation: Evidence of Language Effects on Purchase Intention

Empirical evidence demonstrates that language choice can produce measurable differences in behavioral intention. Spierts [4] conducted an experimental study comparing Arabic, mixed, and English advertisement versions and reported a statistically significant main effect of language version on purchase intention, with English yielding higher purchase intention than Arabic. Specifically, a repeated measures analysis showed a significant main effect of version on purchase intention,  $F(2, 127) = 6.19, p = 0.003$ , while there was no significant interaction between language version and product price category ( $F(2, 127) = 1.42, p = 0.245$ ) [4]. Pairwise comparisons further showed that purchase intention was higher for English ( $M = 2.94, SD = 0.96$ ) than Arabic ( $M = 4.02, SD = 1.89, p < 0.001$ ) [4]. In addition to English and Arabic, there was no evidence on whether the same study showed no difference in evaluation of the advertisement itself by different languages, which implies that language can influence a person's behavior even when one is somewhat similar to other people's opinions about an ad [4].

The research described above is significant due to it being quantitative data showing that the way a consumer sees something will create a behavioral intention. However, this evidence only applies to Urban Educated Cairo Consumers. This evidence also has methodological issues as well as a limitation on the number of representative samples of these groups that can be used when attempting to generalize for all Egypt. For example, the sample of research Spiert included are the Egyptians living in Cairo meaning they are only Urban Consumers; thus their findings will not reflect the differences found between regions in terms of education and the socio-economics of groups of consumers [4].

Following up on this research, other researchers presented similar or opposing results. For instance, Van Hooff *et al.* [5] set out to replicate and expand on the work of these other researchers and observed that the Mixed Language Advertisements received a lower level of attractiveness relative to the Monolingual Versions. Younes [6] conducted a content analysis of Actual Egyptian Commercials on Television and also made the determination that ECA was the Easiest to Read, appearing the most as the form of the Commercial in Egyptian TV Advertising, indicating that marketers prefer this form of dialogue between Advertisers and Consumers even though English retains a certain amount of Prestige when it comes to presenting their Commercials.

### 1.4. Aim and Research Questions

Given the socio-cultural complexity of language use in Egypt and the strategic function of language in marketing communication and its strategic role, this integrative Literature Review is meant to collect all the previous research results on what kind of choices people make in advertising affect their purchasing intentions in Egyptian consumers. Special emphasis is paid to comparison of the role of Egyptian colloquial Arabic and English as well as the mechanism by which it can

be explained when there's a particular context in mind.

RQ1: What empirical evidence is there for the effect of ECA vs. English on Egypt's consumer's purchase intention in advertisements, and what factors moderate this effect?

RQ2: Which explanations explain the observed effects of ECA and English on consumer response and purchase intention (*i.e.*, perceived quality, expertise, credibility, cultural proximity, and message accessibility)?

RQ3: Which contextual moderators are involved in shaping the direction and strength of language effects in Egyptian advertising (such as sample characteristics, product category, brand positioning, and socio-economic factors)?

## 1.5. Structure of the Paper

The organization of this paper is quite straightforward. Section 2 examines scholarly work, both theoretical and empirical, concerning the selection of languages in advertising, with particular attention paid to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and English. Section 3 describes the methodological approach used, outlining the ways we will identify and choose relevant scholarly articles. This includes the search strategy for finding academic sources, the conditions for including or excluding particular studies, and the specifics of how the research selection will proceed. Our aim is to ensure a thorough method from the outset. Section 4 presents the outcomes of the review, bringing together the support for each research question. Section 5 aims to clarify what the findings suggest by interpreting the general pattern of results, explaining the underlying mechanisms observed, noting any contextual moderators that played a role, and outlining the theoretical and practical implications for Egyptian advertising.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Foundations and the Egyptian Diglossic Context

Communication in marketing functions as more than just a means of sharing information. It is also used in advertising as a method to shape the way consumers view the value of products, the credibility of the brand, and the distance they feel from the advertisement [7]. To achieve this, advertisers have the ability to select the language they use to evoke sociolinguistic cues associated with authority, modernity, and intimacy [8]. The selection of language by advertisers in Egypt is particularly complicated due to the nature of diglossia where consumers move fluidly along a continuum using Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to interact with formal institutions, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) for day-to-day conversation, and English in a globalised context. As a result of this complexity, there will continue to be a tension between traditional linguistic norms and the need for effective advertising. On the one hand, a formal register conveys institutional authority; however, a formal register may generate feelings of psychological resistance or emotional distance, and thus, be perceived as cold by the consumer [4]. Therefore, in most situations, the effectiveness of an advertisement will outweigh the status as-

sociated with formal register and instead will drive advertisers to use the most accessible and readily available forms of language to enhance the consumer's experience of messaging and create an emotional connection to that messaging. Empirical evidence has corroborated this operational hierarchy; for example, in Younes' [6] analysis of Egyptian television commercials, he found that consumer dialogue in ECA, significantly dominates advertising dialogue with the intention of reducing the consumers feeling of social distance. Code-switching into English is limited to slogans and catchphrases that convey a brand's unique capabilities.

## **2.2. Strategic Dichotomy: Written ECA Proximity vs. English Symbolic Capital**

There exists a market in Egypt that displays a dichotomy between the increasing public legitimacy of written ECA and the aspirational quality of English. Until recently, ECA had been used only in oral form, but now its credibility (as a written mode of communication) has increased significantly due to the types of communications that are being developed for advertising and online digital media; by developing standards of how the vernacular should be used in written format, marketers have demonstrated that the use of ECA in advertising is a viable, robust, non-intrusive means to build relational equity in terms of the brand [9] [10]. Additionally, ECA uses hybridized (digital) advertising strategies; ECA leverages local humour to create the so-called "proximity effect" whereby ECA leads consumers to perceive the brands offered as safe and familiar; additionally, using ECA enhances consumers' perceived honesty and authenticity of brand communication [11] [12]. However, due to the necessity of objective precision for technical and/or formal positioning in an institution or an organization, it is not as effective as English when creating an accurate perception of a technical and/or formal institution or organization.

On the other hand, the English language serves as a form of short-hand or cue in association with aspirational, cosmopolitan identity and characteristics relating to global modernity and premium-quality attributes. The studies/cases performed in Cairo suggest that English positions a product as providing a higher level of structural competence, expertise, and institutional professionalism than an ECA position [2]. Nevertheless, the prestige associated with English can work to the disadvantage of the firm using it; poor contextual alignment of the English messages with an audience, or overuse of English, can create psychological barriers to purchase for consumers that place a premium on cultural sensitivity [3]. Marketers therefore have adopted structural code-switching as a strategy for marketing their products. By positioning English-language components within the larger Arabic structure, marketers are able to offer the products both as being of local relevance as well as having a degree of elite prestige [13] [14]. The positioning of English and ECA has an associated macro-level segmentation in the marketplace: English is associated with high-involvement (premium) categories of products, whereas ECA is associated with mass-market product availability and emotional penetration.

### 2.3. Empirical Evidence of Language Choice on Purchase Intention

While substantial literature describes Egyptian sociolinguistics, limited empirical research explicitly quantifies overt behavioral outcomes like purchase intention. The baseline experimental framework by Spierts [4] confirmed that advertising language creates a statistically significant main effect on Egyptian consumers' purchase intentions ( $F(2, 127) = 6.19, p = 0.003$ ), with English yielding significantly higher purchase likelihood than Arabic ( $M_{\text{English}} = 2.94, SD = 0.96$  vs.  $M_{\text{Arabic}} = 4.02, SD = 1.89, p < 0.001$ ). Crucially, because explicit evaluations of the advertisement itself did not vary significantly across language conditions, these findings indicate that linguistic cues influence behavioral intentions through implicit symbolic and inferential processing rather than overt affective liking.

Nonetheless, both the methodological constraints and significant boundary conditions imposed on the empirical studies create limitations on empirical observations. Spierts' [4] convenience sample limited generalization to less-educated, lower-socioeconomic or rural English-speaking populations while conducting research in a more educated, urban area of Cairo. Furthermore, Van Hooft and colleagues [5] further explicate this by demonstrating that structural consistency is essential when using an arbitrary mixed-language advertisement (*i.e.*, Arabic-English code-switching); mixed-language advertisements received lower attractiveness ratings than monolingual advertisements due to an evaluation penalty.

Recent research indicates that product category, trust between consumers and the brand, and the mode of media transmission all play a large role in determining how much of an impact an advertisement's language has on purchase intention [15]. Within digital and social media environments, the driving force behind purchasing intent for consumers is their interactions with peers via EWOM, which provides a form of validation and support for the linguistic choices made in the advertisement at the time of purchase [16]. When using localized scripts on digital applications, it is essential to physicalize and present the scripts correctly for optimal consumer response rates, especially when two languages are blended on the advertisement [17]. Collectively, this empirical synthesis shows that no language translates universally into the best purchasing behaviors; the directional and magnitude of an advertisement's language(s) influence on purchase intention depend on the target audience profile, the degree of alignment with the brand, and how well it is executed within the context of advertising.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Review Design and Research Approach

This research employs a Qualitative and Comprehensive Integrative Literature Review methodology, where the previous empirical findings about the Dynamic Effects of Advertising Language Choices on Egyptian Consumer Purchase Intentions are aggregated, contextualized, and examined. While primary empirical studies involve collecting raw data as the main method of development, this overall methodological strategy uses and interprets previously collected research. In

addition, this study collects, synthesizes, and maps empirical metrics, sociolinguistic metrics, and sociolinguistic metrics from previously performed studies.

This research methodology was created in accordance with a clearly defined and organized methodology that used a systematic procedure, a well-defined database search process, an extensive methodology that allowed for a search of different categories of papers, the ability to verify and assess the requirements for selection, and a comprehensive approach to the identification of thematic areas of interest through the development of a Thematic Narrative Synthesis [18] [19].

The overall structural foundation of this study includes both quantitative and qualitative evidence bases, which allow for the comprehensive and thorough comparison of descriptive statistics and inferential statistical (such as means, standard deviations, F-values, p-values, and effect sizes) in addition to qualitative sociolinguistics and contextual data in order to fully illustrate the social-cognitive processes involved with the Advertising Language Persuasion Path. The comparison of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) versus English is the primary focus of the statistical analysis; however, the focus will also include how both of these varieties have different ways of influencing consumers' reactions and behaviors in a variety of market contexts.

### 3.2. Search Strategy and Keyword Domain Mapping

A systematic review was carried out in October 2025 and was designed to provide a comprehensive overview of all academic knowledge on the topic of advertising language covering theory and practice from 1994 to 2024. This time period captures the important historical context related to the influence of advertising language, but also incorporates new empirical studies that have contributed to the understanding of advertising language in a contemporary marketing environment. A combination of Boolean operators to bring together keywords thematically within the three structural areas of marketing was used.

**Table 1** summarizes the search domains and keywords used in this review.

**Table 1.** Methodological search domains and terms.

Domain	Search Terms
Language phenomena	“language choice”, “code-switching”, “Egyptian Colloquial Arabic”, “‘āmmiyya”, “English advertising”
Advertising context	“advertising”, “marketing communication”, “consumer advertising”
Consumer outcomes	“purchase intention”, “consumer behavior”, “buying behavior”, “advertising effectiveness”

The search string structure intersected these fields: (“language choice” OR “code-switching” OR “Egyptian Colloquial Arabic”) AND (“advertising” OR “marketing communication”) AND (“purchase intention” OR “consumer behavior”). No publication date restrictions were applied. To ensure methodological

alignment, retrieved records were evaluated against strict parameters:

- **Inclusion Criteria:** 1) Peer-reviewed empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, or systematic reviews displaying methodological transparency; 2) Explicit focus on advertising language effects or persuasive communication; 3) High relevance to Egyptian, Arabic, or directly comparable diglossic market contexts; 4) Direct measurement of persuasive outcomes, behavioral intentions, or cognitive/affective evaluations; 5) Full-text availability through institutional or open access. Master's theses and conference proceedings were additionally considered when they provided foundational experimental data unavailable in peer-reviewed sources.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** 1) Non-academic industry reports lacking verifiable source documentation; 2) Purely linguistic or descriptive analyses devoid of consumer behavior implications; 3) Studies executed in environments too distinct from Egypt to offer transferable insights; 4) Duplicate publications across databases.

### 3.3. Screening Protocol and Sample Coding

A comprehensive systematic literature search was conducted in October 2025, covering a range of literature dating from 1994 through 2024. Using database searching and backward snowball sampling, the search produced a total of 45 records. The initial review of records occurred in two successive phases with one reviewer and no independent validation.

Stage 1 consisted of the review of the titles and abstracts of the 45 publications to remove any obvious exclusions of the records associated with advertising language effects and Egyptian consumers' behavior. At this point, there were 10 records rejected as having little to no relevancy, leaving 35 records available for the complete evaluation of full text.

Stage 2 included the evaluation of the complete text of the 35 articles, which included all the inclusion/exclusion criteria specified earlier. At this stage, the 9 records were formally excluded from the final results for the following reasons: (n = 4) they were not related to advertising language effects; (n = 3) there was no empirical data that could be extracted; and (n = 2) they were duplicate publications.

As a result, the final number of studies included for analysis was 26. As part of the evaluation of each of these studies, specific characteristics of each study were collected: the context of the research, sample demographics, language condition, study design, and reported outcomes (means, standard deviations, F-values, and p-values). Based on the information collected, the final collection of studies was organized into three categories by structure for systematic analysis.

- **Core Empirical Egyptian Evidence:** 11 studies directly examining Egyptian consumer behavioral outcomes and purchase intentions.
- **Supporting Egyptian Contextual Evidence:** 6 studies providing sociolinguistic insights into accessibility, proximity, or language use patterns in Egyptian

communication.

- **Transferable Mechanism Evidence:** 9 studies from non-advertising or international contexts providing transferable theoretical frameworks regarding accommodation effects and symbolic value.

Because screening and data extraction were conducted by a single reviewer without external cross-checking, synthesized findings must be interpreted with appropriate awareness of potential screening limitations and source-selection variability.

### 3.4. Quality Appraisal and Data Synthesis

The systematic quality appraisal of the 26 associated studies was based on the three aspects of representativeness, directness of research question and strength of study designs. The most robust evidence for purchase intentions came from experimental designs whose internal validity is acceptable. The major limitation is the exclusive use of convenience sample of educated, urban area residents of Cairo. This represents a direct limitation on the external generalizability of the results to rural, low SES, and non-English speaking populations in the broader context of Egypt. These limitations were mitigated by including high ecological context studies and international frameworks that offer transferable contextualization to provide a more balanced synthesis of these studies.

This synthesis of studies represents an integrative review, and as such, the approach taken to synthesize the studies was to compare, map, and interpret statistics reported (*i.e.*, F-tests, p-values; descriptive means) rather than performing new analyses on a pooled dataset. For those studies where inferential statistics were available, test values were used with effect size calculated from reported F-statistics where available (*i.e.*, partial eta-squared  $\eta^2_p = 0.089$ , derived from Spierts, 2015 [4]:  $F(2, 127) = 6.19$ ) to standardize the comparisons. Synthesis of findings provides a distinction between outcomes that directly measure purchase intentions from indirect mechanisms (*i.e.*, prestige signaling or cultural proximity), and the results of the studies are organized thematically and narratively according to the proposed Contingency Model.

## 4. Finding

### 4.1. Measurement Inconsistency and Operational Heterogeneity

In advance of presenting the synthesized results, it is methodologically necessary to emphasize that the way that “purchase intention” and closely related outcomes have been operationalized varied significantly between the different studies included in this synthesis, and therefore precluded direct statistical pooling of the results. Purchase intention has primarily been operationalized by means of a standardized 7-point Likert-type scale [4], with lower average levels of intention reflecting greater behavioural commitment (with 1 meaning strong agreement and 7 meaning strong disagreement), whereas those evaluative outcomes that were adjacent to purchase intention (*i.e.*, advertisement attractiveness, brand credibility, and language attitudes) were assessed on different types of measuring instru-

ments, including 5-point semantic differential scales with a number of different qualitative discourse descriptive indicators [5]. Because of the marked variations between these instruments, the numerical comparison of them is impossible. As a result, the synthesis draws on directional trends derived from the findings of these studies, thereby limiting the amount of empirical evidence that directly links advertising language to purchase intention exclusively to a very small, Cairo-centric experimental database. On the other hand, the broader outcomes can be interpreted as indirect theoretical antecedents.

#### 4.2. Core Quantitative Evidence on Direct Purchase Intention

The most direct quantitative data evaluating the behavioral intentions of Egyptian consumers derives from the experimental framework conducted by Spierts [4]. The repeated measures analysis established a statistically significant main effect of the advertising language version on purchase intention,  $F(2, 127) = 6.19, p = 0.003$ . Importantly, no significant interaction was observed between the language version and product price categories,  $F(2, 127) = 1.42, p = 0.245$ , indicating that the observed linguistic effect operates independently of basic pricing cues. These results are summarized in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Purchase intention metrics by language version [4].

Language Version	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Directional interpretation
English	2.94	0.96	Highest purchase intention (lowest mean score)
Arabic	4.02	1.89	Lower purchase intention than English (higher score = lower intention)
Mixed	3.51	1.50	Intermediate

Note: The scale is coded such that 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree; lower means reflect stronger purchase intention.

Pairwise comparisons confirmed that purchase intention was significantly higher for the monolingual English version than the Arabic version ( $p < 0.001$ ). Crucially, because explicit affective evaluations of the advertisement itself did not differ significantly across language conditions, these metrics provide core empirical evidence that language choices can influence behavioral intentions through implicit symbolic cues even when overt attitudes toward the ad remain constant.

#### 4.3. Indirect and Adjacent Evidence: Prestige vs. Cultural Proximity

Further empirical research beyond direct purchasing metrics provides a more nuanced understanding of the language dichotomy and its relationship to various evaluative outcomes. Van Hooft *et al.* [5] expanded upon their experimental findings regarding ad attractiveness, discovering that there was a significant main effect of language in their experimental results based on a negative evalu-

ation of mixed-language advertisements relative to monolingual consistency ( $F(2, 129) = 5.88, p = 0.004, \eta^2 p \approx 0.084$ ). This indicates that structural alignment is critical, and that empirical evidence concerning marketing across different contexts indicates that English-speaking individual prestige cues are highly effective for aspirational, high-involvement product categories, but their persuasive potential diminishes for low-involvement and high-involvement consumer products [20].

However, extensive qualitative and content analysis data provides conclusive evidence regarding the behavioural power of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) via pathways of accessibility and trust. Younes conducted an ecological corpus analysis of 220 television commercials [6]. The dominance of ECA in consumer dialogue is particularly evident in food and beverage product categories, where Arabic language carries specific stylistic and semantic functions that reinforce cultural familiarity [21]

establishing that ECA is the predominant form of consumer dialogue, with varying colloquial registers embedded for the target audience's social class and age. Referring to Badawi's Arabic continuum [5] as a framework, Younes' analysis established that colloquial varieties are the most common forms of communication employed in widely popular television advertising; however, the colloquial variety used by educated speakers was the most dominant on mainstream television channels. The code choice of the advertisement was based upon the social class and age of the receiver, the nature of the advertised product, and the desired persuasive effect of the advertisement. Additionally, the analysis showed growing evidence of diglossic code mixing occurring in the media, with colloquial forms being the predominant variety and Modern Standard Arabic being used as an embedded rather than the primary form of communication. These findings are consistent with the digital localisation findings which demonstrate that culturally adapted local scripts significantly improve consumers' attitudes and behavioural intention via the development of relational warmth and perceived sincerity of the brand [22]. This pattern extends to broader localization practices in Arabic advertising, including language adaptation in dubbed television content [23].

#### 4.4. Contradictory Evidence and Contextual Boundary Conditions

To establish appropriate boundary conditions for the main claim, international comparative data must be integrated. Empirical research conducted across non-Egyptian, Western European contexts frequently reports null findings, capturing no significant differences in product image or purchase intentions between English and local-language advertisements [24]. Similar dynamics have been documented in other multilingual markets; for instance, research in the Korean marketplace demonstrates that strategic code-switching between English and the local language similarly reflects prestige signaling and audience segmentation objectives [25].

This contradiction highlights that the English advantage observed in Cairo-based samples is not a universal linguistic law, but a context-specific phenomenon

driven by the high aspirational capital and symbolic prestige associated with English in developing, multilingual markets. Taken together, these conflicting patterns demonstrate that language effects are construct-specific reliably shifting peripheral brand personality perceptions and social proximity, while direct behavioral purchase intentions remain strictly contingent upon audience demographic profiles and product alignment.

#### 4.5. Integrated Evidence Map

The heterogeneous literature tracking linguistic effects can be visually and structurally mapped based on empirical directness and strategic orientation, as presented in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** Integrated evidence map (ECA closeness vs English prestige).

Evidence type	Study	What it supports	Key reported result (s)	How it contributes to this SLR
Core (RQ1; Egypt, quantitative/experiment)	Spierts (2015)	RQ1—English -> higher purchase intention (vs Arabic) in some Egyptian consumer segments	Main effect of language version on purchase intention: $F(2, 127) = 6.19, p = 0.003$ . Reported means indicate higher purchase intention for English vs Arabic.	Direct statistical evidence addressing RQ1 on ECA vs English effects in Egypt.
Core (RQ1; Egypt, experimental)	van Hoof, van Meurs, & Spierts (2017)	RQ1—Language version matters; mixed Arabic + English can reduce evaluations (mixing penalty)	Main effect of language version on ad attractiveness: $F(2, 129) = 5.88, p = 0.004$ , partial eta squared $\approx 0.084$ , driven by lower evaluations of the mixed condition.	Adds Egypt-based experimental evidence that mixing languages can backfire, refining interpretation of language effects under RQ1.
Mechanism (RQ2; Egypt, perception)	Nasralla (2023)	RQ2—English can function as a quality/expertise/credibility cue	English-language advertising associated with higher perceived quality/knowledge/expertise in the reported findings.	Supports RQ2 by explaining why English may increase purchase intention via prestige/quality signaling mechanisms.
Mechanism/Context (RQ2->RQ3; Egypt, discourse)	Pimentel (1998)	RQ2—Message accessibility and cultural proximity (ECA) can enhance closeness; RQ3—norms shape persuasive effectiveness	Discusses how effective communication and audience alignment can be achieved through locally resonant linguistic choices.	Provides contextual grounding for ECA closeness/accessibility mechanisms and helps interpret when local language varieties may be more persuasive (RQ2/RQ3).
Context/Moderator (RQ3; Cairo/Arab world)	Kindt & Kebede (2016)	RQ3—Colloquial written Arabic is common/accepted -> familiarity/accessibility (supports ECA side)	Reports widespread colloquial usage/acceptance in everyday written practices, supporting audience alignment for colloquial varieties.	Contextual evidence for RQ3 that helps justify ECA as a natural, audience-aligned choice, supporting closeness/accessibility interpretations.

**Continued**

Context/Moderator (RQ3; Arab world)	Høigilt & Mejdell (2017)	RQ3—Colloquial Arabic appears in public genres including advertising (ecological validity)	Documents the presence/legitimacy of colloquial Arabic in public discourse genres (including advertising/media contexts).	Strengthens RQ3 by supporting the ecological plausibility of ECA use in advertising and public persuasion settings.
Mechanism (RQ2; thematic literature analysis, cross-context)	Yusuf & Abas (2024)	RQ2—Mechanisms by which advertising language shapes purchase intention (identity/cultural resonance, emotion, informality, persuasion routes)	Thematic analysis (31 articles, 2019-2023) identifies recurring themes influencing purchase intention: cultural resonance/social identity, emotional and sensory appeal, informal language, and persuasion routes.	Adds synthesis-level mechanism support for RQ2; not Egypt-specific, but strengthens broader interpretation of how language influences purchase intention.

The multi-layered interaction parameters illustrated in the integrated mapping confirm that direct evidence on purchase intention remains geocentrically and contextually constrained, showing that neither variety yields blanket behavioral superiority over the other.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Reconciling Heterogeneous Evidence: A Contingency Framework

Synthesized evidence for advertising methods in Egypt provides a more subtle and contextual conclusion rather than one prescriptive statement. To address the conflicting nature of Egyptian advertising literature, the Contingency Model of Language Effectiveness is proposed as the most suitable framework to explain the differences between how ECA (Egyptian Colloquial Arabic) and EN (English) work. In this model, ECA and EN function through different, but overlapping, pathways of persuasion. Experimental results show that within the educated urban Cairo population, EN commercials receive higher purchase intention than their ECA counterpart. This finding indicates a symbolic effect, in which EN serves as a peripheral cue to convey a sense of modernity, premium quality, and corporate expertise [4]. Although the statistical effect size ( $\eta^2p = 0.089$ ) is small, the symbolic capital created by using EN is very important for brands targeting aspirational consumers [4]. Conversely, ecological evidence demonstrates that ECA is overwhelmingly used within advertising, and provides a mechanism for advertising to create and support social proximity, accessibility, cultural resonance, and brand credibility through the usage of ECA [1] [6] [9].

### 5.2. Reconciling Competing Explanations: The Mixed-Language Paradox

A notable empirical tension emerges from the data: while experimental studies indicate that mixed-language advertisements incur an evaluation penalty and

lower attractiveness ratings [4] [5], code-switching remains ubiquitous in actual Egyptian advertising practice [6] [14]. This “Mixed-Language Paradox” can be resolved through three underlying dimensions:

- **Functional Differentiation:** Unlike the arbitrary mixing often utilized in experimental stimuli, real-world campaigns systematically assign English to slogans (to project international prestige) and ECA to dialogue (to anchor relational proximity).
- **Audience Segmentation:** Advertisers deliberately target bilingual, high-socioeconomic urban elites via code-switched content, willingly accepting lower persuasiveness among broader monolingual consumer segments [14].

**Evolutionary Trajectories:** Older experimental benchmarks may reflect a transitional sociocultural period. Driven by digital media proliferation, contemporary Egyptian consumers exhibit higher English familiarity, accelerating the public acceptance of hybrid, mixed-language branding styles over time [12] a pattern further reflected in the code-switching practices of Egyptian social media users [26].

### 5.3. Limitations of the Current Evidence Base

To properly contextualize these insights, the structural, methodological, and theoretical limitations of the existing literature must be acknowledged:

- **Methodological Geocentricity:** The core experimental evidence optimizing purchase intention relies excessively on urban, educated convenience samples from Cairo [4], preventing generalizability to rural or lower-socioeconomic demographics across broader Egypt.
- **Artificiality and Measurement Inconsistency:** Experimental stimuli frequently fail to simulate the production values and ecological complexities of actual campaigns. Furthermore, measurement scales vary inconsistently across studies (e.g., varying Likert configurations), complicating direct statistical pooling.
- **Theoretical Mediation Gaps:** No reviewed study utilizes formal statistical mediation analysis to explicitly test the proposed underlying mechanisms (perceived quality versus social proximity). Additionally, the lack of longitudinal designs and understudied digital environments (e.g., TikTok and Instagram algorithms) leaves the long-term evolutionary shifts of language choices unresolved.

### 5.4. Practical Implications for Advertisers

Based on the contingency framework, four macro-strategic recommendations are established for brand managers operating within the Egyptian market:

- **Linguistic Brand Alignment:** Align language choice strictly with market positioning. High-involvement, premium product categories seeking to signal international quality should leverage targeted English scripts. Conversely, low-involvement, mass-market consumer goods prioritizing immediate relational bonding and sincerity should anchor their communication in ECA.

- **Strategic Functional Mixing:** Avoid arbitrary or disorganized language mixing that dilutes clarity. Instead, implement structured functional differentiation, utilizing English to secure prestige in slogans and claims, and ECA to drive narrative empathy in character dialogues.
- **Demographic Pre-Testing:** Given that linguistic cues interact dynamically with consumer age, geographic location, and language proficiency, advertisers must empirically validate ad iterations through localized pre-testing before full campaign execution.

## 6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Based on the experimental analysis obtained from samples collected in Cairo, it appears that under certain circumstances, English-language advertisements result in significantly greater purchasing intentions compared to Arabic-language advertisements [4]. However, the limited scope of available evidence does not allow for these results to be generalised to non-urban or less-educated Egyptian consumers. Conversely, other research studies that have examined Advertisement Attractiveness, Language Attitude, and Credibility, have confirmed that consumer reactions are affected by the use of a specific language, but the effect of this choice on consumer purchasing intentions may vary significantly.

The current literature review integrates quantitative research findings that demonstrate how Egyptian consumers are affected by the use of particular languages in Egyptian advertisements. Most of the data supports the conclusion that English-language advertisements can improve the likelihood of certain consumer groups in Egypt making a purchase. Specifically, this improved likelihood is more prevalent among urban-dwelling consumers with higher levels of education. The influence of English-language advertisements on Egyptian consumers' purchasing decisions stems from perceptions of English being a prestigious and modern language that implies quality and value, rather than just personal attraction to an Advertisement. The symbolic meaning of these associations has a far greater impact on consumers than does the pure emotional appeal of an Advertisement. On the other hand, examining the social dimensions associated with the use of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic as an advertisement strategy shows that using Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is effective in creating a feeling of accessibility and familiarity between consumers and the brands they purchase and use. This feeling of accessibility helps to establish trust between consumers and brands and reflects the integration of the language used in advertising within the context of the language that consumers regularly use in their everyday lives during daily communication.

Results show that English and ECA (Egyptian Colloquial Arabic) are not positioned on a hierarchy of language choice and are/or mutually exclusive. Rather, they are both distinctly different ways of persuading; each has its own means of execution and will appeal to different objectives. English appears to represent a perceived higher quality, modern and global appeal while ECA represents a more culturally relevant approach that conveys familiarity with Egypt and ease of com-

munication in the marketplace. The effectiveness of using either English or ECA, in a given campaign, is determined by how closely the intended target audience aligns with the characteristics attributed to the selected language; the symbolic meaning of the product category; and the image the brand wishes to project. Developing effective strategies for communicating through language in Egyptian advertising requires an increased awareness of both the context of the language and the symbolism attached to the language as a means of communication, as well as a branding strategy. An effective advertising strategy requires that the marketer considers not only the language that is being used; they must take into account the brand values that are conveyed through that language, as well as the perceived quality of the brand and how it represents Egyptian culture.

Future research in Egypt would benefit the Egyptian advertising market in a number of ways. First, utilizing a more representative sample that extends beyond Cairo would allow researchers to verify whether or not the language trends identified in this study are present across all portions of Egypt, both geographically and demographically. Second, conducting studies comparing the performance of ECA, MSA (Modern Standard Arabic), and English in a number of settings (for example, use of ECA in comparison to formal Arabic) provides insight into the impact of using colloquial versus formal Arabic on consumer behavior. Third, connecting language selection to actual behaviors such as click-through rates, sales, etc., rather than simply using survey data about consumers' intended actions, can provide added insight into actual results. Fourth, more research on how socioeconomic factors, various product categories, and brand positioning affect language in advertising will provide greater clarity regarding potential limitations to the current findings. Taking these additional steps toward developing an understanding of how language selection affects Egyptian advertising will provide evidence regarding potential shifts in the impact of language over time as English continues to become more prevalent and the use of everyday Arabic becomes more commonplace in written communications.

This research aims to explore what are the circumstances where the English language has had a beneficial impact and the times when using Egyptian Colloquial Arabic with an audience who are inherently familiar with it will be most effective from a persuasive standpoint. The findings from this study will give advertisers that are trying to navigate Egypt's unique multilingual advertising environment a better understanding of how to be successful in this environment, as well as offer a fuller understanding of how language can affect the effectiveness of persuasive messaging.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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