

Optimising Arabic Language Localisation In E-Commerce Marketing: A Qualitative Study Of User Experience, Trust, And Cultural Adaptation

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Abstract

This study examines the optimisation of Arabic as a strategic marketing asset in e-commerce platforms targeting Arabic-speaking consumers, particularly in the Middle East. Using a qualitative approach, the study draws on secondary data from academic literature, industry reports, policy documents, and digital observations of selected platforms such as Amazon.ae and Noon.com. The data were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to Arabic interface design, localised marketing content, cultural adaptation, consumer trust, and platform competitiveness. The findings show that Arabic optimisation improves e-commerce competitiveness by enhancing platform accessibility, strengthening consumer trust, increasing user engagement through culturally relevant marketing, and supporting customer retention through Arabic-based services. The study also highlights challenges such as dialect variation, translation quality, right-to-left interface integration, and localisation costs. The novelty of this article lies in positioning Arabic not merely as a translation medium, but as a strategic marketing resource that integrates linguistic, cultural, technological, and commercial dimensions. These findings provide practical implications for global e-commerce companies seeking to expand into Arabic-speaking markets.

Keywords: Arabic, e-commerce, marketing strategy, localization, global market.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, e-commerce has become one of the most influential forms of digital economic transformation. The expansion of internet access, mobile technology, online payment systems, and changing consumer behaviour has allowed

companies to reach markets beyond national and linguistic boundaries. By 2025, the global e-commerce market is projected to exceed 7.4 trillion USD, reflecting rapid growth across digital services, retail platforms, and consumer goods.¹ Several studies have also shown that the adoption of online marketplaces and mobile commerce has reshaped global retail structures and consumer purchasing behaviour.² However, the success of e-commerce expansion is not determined solely by technology, logistics, or platform availability. In multilingual and culturally diverse markets, language localisation has become a strategic factor that influences accessibility, trust, user experience, and consumer loyalty.

In this market environment, Arabic has a strategic position because it is not only a communication medium but also a marker of cultural identity, social trust, and consumer familiarity. Arabic is the official language in 22 countries and is spoken by more than 310 million native speakers. Its use in e-commerce platforms is therefore closely related to the ability of companies to communicate product information, promotional messages, customer service, and brand identity in a culturally meaningful way.³ Previous research has demonstrated that language localisation affects consumer trust, perceived usability, and purchasing intention in online platforms.⁴ This means that Arabic should not be treated merely as a translated version of English content, but as a strategic element in designing market communication for Arabic-speaking consumers.

Despite this potential, many global e-commerce platforms still face weaknesses in Arabic language optimisation. These weaknesses include inaccurate translation, limited cultural adaptation, inconsistent Arabic content across platform features, and technical problems in implementing right-to-left interface design. The lack of Arabic language optimisation on global e-commerce platforms affects user experience, customer trust, and platform loyalty.⁵ Studies on website localisation also confirm that inadequate linguistic and cultural adaptation can reduce consumer engagement and negatively influence online purchasing decisions.⁶ Furthermore, inconsistencies between marketing content, product information, and customer service may weaken consumer confidence and reduce the competitiveness of global platforms in Arabic-speaking markets.⁷ Research on digital marketing localisation also emphasises that culturally adapted language strategies can improve brand perception and long-term customer loyalty in regional markets.⁸

The research gap in this field lies in the fact that previous studies have generally

¹ E. R. Kamila, A. I. X. Andini, and T. Azzahra, Digital Transformation and E-Commerce Growth: Impacts, Opportunities, and Challenges in the Modern Era, *Journal of Economics and Management* 3, no. 2 (2025): 141–145.

² Kenneth C. Laudon and Carol Guercio Traver, *E-Commerce: Business, Technology, Society* (Pearson, 2022); P. C. Verhoef et al., “Digital Transformation: A Multidisciplinary Reflection and Research Agenda,” *Journal of Business Research* 122 (2021): 889–901. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022>.

³ R. A. F. Asbari and A. Makarim, “Challenges and Opportunities for the Arabic Language in the Workplace,” *Journal of Transformative Education* 2, no. 1 (2023): 114–116.

⁴ Marieke de Mooij, *Consumer Behavior and Culture: Consequences for Global Marketing and Advertising* (Sage, 2019); Nitish Singh and Arun Pereira, *The Culturally Customized Website: Customizing Websites for the Global Marketplace* (Elsevier, 2005).

⁵ N. Qandos et al., “A Multiscale Cascaded Domain-Based Approach for Detecting Fake Arabic Reviews on E-Commerce Platforms,” *Journal of King Saud University – Computer and Information Sciences* 36, no. 2 (2024): 101926. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksuci.2024.101926>.

⁶ E. Yalcin and F. Bektas, “The Impact of Website Localization on Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention,” *Journal of Global Marketing* 32, no. 4 (2019): 273–289.

⁷ N. Qandos et al., *A Multiscale Cascaded Domain-Based Approach for Detecting Fake Arabic Reviews on E-Commerce Platforms* (2024).

⁸ A. A. Alalwan, N. P. Rana, Y. K. Dwivedi, and R. Algharabat, “Social Media in Marketing: A Review and Analysis of the Existing Literature,” *Telematics and Informatics* 34, no. 7 (2017): 1177–1190. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.05.008>.

discussed e-commerce growth, digital marketing, website localisation, and consumer behaviour as separate issues. Limited attention has been given to Arabic as an integrated strategic resource that connects linguistic competence, cultural adaptation, user experience, customer trust, and marketing competitiveness. In addition, the relevance of this issue to Arabic language education has not been sufficiently highlighted. From the perspective of Arabic language education, e-commerce provides an authentic context for developing applied Arabic competencies, especially Arabic for business, digital communication, translation, localisation, customer service, and intercultural marketing.⁹ Arabic language education is therefore not limited to grammatical mastery or literary understanding, but also includes the ability to use Arabic functionally in professional, commercial, and digital environments.¹⁰ This is increasingly important because digital marketing practices in Arabic-speaking countries require sensitivity to linguistic choices, cultural expressions, consumer values, and platform-based communication.¹¹

Based on this gap, this study formulates three main research questions. First, how is Arabic language optimisation implemented in e-commerce platforms targeting Arabic-speaking markets? Second, how does Arabic language localisation contribute to user experience, consumer trust, cultural relevance, and marketing competitiveness? Third, what challenges and strategic solutions are involved in optimising Arabic for global e-commerce platforms.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using secondary data analysis, document analysis, and digital observation. A qualitative design was selected because the study aims to interpret how Arabic language optimisation functions as a strategic marketing asset in e-commerce, rather than to measure statistical relationships among variables. This approach is appropriate for examining social, linguistic, cultural, and marketing phenomena that require contextual interpretation.¹² In this study, Arabic language optimisation was examined through its role in platform interface design, digital marketing content, customer service, cultural adaptation, and consumer trust in Arabic-speaking markets.

The data used in this study were entirely secondary. The sources consisted of four categories. First, academic sources were collected from books and peer-reviewed journal articles discussing e-commerce, digital marketing, website localisation, Arabic language use, consumer trust, user experience, and Arabic for business communication. Second, industry reports from institutions such as Statista, Deloitte, and McKinsey were used to understand the development of e-commerce in the Middle East and North Africa region. Third, official documents and policy-related sources, including documents related to digital transformation and economic diversification in the Arab region, were used to contextualise the role of e-commerce within broader development agendas. Fourth, digital observation was conducted on selected e-commerce platforms, particularly Amazon.ae and Noon.com, to examine the implementation of Arabic in user interfaces, product descriptions, promotional campaigns, customer service features, and culturally adapted

⁹ Ahmad Nurcholis and Syarif Hidayatullah, *Bahasa Arab untuk Bisnis dan Industri Kreatif* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Ubaid Ridlo, *Bahasa Arab dalam Perspektif Bisnis dan Ekonomi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015).

¹¹ A. Alotaibi, "The Role of Language in Digital Marketing Strategies in Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies* 7, no. 2 (2025): 176–183. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2025.7.2.15>.

¹² Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003).

marketing practices.¹³

Data collection was carried out in several stages. First, relevant literature and reports were identified and classified according to the main themes of the study. Second, the selected sources were reviewed to extract information related to Arabic language localisation, digital marketing strategy, customer experience, and platform competitiveness. Third, digital observation was conducted by examining the visible features of Amazon.ae and Noon.com, including language options, right-to-left interface arrangement, Arabic product information, promotional content, culturally specific campaigns, payment and delivery information, and customer support features. Fourth, the collected data were organised into analytical categories to support thematic interpretation. This procedure enabled the study to combine conceptual evidence from literature with practical observations of e-commerce platforms.

Result and Discussion

A. The Importance of Arabic in E-Commerce.

Here are several reasons for the importance of the Arabic language in global e-commerce:

1. Accessing Potential Markets.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has developed into one of the most dynamic e-commerce markets in the global digital economy. This potential is not only reflected in population size, but also in the high level of internet connectivity, mobile access, and the increasing use of online platforms for retail transactions. The region is home to more than 420 million people, many of whom are active digital users. A report by Statista estimates that the value of the e-commerce market in the MENA region will exceed USD 50 billion by 2025, indicating significant growth prospects for companies seeking to expand into Arabic-speaking markets.¹⁴ This potential is further supported by digital user data in major MENA markets. In 2025, Saudi Arabia recorded 33.9 million internet users with 99.0 percent internet penetration, while the United Arab Emirates recorded 11.1 million internet users with the same level of penetration. Egypt, as one of the largest Arabic-speaking markets, recorded 96.3 million internet users with 81.9 percent internet penetration.¹⁵ These figures show that e-commerce growth in the region is supported by a large and digitally connected consumer base.

The potential of the MENA market can also be seen through the competitive position of major e-commerce platforms. Comparative digital traffic data show that Amazon.ae receives most of its traffic from the United Arab Emirates, indicating its strong position in the UAE market. Meanwhile, Noon.com has a broader regional traffic distribution, with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt among its main sources of visitors. In Saudi

¹³ Aminudin, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

¹⁴ Shenify, "E-commerce Market Growth in the MENA Region," industry report, 2024.

¹⁵ DataReportal, *Digital 2025: Saudi Arabia (2025)*; DataReportal, *Digital 2025: The United Arab Emirates (2025)*; DataReportal, *Digital 2025: Egypt (2025)*.

Arabia, traffic comparison between Amazon.sa and Noon.com also shows intense competition between global and regional platforms in attracting Arabic-speaking consumers.¹⁶ This comparison demonstrates that the MENA market should not be treated as a single homogeneous market. Each country has different levels of digital adoption, platform preference, consumer behaviour, and linguistic-cultural expectations.

2. Improving Accessibility and User Experience.

Arabic language support plays a central role in improving accessibility and user experience on e-commerce platforms, particularly for local users who are more comfortable using Arabic than English or other foreign languages. In the context of Arabic-speaking markets, accessibility is not limited to the availability of translated content. It also involves the extent to which users can read information clearly, navigate the platform easily, understand product details, complete transactions without confusion, and obtain customer support in a language that is familiar to them. Therefore, Arabic optimisation needs to be evaluated through several user experience indicators, namely right-to-left interface design, navigation clarity, readability, transaction process clarity, and customer service accessibility.¹⁷

The first indicator is right-to-left (RTL) interface design. Since Arabic is written from right to left, e-commerce platforms must adapt their layout structure to match Arabic reading patterns. RTL optimisation includes the placement of menus, search bars, category lists, product filters, buttons, banners, and checkout instructions in a direction that feels natural for Arabic-speaking users. If the interface is only translated linguistically without proper RTL adjustment, users may still experience confusion because the visual flow of the platform does not correspond to the structure of the Arabic language. In this regard, accessibility depends not only on language translation but also on interface architecture. Studies on Arabic e-commerce localisation show that linguistic clarity, readable interface elements, and understandable item descriptions directly affect users' ability to navigate and trust localised platforms.¹⁸

The second indicator is navigation clarity. A well-localised Arabic e-commerce platform should allow users to move smoothly from the homepage to product categories, product pages, shopping carts, payment pages, and delivery confirmation pages. Navigation menus, product filters, search results, and call-to-action buttons need to be translated accurately and consistently. Inconsistent Arabic terminology may create uncertainty, particularly when users compare products, check shipping options, or review return policies. Clear navigation contributes to perceived ease of use because users can understand where they are on the platform, what action they need to take, and how to complete each stage of the shopping process.¹⁹

¹⁶ Similarweb, "amazon.ae Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience," 2026

¹⁷ Alexander Pons, Hassan Aljifri, and Khalid Fourati, "E-Commerce and Arab Intra-Trade," *Information Technology & People* 16, no. 1 (2003): 34–48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09593840310463014>.

¹⁸ Abdulfattah Omar, Waheed M. A. Altohami, Hamza Ethelb, and Bahramuddin Hamidi, "Localization Quality Assessment for More Reliable E-Commerce Applications in Arabic," *Education Research International* 2022, Article ID 6942735 (2022): 1–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6942735>.

¹⁹ International Organization for Standardization, ISO 9241-210:2019, *Ergonomics of Human-System Interaction—Part 210: Human-Centred Design for Interactive Systems* (Geneva: ISO, 2019).

3. Helping to Build Consumer Trust.

Trust is a central factor in e-commerce because online transactions require consumers to make purchasing decisions without direct physical interaction with sellers, products, or service providers. In this context, consumers face several perceived risks, including payment risk, product mismatch, delivery uncertainty, data privacy concerns, and difficulties in post-purchase communication. Research on online shopping shows that consumer trust is as important as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in shaping consumers' intention to use e-commerce platforms.²⁰ Therefore, trust should not be understood only as an emotional response, but as a consumer's assessment of whether an online platform is competent, reliable, transparent, and able to protect consumer interests.

The relationship between Arabic language use and consumer trust can be explained through trust theory. In the trust model developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, trust is influenced by three main dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity.²¹ In e-commerce, ability refers to the platform's capacity to provide accurate product information, reliable transactions, secure payment systems, and effective customer support. Benevolence refers to the consumer's perception that the platform understands and cares about user needs. Integrity refers to the perception that the platform communicates honestly and consistently. Arabic language optimisation can support these three dimensions when product descriptions, navigation menus, payment instructions, return policies, promotional messages, and customer service are presented clearly and culturally appropriately in Arabic.

4. Adaptation to Local Culture and Values.

Arabic plays a role that goes beyond that of a communication tool. It represents cultural identity, religious values, social norms, and local expressions that shape consumer behaviour in Arabic-speaking societies. In e-commerce, therefore, Arabic localisation should not be understood as literal translation from English into Arabic. It must include cultural adaptation that allows product information, promotional messages, visual elements, payment options, customer service, and delivery practices to be accepted within specific social and cultural contexts. Research on Arabic e-commerce localisation shows that linguistic, cultural, and technical barriers can affect localisation quality and the reliability of e-commerce platforms.²²

a. Use of Locally Relevant Terminology

One of the most important aspects of Arabic localisation is the selection of terminology. E-commerce platforms need to distinguish between Modern Standard Arabic, which is widely understood across the Arab world, and regional dialects, which may create stronger emotional closeness in local marketing communication. For formal information such as product

²⁰ Gefen, D., Karahanna, E., and Straub, D. W., "Trust and TAM in Online Shopping: An Integrated Model," *MIS Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2003): 51–90. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/30036519>.

²¹ Roger C. Mayer, James H. Davis, and F. David Schoorman, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust," *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (1995): 709–734. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335>.

²² Abdulfattah Omar, Waheed M. A. Altohami, Hamza Ethelb, and Bahramuddin Hamidi, "Localization Quality Assessment for More Reliable E-Commerce Applications in Arabic," *Education Research International* 2022, Article ID 6942735 (2022): 1–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6942735>.

specifications, payment instructions, return policies, privacy policies, and warranty descriptions, Modern Standard Arabic is generally more appropriate because it provides clarity and cross-regional comprehensibility. However, for social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and promotional slogans, regional expressions may be more effective because they sound closer to everyday communication.

b. Selection of Visuals Suitable for Local Cultural Contexts

Visual adaptation is also necessary because images, colours, symbols, clothing styles, family representations, and religious elements can be interpreted differently across Arab countries. In more conservative markets, such as Saudi Arabia, visual content often requires greater sensitivity to modest dress, gender representation, religious values, and public morality. In the UAE, visual communication may combine Islamic cultural markers with a more cosmopolitan and international style because of the country's global business environment. In Egypt, visual campaigns may need to reflect mass-market familiarity, family-oriented consumption, and locally recognisable social expressions.

c. Provision of Specific Information such as Halal Products

Halal information is another key element in cultural adaptation, but its importance may vary according to product category and national market context. In food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, travel, and personal care products, halal labelling can strengthen consumer confidence because it provides assurance that the product is compatible with Islamic principles. Clear halal information is particularly important in markets where consumers rely on certification, product ingredients, and brand credibility before making purchasing decisions. Studies on halal-certified products in e-commerce indicate that halal certification and web design can influence purchase intention through the mediation of brand trust.²³

5. Competition in the Global Market.

In the era of globalisation, competition in the e-commerce industry is no longer determined only by price, product variety, logistics, or payment systems. In multilingual markets, language localisation has become an important source of competitive advantage because it influences how consumers access information, evaluate platform reliability, and build attachment to a brand. In Arabic-speaking markets, the ability to use Arabic accurately and culturally appropriately allows e-commerce platforms to compete not only through technological infrastructure, but also through linguistic familiarity and cultural relevance. Research on digital marketing in Saudi Arabia shows that the use of Arabic and Arabic-rooted expressions can strengthen consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and cultural sensitivity in marketing strategies.²⁴

²³ H. T. Putra, D. Riyanti, and D. Anggraeni, "The Effects of Halal Certification and Web Design on Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Trust in E-Commerce of Halal Cosmetics Consumers in Bandung Raya," *Ilomata International Journal of Management* 4, no. 3 (2023): 368–385. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52728/ijjm.v4i3.793>.

²⁴ A. Alotaibi, "The Role of Language in Digital Marketing Strategies in Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies* 7, no. 2 (2025): 176–183. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2025.7.2.15>.

A more systematic competitor analysis can be made by comparing the localisation strategies and market positions of major e-commerce platforms in the Middle East, particularly Amazon.ae, Amazon.sa, Amazon.eg, and Noon.com. Amazon's regional platforms represent the localisation strategy of a global company that adapts its services to specific national markets. Amazon.ae focuses strongly on the United Arab Emirates, Amazon.sa on Saudi Arabia, and Amazon.eg on Egypt. This country-based platform structure allows Amazon to localise language, payment information, product availability, delivery systems, and promotional campaigns according to each market. Public web traffic estimates show that Amazon.ae receives most of its traffic from the United Arab Emirates, indicating its strong market concentration in the UAE.²⁵

6. Supporting Economic Diversification in the Middle East.

Arabic language optimisation in e-commerce is also relevant to the economic transformation agenda in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Vision 2030. However, the relationship between Arabic and Vision 2030 should not be understood only in a general macroeconomic sense. More specifically, Arabic supports economic diversification by enabling local consumers, local sellers, SMEs, digital workers, and technology-based companies to participate more effectively in the digital economy. In this context, Arabic functions as a localisation instrument that connects global e-commerce innovation with local linguistic identity, consumer trust, and market participation.²⁶

Saudi Vision 2030 emphasises the development of a diversified economy, a supportive business environment, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and non-oil sectors. E-commerce is one of the sectors that benefits from this transformation because it depends on digital infrastructure, online payment systems, logistics networks, data-driven marketing, and user-centred platform design. The role of Arabic becomes specific at this point: digital infrastructure alone is not sufficient if local consumers cannot access product information, payment instructions, delivery policies, return procedures, and customer support in a language they understand. Therefore, Arabic language localisation contributes to Vision 2030 by making digital commerce more inclusive and accessible to Arabic-speaking consumers.²⁷

B. Strategies for Optimising Arabic in E-Commerce.

1. The Use of Arabic in Digital Interfaces.

The use of Arabic in digital interfaces is one of the most important strategies for optimising e-commerce platforms in Arabic-speaking markets. Arabic interface localisation should not be understood merely as translating English content into Arabic. It requires a technical and linguistic adaptation process that ensures accuracy, usability, readability, and cultural appropriateness across the entire customer journey. In this study, the quality of Arabic digital interfaces can be assessed through four main indicators: translation accuracy, right-to-left interface

²⁵ Similarweb, "amazon.ae Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience," April 2026

²⁶ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Vision 2030 (Riyadh: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016)

²⁷ International Trade Administration, "Saudi Arabia - Digital Economy," Country Commercial Guide, 2026

implementation, consistency of terminology, and ease of navigation.²⁸

a. Translation Accuracy in Arabic Website Design

The first technical indicator is translation accuracy. E-commerce websites that support Arabic must translate all essential interface elements, including navigation menus, product categories, product descriptions, search filters, payment instructions, shipping information, return policies, privacy notices, and customer service pages. Translation errors in these elements can reduce user confidence because consumers may misunderstand product specifications, delivery terms, warranty conditions, or payment procedures. Therefore, Arabic translation must not be limited to word-for-word conversion. It should consider context, product category, consumer familiarity, legal meaning, and commercial clarity.

b. Right-to-Left Interface Implementation

The second technical indicator is right-to-left (RTL) implementation. Since Arabic is written from right to left, e-commerce platforms must adapt their visual structure to Arabic reading patterns. RTL implementation includes the repositioning of menus, search bars, icons, product filters, banners, call-to-action buttons, shopping carts, checkout steps, and confirmation messages. If an interface is translated into Arabic but still follows a left-to-right visual logic, users may experience confusion because the textual direction and visual flow do not match.

c. Consistency of Arabic Terminology

The third technical indicator is terminology consistency. Arabic e-commerce platforms need to use consistent terms for product categories, buttons, payment methods, discounts, shipping options, return procedures, customer support, and account settings. Inconsistent terminology can confuse users, especially when the same function is expressed using different Arabic terms in different parts of the platform. For example, inconsistent translation of terms related to “cart,” “checkout,” “return,” “refund,” “delivery,” or “cash on delivery” can disrupt the transaction process and reduce perceived reliability.

2. Language-Based Local Marketing

Arabic language-based local marketing is a crucial strategy for e-commerce platforms operating in the Middle East and other Arabic-speaking markets. However, the effectiveness of Arabic marketing campaigns should not be understood only through general claims of cultural closeness. It needs to be assessed through clearer indicators, such as audience reach, engagement potential, purchase intention, campaign relevance, seasonal timing, and the credibility of Arabic-speaking influencers. These indicators are important because public campaign-level conversion data from major platforms such as Amazon.ae and Noon.com are not always disclosed. Therefore, the effectiveness of Arabic-based

²⁸ Abdulfattah Omar, Waheed M. A. Altohami, Hamza Ethelb, and Bahramuddin Hamidi, “Localization Quality Assessment for More Reliable E-Commerce Applications in Arabic,” *Education Research International* 2022, Article ID 6942735 (2022): 1–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6942735>.

marketing can be analysed through available digital market data, consumer behaviour patterns, and previous studies on social media and influencer marketing.²⁹

a. Digital Advertising Campaigns Using Arabic

Digital advertising campaigns using Arabic can increase campaign relevance because they communicate with consumers in a language that reflects local identity, cultural familiarity, and everyday communication. In Arabic-speaking markets, campaign effectiveness is strongly related to whether promotional messages are understandable, culturally appropriate, and distributed through platforms used by the target audience. For example, Saudi Arabia recorded 34.1 million social media user identities in January 2025, while the United Arab Emirates recorded 11.3 million social media user identities in the same period. These figures indicate that social media provides a wide audience base for Arabic-language digital campaigns in major Gulf markets.³⁰

b. Collaboration with Local Influencers Who Communicate in Arabic

Collaboration with Arabic-speaking influencers is another important strategy in local marketing. Influencers can help e-commerce platforms translate brand messages into familiar cultural expressions and everyday consumer language. Their effectiveness is related not only to the number of followers, but also to credibility, authenticity, engagement quality, audience relevance, and cultural fit. In Arabic-speaking markets, consumers may trust influencers who speak their dialect, understand local values, and present products in a way that feels socially familiar.

3. Personalising the Customer Experience

Personalised customer experience is essential for building loyalty and improving customer retention in an increasingly competitive e-commerce landscape. In Arabic-speaking markets, personalisation is closely related not only to consumer behaviour, purchase history, and product preference, but also to language, dialect, cultural values, and communication style. Companies can create more relevant shopping experiences by using data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to provide Arabic-language recommendations, personalised promotions, and automated customer service. However, the use of AI in Arabic e-commerce also requires critical attention because Arabic is linguistically complex, with differences between Modern Standard Arabic and regional dialects across countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco, and the Levant.³¹

a. Using AI and Data Analytics for Arabic-Language Recommendations

²⁹ A. A. Alalwan, N. P. Rana, Y. K. Dwivedi, and R. Algharabat, "Social Media in Marketing: A Review and Analysis of the Existing Literature," *Telematics and Informatics* 34, no. 7 (2017): 1177–1190. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.05.008>.

³⁰ DataReportal, *Digital 2025: Saudi Arabia (2025)*; DataReportal, *Digital 2025: The United Arab Emirates (2025)*.

³¹ Nizar Y. Habash, *Introduction to Arabic Natural Language Processing* (San Rafael: Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2010).

AI and data analytics allow e-commerce companies to analyse consumer behaviour and provide product recommendations that are more relevant to individual users. These systems can process browsing history, previous purchases, search keywords, product categories, location, payment preferences, and seasonal shopping behaviour. In Arabic-speaking markets, this personalisation may include recommendations for halal products, modest fashion, electronics, household goods, Ramadan needs, Eid gifts, and other culturally relevant product categories.

Arabic-language recommendations can make the shopping process more accessible because consumers receive product suggestions, promotional messages, and product descriptions in a language they understand. Platforms such as Amazon.ae and Noon.com, for example, may use previous searches and browsing patterns to display relevant products in Arabic. AI can also support personalised Arabic promotional emails, push notifications, and search results. If a consumer searches for organic food, modest clothing, or electronic products, the platform can recommend related items with Arabic descriptions, price information, and delivery options.

b. Automated Customer Service such as Arabic-Language Chatbots

Responsive and accessible customer service is a key component of customer experience in e-commerce. AI-powered chatbots that support Arabic can improve customer interaction by answering frequently asked questions, providing order tracking, explaining return procedures, guiding payment processes, and assisting customers at any time. This feature is particularly useful in markets where customer activity may shift during Ramadan, weekends, prayer times, or evening shopping hours. Arabic chatbots can also create a sense of familiarity by using polite greetings, formal expressions, and culturally appropriate communication styles.

However, Arabic-language chatbots also involve several risks. The first risk is dialect misrecognition. Arabic-speaking consumers may use different dialects, informal spellings, Arabizi, code-switching between Arabic and English, or country-specific expressions. A chatbot that cannot recognise these variations may provide irrelevant answers or fail to understand the customer's problem. The second risk is mistranslation in problem-solving. If a chatbot misunderstands complaints related to payment failure, delivery delay, refund requests, damaged products, or return policies, the customer may experience frustration and lose trust in the platform.

4. Cultural Adaptation of Content

Cultural adaptation of content is essential in e-commerce because consumers do not evaluate online platforms only through price, product availability, or delivery speed. They also assess whether the platform understands their values, lifestyle, religious expectations, communication patterns, and social norms. In Arabic-speaking markets, cultural adaptation should therefore be organised systematically rather than treated as a general adjustment to "Middle Eastern culture." Based on the analysis, cultural adaptation in Arabic e-commerce content can be classified into six main categories: linguistic-discursive adaptation, product adaptation,

visual-symbolic adaptation, service adaptation, religious-temporal adaptation, and promotional adaptation.³²

a. Linguistic-Discursive Adaptation

The first category is linguistic-discursive adaptation. This refers to the way Arabic is used in product information, promotional messages, customer support, and platform instructions. E-commerce content should use Arabic that is clear, polite, contextually appropriate, and consistent with the communicative purpose of each platform feature. Formal content such as privacy policies, product specifications, payment instructions, and return procedures should generally use Modern Standard Arabic because it is widely understood across Arabic-speaking countries. Meanwhile, social media promotions, influencer campaigns, and local advertisements may use regional expressions or dialect-sensitive phrases to create emotional closeness with consumers.

b. Product Adaptation

The second category is product adaptation. Products offered on e-commerce platforms for Arabic-speaking markets must be relevant to local needs, values, and preferences. One important example is the provision of halal products in categories such as food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, personal care, and travel-related services. Clear halal information can reassure Muslim consumers because it indicates that the product is compatible with religious requirements. Studies on halal-certified products in e-commerce show that halal certification and web design can influence purchase intention through the mediation of brand trust.³³

c. Visual-Symbolic Adaptation

The third category is visual-symbolic adaptation. Visual content in e-commerce includes product images, models, colours, icons, banners, campaign symbols, packaging displays, and festive decorations. In Arabic-speaking markets, visual content must be designed with sensitivity to modesty norms, religious values, family representation, gender portrayal, and culturally appropriate symbols. For example, images used for fashion, cosmetics, food, or family products should consider the cultural expectations of the target country.

C. Successful E-Commerce Companies Using Arabic.

1. Amazon.ae

Amazon.ae provides an important case for analysing how a global e-commerce company adapts its platform to Arabic-speaking consumers in the Middle East. Amazon acquired Souq.com, one of the leading e-commerce platforms in the Middle East, in 2017. The company later rebranded Souq.com UAE as Amazon.ae in 2019 and launched Amazon.sa

³² Marieke de Mooij, *Consumer Behavior and Culture: Consequences for Global Marketing and Advertising* (London: Sage, 2019); Nitish Singh and Arun Pereira, *The Culturally Customized Website: Customizing Websites for the Global Marketplace* (Burlington: Elsevier, 2005)

³³ H. T. Putra, D. Riyanti, and D. Anggraeni, "The Effects of Halal Certification and Web Design on Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Trust in E-Commerce of Halal Cosmetics Consumers in Bandung Raya," *Ilomata International Journal of Management* 4, no. 3 (2023): 368–385. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52728/ijjm.v4i3.793>.

for the Saudi Arabian market in 2020.³⁴ This expansion indicates Amazon's strategy of entering Arabic-speaking markets through country-specific localisation rather than relying only on its global platform model.

However, the performance of Amazon.ae should be discussed carefully. Publicly available information does not provide complete data on transaction volume, customer retention, conversion rate, or campaign-level return on investment. Therefore, this study does not claim success based on undisclosed internal data. Instead, Amazon.ae is analysed through observable indicators, including platform localisation, Arabic interface availability, traffic position, market concentration, culturally adapted campaigns, and the platform's ability to compete in the United Arab Emirates e-commerce market. Public web analytics estimates show that Amazon.ae is ranked first in the marketplace category in the United Arab Emirates and receives most of its traffic from the UAE market.³⁵ These indicators suggest that Amazon.ae has achieved a strong digital presence in its target market, although they should not be interpreted as direct evidence of transaction performance or customer retention.

a. Implementation of Arabic in the User Interface

Amazon.ae demonstrates Arabic localisation through the availability of Arabic interface options across its website and mobile application. The platform allows users to switch between English and Arabic, which is important in the UAE because the market consists of both Arabic-speaking users and a large expatriate population. The Arabic interface supports access to navigation menus, product categories, product descriptions, account settings, payment information, delivery details, and customer service features.

b. Arabic SEO and Search Visibility

Arabic search optimisation is another important aspect of Amazon.ae's localisation strategy. In e-commerce, search visibility is strongly influenced by whether users can find products using Arabic keywords, product names, and category terms. For example, Arabic search phrases such as "أفضل الهواتف الذكية" can help users find products using familiar language. Arabic SEO supports platform visibility because users in Arabic-speaking markets may search for products in Arabic, English, or mixed Arabic-English forms.

c. Product Descriptions and Transaction Information

Product descriptions in Arabic are central to consumer trust and purchase confidence. When product information is available in Arabic, users can better understand specifications, size, material, warranty, compatibility, delivery details, and return conditions. This is particularly important for product categories such as electronics, household goods, fashion, beauty products, food, and personal care. Inaccurate or incomplete Arabic descriptions can create ambiguity and may reduce consumer confidence.

³⁴ Amazon, "Amazon to Acquire SOUQ.com," press release, March 28, 2017; Arab News, "Amazon to Rebrand Souq.com Egypt Site This Year," July 2021

³⁵ Similarweb, "amazon.ae Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience," April 2026

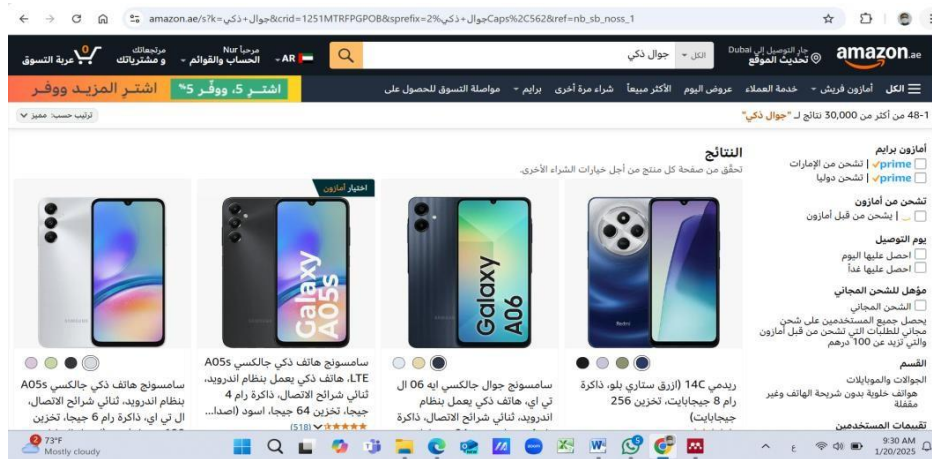


Image: Amazon.ae website

2. Noon.com

Noon.com provides an important case for analysing Arabic localisation from the perspective of a regional e-commerce platform. Launched in 2017, Noon was founded by Emirati entrepreneur Mohamed Alabbar with support from the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund and other regional investors. The platform operates across Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, with product categories ranging from electronics and fashion to household goods, beauty products, groceries, and related digital services.³⁶ Unlike global platforms that enter the Middle Eastern market through country-specific adaptation, Noon.com positions itself as a regional platform with stronger local identity and Arabic-oriented market communication.

However, claims about the direct effect of Arabic language use on sales growth or customer loyalty should be made cautiously. Publicly available sources do not provide complete campaign-level data, such as conversion rate, customer retention, sales uplift, or return on advertising spend specifically caused by Arabic-language campaigns. Therefore, this study does not claim a direct causal relationship between Arabic use and Noon.com's sales performance. Instead, Noon.com is analysed through observable proxy indicators, including regional traffic distribution, Arabic interface availability, localised promotional strategy, regional brand positioning, and the platform's ability to compete with global e-commerce players in Arabic-speaking markets. Public web analytics estimates show that Noon.com receives substantial traffic from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, indicating that its audience is concentrated in major Arabic-speaking markets.³⁷

a. Arabic-Language Interface and Regional Accessibility

Noon.com uses Arabic as an essential part of its platform

³⁶ Quest Search, "Noon.com, the Middle East's Most Awaited Ecommerce Platform, Now Live in the UAE," 2017; Financial Times, "Middle East's Amazon Rival Noon Plans Public Offering within Two Years," 2025

³⁷ Similarweb, "noon.com Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience," April 2026

accessibility. The availability of Arabic interface options allows users to browse product categories, read product descriptions, review prices, understand delivery information, and complete transactions in a language familiar to them. This is particularly important because Noon.com operates in markets where Arabic is not only a communication medium but also a marker of cultural identity and consumer familiarity.

b. Targeted Arabic-Language Marketing Campaigns

Noon.com's marketing communication frequently uses Arabic during key commercial and cultural moments, including Ramadan, Eid, and major discount periods such as Yellow Friday. Arabic promotional messages are relevant because they allow campaigns to connect with consumers through familiar expressions, seasonal meanings, and local consumption patterns. These campaigns often focus on product categories that are culturally significant during festive periods, such as food, fashion, beauty products, household goods, electronics, and gifts.

c. Collaboration with Arabic-Speaking Influencers and Local Partners

Noon.com also uses local partnerships and Arabic-speaking influencers to strengthen its regional positioning. Influencer marketing can support consumer trust because influencers communicate in familiar language, use local expressions, and present products within culturally recognisable lifestyles. However, the impact of influencer campaigns should not be stated as a confirmed increase in sales unless supported by verifiable data such as campaign analytics, affiliate-link performance, promotional code redemption, or sales reports.

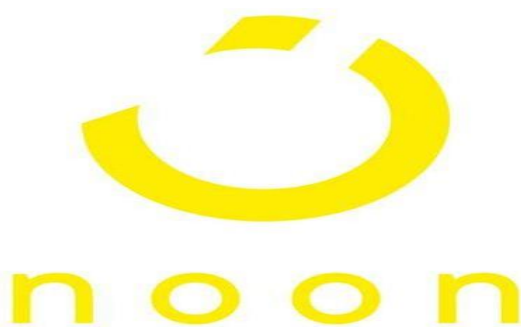


Image: Noon.com logo

D. Challenges and Solutions in Arabic Language Optimisation.

Optimising Arabic for e-commerce is a strategic requirement for platforms that aim to serve Arabic-speaking consumers. However, Arabic localisation is not a simple process of translating platform content from English into Arabic. It involves linguistic, cultural, technical, and operational challenges that affect interface design, product information, marketing communication, customer service, search systems, and automated language technologies. The complexity of Arabic is particularly visible in its diglossic structure, dialectal diversity, right-to-left writing system, terminology variation, and the uneven quality of machine

translation. Therefore, Arabic optimisation requires a more systematic understanding of the challenges before appropriate solutions can be formulated.

1. Challenges in Arabic Optimisation.

a. Costs of Translation and Content Localisation.

Translation and content localisation require substantial investment because e-commerce platforms contain large volumes of dynamic content. Product descriptions, product categories, user reviews, search filters, payment instructions, return policies, privacy notices, promotional banners, customer service scripts, and seller guidelines all need to be translated and adapted into Arabic. The cost becomes higher when the platform offers thousands or millions of products that are frequently updated. In this context, localisation is not a one-time process, but a continuous operational activity that must be maintained as products, campaigns, policies, and user interfaces change.

b. Arabic Diglossia

One of the most important linguistic challenges is Arabic diglossia. Arabic-speaking societies commonly use Modern Standard Arabic in formal writing, education, media, government communication, and official documents, while regional dialects are used in everyday oral communication and informal digital interaction.⁷⁴ This creates a challenge for e-commerce platforms because different parts of the platform require different language registers.

c. Dialect Variation Across Arab Markets

Arabic dialect variation is another major challenge. The Arabic used in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, the Levant, Morocco, and other North African countries differs in vocabulary, pronunciation, idioms, and everyday expressions. A term that is familiar to Gulf consumers may not be equally familiar to Egyptian or Moroccan consumers. This variation affects product search, advertising copy, influencer marketing, chatbot responses, and customer service communication.

2. Solutions to Overcome These Challenges.

The challenges of Arabic optimisation in e-commerce require solutions that are not only conceptual but also operational. Translation cost, diglossia, dialect variation, machine translation quality, terminology inconsistency, right-to-left interface complexity, and chatbot misunderstanding cannot be solved through technology alone. They require an integrated workflow involving Arabic language specialists, translators, UX designers, developers, marketing teams, data analysts, local partners, and customer service teams. Therefore, the proposed solutions should include clear operational procedures and measurable indicators of success.

a. Implementing Human-in-the-Loop Machine Translation

AI-based machine translation can be used as an initial tool to translate large volumes of e-commerce content, such as product descriptions, category labels, user guides, promotional banners, and

customer service templates. However, machine translation should not be treated as the final output. The recommended procedure is a human-in-the-loop workflow. First, product and interface content is translated using machine translation tools. Second, Arabic language editors review the output for accuracy, terminology consistency, readability, cultural appropriateness, and legal clarity. Third, sensitive content, such as halal claims, return policies, privacy terms, warranty information, payment instructions, and product safety descriptions, is reviewed by subject specialists. Fourth, revised translations are stored in a translation memory and terminology database to ensure consistency in future updates.⁷⁹

b. Developing an Arabic Terminology Database and Style Guide

To address terminology inconsistency, e-commerce platforms should develop an Arabic terminology database and an Arabic style guide. The terminology database should include standardised Arabic terms for product categories, cart, checkout, delivery, refund, return, discount, warranty, seller, customer service, payment method, cash-on-delivery, order tracking, and account settings. The style guide should determine when to use Modern Standard Arabic, when regional expressions may be used, how formal the tone should be, and how product descriptions, promotional messages, and customer service responses should be written.

c. Applying Country-Sensitive and Dialect-Aware Localisation

Arabic localisation should be adapted to the target country because Arabic-speaking markets differ in dialect, consumer behaviour, cultural expectations, and purchasing patterns. The recommended procedure is to segment Arabic content into functional and promotional domains. Functional content, such as product specifications, policies, payment instructions, and return procedures, should generally use Modern Standard Arabic to maintain clarity and cross-market comprehensibility. Promotional content, social media campaigns, influencer scripts, chatbot greetings, and seasonal messages may include country-sensitive expressions when targeting specific markets such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, or other Arabic-speaking regions.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Arabic language optimisation plays a strategic role in e-commerce platforms targeting Arabic-speaking markets, particularly in the Middle East. Arabic should not be understood merely as a translation medium, but as a localisation asset that connects language, culture, user experience, consumer trust, marketing communication, and platform competitiveness. The findings show that Arabic contributes to e-commerce strategy through several mechanisms: improving accessibility through right-to-left interface design and readable Arabic content; strengthening consumer trust through clear product information, transaction transparency, and Arabic customer service; increasing cultural relevance through country-sensitive terminology, visual adaptation, halal information, and religious-temporal campaigns; and supporting competitive

positioning through Arabic-based marketing, localised platform design, and regional market communication.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in expanding the discussion of Arabic from a linguistic and educational domain into the field of digital marketing and e-commerce localisation. This study positions Arabic as an applied language resource that operates across linguistic, cultural, technological, and commercial dimensions. It also contributes to Arabic language education by showing that Arabic competence is increasingly needed in professional digital contexts, including business translation, Arabic SEO, content localisation, customer service, chatbot design, and intercultural marketing. Therefore, Arabic language education should not be limited to grammar, literature, or general communication, but should also respond to the needs of digital business and global platform economies.

Practically, this study provides several implications for e-commerce companies. Companies targeting Arabic-speaking consumers need to develop Arabic localisation strategies based on clear operational indicators, including translation accuracy, terminology consistency, RTL usability, navigation clarity, transaction transparency, Arabic search performance, culturally appropriate campaigns, and responsive Arabic customer service. The study also highlights the importance of human-in-the-loop machine translation, Arabic terminology databases, dialect-aware localisation, local partnerships, UX testing, chatbot quality control, and continuous performance evaluation. These strategies can help companies reduce linguistic barriers, improve customer experience, strengthen trust, and build stronger market relevance in Arabic-speaking regions.

This study has several limitations. It relies on secondary data, document analysis, and digital observation, without using interviews, surveys, direct user testing, or internal company data. Therefore, the findings cannot prove a direct causal relationship between Arabic language use and sales growth, conversion rate, customer retention, or campaign return on investment. Publicly available traffic and platform data are used only as proxy indicators of digital presence and market positioning. Future research should therefore employ empirical methods, such as consumer surveys, usability testing, platform analytics, A/B testing, interviews with localisation professionals, or comparative case studies across Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and other Arabic-speaking markets. Such research would provide stronger evidence regarding how Arabic localisation affects consumer trust, purchase intention, user experience, loyalty, and business performance in e-commerce.

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