The aim of this work is to examine how language is used in Egyptian public discourse to illuminate the collective identity of Egyptians, and how this identity is then made manifest in language form and content. The data used to identify the collective identity of Egyptians in public discourse includes newspaper articles, caricatures, blogs, patriotic songs, films, school textbooks, television talk shows, poetry, and, finally, Egyptian novels that deal with the theme of identity.

Edwards (2009: 20) stipulates that “individual identities will be both components and reflections of particular social (or cultural) ones, and the latter will always be, to some extent at least, stereotypic in nature because of their necessary generality across the individual components.” That is, the influence of public discourse in providing a coherent unified identity to all Egyptians is essential, even on the level of individual identity.

What concerns us here is the individual as a member of an imagined “coherent group.” A collective identity may be stereotypic, exclusive, built on myths, detached from reality, and propagated by politicians or the media at different times. However, it is, indeed, this imagined identity that steers individuals into taking specific actions, endorsing others, and perhaps putting up with some. This in itself makes the study of the relationship between language and identity a pivotal task.

It has been established that language does not stand alone, but is related both directly and indirectly to social, political, historical, and other extra-linguistic factors (Spolsky 2004). However, extra-linguistic factors also need to be examined in relation to language. Thus, one cannot describe the social and political changes in Egypt without referring to the diglossic community and how code-choice reflects a political or social stand in most cases and is, in almost all cases, a reflection of an
identity, whether a collective one or an individual one. In addition, identity, as we mentioned above, is the product of a community, not just an individual. A collective national Egyptian identity is no exception. While Edwards begins his book on language and identity by posing the question of what he has in common with himself as a little child in a picture, an even more challenging question would be: what does an Egyptian have in common with a statue of a Pharaoh, which is 3,000 years old, especially given that this Pharaoh is supposedly a pagan, who speaks a different language altogether?

Writing a book about language and identity in Egypt is a challenging task, but a necessary one. Such work will further our understanding of the relationship between identity and language in general and also yield insights about the intricate ways in which media and public discourse more generally help shape and outline an identity through linguistic processes. Individuals express this identity through linguistic practices, including code-choice and code-switching.

I.1 Why Egypt?

Despite the fact that Egypt is the most populous Arabic-speaking country in the world, there are exceedingly few monographs on language in Egypt during the modern period.

Egypt, like all Arab countries, is a diglossic community—that is, a community in which in addition to the different dialects, two varieties exist side by side, each with a different function. Ferguson (1959) called these varieties a “High” variety (in our case, Standard Arabic or SA) and a “Low” variety (here, Egyptian colloquial Arabic or ECA). There are differences between the varieties on the lexical, morphological, and structural levels. Observe the following example:

ECA:
illi: ʕamaluːh if-fabaːb fi tamantaːfər yoːm
rel “do”-3mpl-pr3msg det-“youth” “in” eighteen day[sg]
ma-haddiːf ʕamaluːh fi sittiːn sana
neg-“one”-neg “do”-3msg-pr3msg “in” sixty year[sg]

“What the young people achieved in eighteen days, no one had achieved in sixty years”

SA:
maː faʃala-hu f-fabaːb fi: əamaːniyata ʕafara
rel “do”-3msg-pr3msg det-“youth” “in” eight[ʃ] “ten”[m]
Compare and contrast *ma-haddi-f* 'amala and *lam* yaf'al-hu ahad in the second part of the sentence. ECA and SA sometimes have distinct lexical choices: while 'amala is also used in SA, it is construed in a much narrower sense as “to work,” whereas in ECA it means “to do” in a general sense. It is also apparent that negation works differently in both varieties: where the negated verb is bracketed by *ma* in ECA, SA has various negation schemes, including the pattern *(lam + imperfect)* for actions completed in the past. The system of numerals in SA is highly complex: for numbers between twelve and nineteen, when used with a masculine noun, the “ones” have a feminine marker, whereas the “tens” are masculine in form. In comparison, the numbers in ECA are greatly simplified. Phonological variations are not dominant in this example. Perhaps the most salient feature of many types of ECA is the replacement of *q* with *ʔ*.

In addition, Egypt constitutes more than one-third of the Arab world with a population exceeding 80 million. However, the relations between Egypt and other Arabic-speaking countries have never been without political rivalry and tensions. This is reflected in perceptions of identity in public discourse.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Egyptian intellectuals have oscillated between considering Egypt the leader of the Arab world, calling her, as Ibn Baṭṭutah (d. 1369) did in the past, “the mother of the world,”3 and emphasizing the distinctive nature of Egyptians as descendants of an ancient civilization, both geographically and historically different from other Arab countries. This contested identity—at times brought to the forefront by political and social problems—is fertile ground for a sociolinguistic study.

In discussion regarding political change in Egypt (and the Arab world at large), “identity” is constantly referenced as a driving force, both by commentators in Arabic-language media and in the English-language press. Hussein Agha and Robert Malley (2011) argue that it is not possible to understand the actions of people in Arab countries without understanding what their concept of identity “entails”:

> One cannot fully comprehend the actions of Egyptians, Tunisians, Jordanians and others without considering this deep-seated feeling that they have not been allowed to be themselves, that they have been robbed of their identities. Taking to the streets is not a mere act of protest. It is an act of self-determination.

But identities also develop and acquire new meanings and positions or appeal to older and forgotten categories. In *The New York Times*, Shadid...
Language and identity in modern Egypt

and Kirkpatrick (2011) attribute the wide spread of protests and revolts in the Arab world and the success of some of these revolts to the new meaning of national identity acquired by “Arabs”:

The revolutions and revolts in the Arab world, playing out over just a few months across two continents, have proved so inspirational to so many because they offer a new sense of national identity built on the idea of citizenship.

As for Egypt, it is not just Egyptian public discourse that constantly tries to demarcate the uniqueness of Egyptian identity, but non-Egyptian public discourse as well, as evidenced in the example below (Bender 2011):

But, Egypt is different. The borders of the Egyptian nation have been roughly the same since the Nile River was first settled. Unlike Iraq, which never really connected its modern version with the Sumerians and Babylonians that ruled within its modern borders long ago, Egyptians continually connect themselves to their ancient and Medieval Era ancestors. Its deep, communally-shared history should serve as the mortar between the bricks of Egypt’s diverse society, and that combination should help repel threats of a military takeover.

Bender does not just discuss Egypt’s uniqueness compared to other countries, but relates this unique identity of Egyptians to the political future of Egypt. According to Bender, it is because Egypt has a long, well-established history that it will be difficult for the military to take over.

The relationship between language and identity in Egypt, especially after the January 25, 2011 Revolution, was also highlighted in non-Egyptian media, as in the example below (Bender 2011):

Even before the European powers demarcated the boundaries of the contemporary Middle East during the mid-20th century, Egyptians were unique from the Bedouins migrating across the Sahara and Arabian deserts. They spoke a distinct Arabic dialect, no doubt born from the busy markets of Cairo and Alexandria. They relished their shared cultural identity that made them not just Arabs, but people of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea. They bore a sizable Coptic Christian community that had contributed to society since the pre-Islamic era. For periods throughout much of the past millennium, especially before the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Cairo was seen as the social and political capital of the Arabs. Any visitor to the great Pyramids of Giza, along the banks of the Nile River, knows that the Egyptians pride themselves in their longstanding accomplishments.

Bender classifies Egyptians as being, to some extent, different from Arabs and attempts to explain this difference by drawing upon independent
variables, such as history, locality, geographical position, religion, and language. According to Bender, the fact that Egyptians spoke “a distinct Arabic dialect, no doubt born from the busy markets of Cairo and Alexandria” is one of the main reasons why they are different from others. The reference to the market streets of Cairo and Alexandria also implies that this dominant dialect is an urban one, as opposed to a Bedouin or rural dialect. The relationship between language and identity comes to the surface in this example—this is what this book will concentrate on. However, it is not non-Egyptian public discourse that will be discussed, although it has to be referred to, but Egyptian public discourse.

The Egyptian Revolution lasted for eighteen days, beginning on January 25, 2011 and ending with Mubarak’s abdication on February 11, 2011 after thirty years of ruling Egypt. The protest movement in Egypt questioned the legitimacy of President Mubarak and his government and their claims to represent the Egyptian people. The demands of the opposition were encapsulated in the seemingly simple Standard Arabic slogan *al-faṭb yuri:d isqa:t al-ni:a:m* (“The [Egyptian] people want to overthrow the system”). As a result, the public discourse of the Revolution—both pro- and anti-Mubarak—revolved around several interrelated questions: who are “the Egyptian people”? Who represents them? What do they want?

Interestingly, many explicit statements about Egyptian identity during the revolution contained direct references to language. This is hardly surprising, given the central role of language in the construction of the Arab identity (for a thorough historical analysis of this phenomenon, see Suleiman 2003). What is new in the context of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 is that language—as a marker of identity—became a pivotal element in the political contestation between “the people” and an autocratic regime.

To give but one example: before stepping down, Mubarak gave three speeches over a period of eighteen days. Unlike his previous speeches (see Bassiouney 2006), the three speeches were given in Standard Arabic, rather than Egyptian colloquial Arabic or a mixture of standard and colloquial. This marked choice to use SA rather than ECA did not go unnoticed by Egyptians. Mubarak was known to use ECA in his speeches; he was even criticized and accused by some intellectuals and opposition leaders of never having mastered SA. On the other hand, the former Tunisian president Bin Ali, ousted weeks earlier, was famous for using only SA in his speeches, never code-switching between Tunisian Colloquial Arabic and SA. Bin Ali, did, however, use only Tunisian Colloquial Arabic in his last speech to the Tunisian people before fleeing to Saudi Arabia on January 14, 2011. Bin Ali, in his last speech, said, in Tunisian Arabic, *fihimtaku* (“I understood you”). Mubarak made sure to never show weakness and
never say “fihimtuku”—incidentally, a word that is pronounced almost identically in both Tunisian Arabic and ECA—and also never use ECA in his last three speeches. Egyptians, Tunisians, and Arabs more generally realized, despite not being linguists, the differences between the speeches of Bin-Ali and Mubarak. Egyptians then joked that as long as Mubarak used SA in his speeches—the authoritative language code—he would cling to power. Code-choice was fundamental, not just to define identity, but to foretell the next political step that was to be taken by the regime.

The content of Mubarak’s three speeches was also important. The way that Mubarak positioned himself as serving Egypt, rather than Egyptians, smacked of vanity and detachment from reality, but was also a linguistically and politically calculated choice of intentionally abstracting himself from Egyptians and concentrating on a more important and sacred entity, which is “Egypt.” That is to say, according to him, the implicit message is that Egyptians may not know what is good for Egypt, but he does. While he referred to serving Egypt for thirty years, the protestors demanded that he now listen to what “Egyptians” want. Identity was underscored and contested, and linguistic resources were manipulated by all those involved in the conflict.

The linguistic choices of the protestors, on the other hand, are worth a book by themselves; their slogans were in SA, ECA, English, and French, to name but a few. They started by chanting “leave” in SA. When Mubarak then broadcast his first speech and showed no sign of listening, the protestors used ECA and SA, saying ʔiɾhǎl yaʔnǐ ʔimʃi yalli mabtifhamʃi (“‘leave’ means ‘go,’ you who do not understand”). After the SA imperative “leave,” they explained the simple word “leave” in ECA, accusing the president of not understanding their demands and failing to understand SA. By accusing him of not understanding SA, they also implicitly undermined his authority and legitimacy, as will be made clear in this book. SA has many indexes that are usually manipulated at times of conflict and transition. The imperative SA verb ʔiɾhǎl was translated into English and French, as well as ECA. The protestors claimed to be the “real Egyptians,” as did the small pro-Mubarak group (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of the correlations between the political contestations of identity and the linguistic situation in Egypt).

I.2 Aims of this work

This book starts from the assumption that language is a resource, access to which is constantly negotiated. Blommaert (2007: 115) defines language as a “repertoire: a culturally sensitive ordered complex of genres, styles, registers, with lots of hybrid forms, and occurring in a wide variety of ways big and small.” In public discourse, individuals choose from their
“repertoire” to index social variables that index an identity. That is, through linguistic resources, individuals construct an identity.

The main aim of this book is to answer the following questions: what is the relationship between language and identity in Egypt, and how is this relationship manifested through language use and discussions about language in public discourse?

In order to answer these questions, one has to first answer a number of other questions, including the following two:

1. In a diglossic community such as Egypt, how do language ideology and language attitudes feed into the indexical associations and order of indexicality between different varieties and languages—that is, different codes—and how do social factors, history, politics, and language policies also feed into that linguistic process? That is, how are the associations of SA, ECA, and foreign languages applied to discussions of identity? In more general terms, can orders of indexicality better our understanding of diglossia as a linguistic phenomenon more generally and in Egypt in particular?

2. If language is considered to be a resource for individuals in a community, then what are the mechanisms of claiming access to codes or utilizing linguistic resources in Egyptian public discourse? And what is the relevance of the associations of linguistic codes to the process of stance-taking, in which speakers position themselves as Egyptians or non-Egyptians in public discourse and thus align or disalign with an object or person or group?

I.3 Setting the framework

In this section, the diglossic linguistic situation in Egypt will be outlined. The term “public discourse” will also be explained and the choice and nature of data will be discussed.

I.3.1 The linguistic situation in Egypt

Egypt’s official name is Jumhu:riyyat mißr al-ʕarabiyya, translated into English as “The Arab Republic of Egypt.” In Arabic, the word “Egypt” comes first before “Arab,” so that a literal translation would be: “Republic-of-Egypt, the-Arabic.”

In order to provide some background on Egypt, I provide a few statistics here:

- **Population**: 83,688,164 [July 2012 estimate]
- **Ethnic groups**: Egyptian: 99.6 per cent; other: 0.4 per cent [2006 Census]
- **Religion**: Muslim (mostly Sunni): 90 per cent; Coptic Christian: 9 per cent; other Christian: 1 per cent
Map of Egypt
Languages used in Egypt:

Standard Arabic (official)

Egyptian colloquial Arabic (in most cases, this is used to refer to Cairene Arabic, but there are different varieties of colloquial in Egypt)

Nubian (ca. 50,000–170,000 speakers)

Bedja (ca. 15,000)

Siwi (ca. 6,000–22,000)

Some Armenian and Greek in Cairo and Alexandria

Colonization: 1882–1952

Official languages:

1882–1952 Arabic and English

1952– Arabic

Urban population: 43.4 per cent of total population (2010)

Rate of urbanization: 2.1 per cent annual rate of change (2010–15 estimates)

Literacy rates: (Definition: age fifteen and over can both read and write)

Total population: 71.4 per cent

Male: 83 per cent

Female: 59.4 per cent (2005 estimate)

Geography

Total area: 1,001,450 km²

Populated area: 78,990 km² (7.8 per cent)

Arable land: 2.92 per cent

I.3.1.1 Arabic in Egypt

The Arabs conquered Egypt around 640 CE and incorporated the country into their expanding empire. The languages used at this time in Egypt were Coptic and Greek. There is some debate about the status of Greek, but the available evidence suggests that both languages were used widely, with a preference given to Greek in contracts and official documents (Clackson 2004).

The practice of drawing up official documents in Greek survived for a limited period of time under Arab rule (and, indeed, the use of Greek letters as numerals in taxation records continued for some three centuries). However, purely Greek documents were soon supplanted by Greek–Arabic bilingual ones, which, in turn, gave way to documents written exclusively in Arabic.

In the Arab chronicles, this transition is attributed to a change in language policy during the Umayyad dynasty (661–750 CE) and to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwán (685–705 CE) in particular. This caliph is often credited with implementing a consistent and effective language policy that aimed to leverage the economic and political power of the Islamic empire to change language practices and habits. Throughout
history, the success of language policies is usually limited (see Spolsky 2004), but ‘Abd al-Malik is said to have initiated a policy that lead to the Arabization of not just Egypt, but the entire Near East. According to the traditional narrative, he made a drastic change in the administration of Egypt, by declaring that in order for Egyptians to keep their jobs in the administration of Egypt, they would have to learn Arabic.7 Arabic was supposedly declared the only language allowed in what we now call government offices, and it became the language of the diwan—the public register of stipends. In other words, unless Coptic speakers learned Arabic, they would be replaced in the administration by Arabs. Now the chronicles do not tell us much about the logistics of this change, and, in fact, the papyrological record suggests that the shift from Greek to Arabic was much more gradual (Hawting 2000: 63). On the other hand, the triumph of Arabic over local languages may suggest that some sort of language planning did take place, whether it was due to corpus planning or status planning.8

While the sources are ambiguous about the specifics of the Arabization of the administration, it is clear that ‘Abd al-Malik instituted another symbolic change that aimed to relate Arabic directly to the identity of the Islamic empire: the change in coinage. During the early Umayyad period, Muslim coinage had simply reproduced the style and iconography of Byzantine or Sassanian coinage. Under ‘Abd al-Malik, these models were abandoned in favor of a design that was purely epigraphic; henceforth, Islamic coins would not have an effigy of the ruler, but Islamic religious formulae in Arabic (Hawting 2000: 64). As Goldschmidt (2008: 5) posits, these fiscal and administrative changes would turn Coptic-speaking Christian Egyptians into Arabic-speaking Muslim Egyptians, although maintaining a Christian minority. Since then, Coptic remains a liturgical language known mainly to priests and monks, although there have always been various attempts at its revival.

By tying language to economic and political power, the Caliph succeeded in implementing its spread both faster and more effectively. There was no need to resort to extreme measures; language change was imminent, especially with a parallel change in religion. Language contact also had a pivotal role in language change in Egypt; the Arabs, when they conquered Egypt, started building inland cities, such as Fustat, and eventually some of them settled and mingled with the Egyptians, perhaps more than Egyptian history books have previously acknowledged.

However, the question regarding why there is diglossia in the Arab world and in Egypt as an Arab country is not yet resolved. Whether Arabs all started speaking in Classical Arabic (a language similar to pre-Islamic poetry), or if Standard Arabic was ever a spoken language, and whether there was a unified “Arabic” in the Arabian Peninsula are all
moot questions (see Versteegh 2001; Holes 2004). The linguistic reality is that Egypt, as with all Arab countries, is considered a diglossic community. Diglossia will be dealt with in detail in the next section. However, Egypt continuously examines the relationship between its language and identity. As noted earlier, Egypt, as part of the Arab world, is a diglossic community. In Arab countries, the official language is usually Modern Standard Arabic, but there is also at least one prestigious vernacular spoken in each country.

I.3.1.2 Ferguson’s definition of diglossia in the Arab world

The following is Ferguson’s definition of diglossia:

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. [Ferguson 1959: 336]

According to Ferguson, diglossia is a different situation from one where there are merely different dialects within a speech community. In diglossic communities, there is a highly valued H (High) variety that is learned in schools and is not used for ordinary conversations. That is to say, no one speaks the H variety natively. The L (Low) variety is the one that is used in conversation. Most importantly, Ferguson claims that the crucial test for diglossia is that the language varieties in question must be functionally allocated within the community concerned [Fasold 1995: 35]. Ferguson stresses that both H and L have to be in “complementary distribution functionally” [see also Boussofara-Omar 2006: 630]. According to Ferguson, diglossia is a relatively stable phenomenon. Ferguson implies that if a society is changing and diglossia is beginning to fade away, this will have specific signs, such as speakers mixing between the forms of H and L, and thus an overlap between the functions of H and L occurs [Ferguson 1959: 336].

Ferguson proceeds by exemplifying situations in which only H is appropriate and others in which only L is appropriate [1959: 329]. According to him, the following are situations in which H is appropriate:

1. Sermon in church or mosque;
2. speech in parliament and political speech;
3. personal letters;
4. university lecture; 
5. news broadcast; 
6. newspaper editorial, news story, and caption on picture; and 
7. poetry.

He also gives situations in which L is the “only” variety used:

1. Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, and clerks;
2. conversation with family, friends, and colleagues;
3. radio soap opera;
4. caption on political cartoon; and 
5. folk literature.

Ferguson’s definition has been criticized and discussed extensively, even by Ferguson himself (see Ferguson 1996), although it is only fair to note that at that stage, Ferguson was describing a general linguistic situation; indeed, he did not set out to describe Arabic diglossia as language standardization. He was describing diglossia cross-linguistically as it relates to issues of standardization. Questions that arose from his definition of diglossia are summarized below.

How far apart or close together do the H and L need to be for a language situation to be called “diglossia”? This question was posed by Fasold (1995: 50ff.), who claimed that there are no absolute measures that can specify the distance between H and L in a diglossic community. Britto (1986: 10–12, 321) considered the same question and argued that H and L must be “optimally” distant, as in Arabic, but not “super-optimally,” as with Spanish and Guaraní, or “sub-optimally,” as with formal–informal styles in English.12

Is there only one H? Ferguson spoke only about a distinction between H and L, without distinguishing the two different kinds of H such as exist in the Arab world, where there is a distinction between Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), although one has to note that this distinction is a Western invention and does not correspond to any Arabic term. However, CA is the religious language of the Qur’ān, which is rarely used except in reciting the Qur’ān or quoting older classical texts, while MSA can be used in a public speech, for example. Ryding, in her book A Reference Grammar of Arabic (2005: 7), mentions that both MSA and CA are referred to as “al-luḡa al-fuṣḥa:” (“the standard language”). This, in a sense, creates a shared past and present. She argues that there are few structural inconsistencies between MSA and CA. The main differences between both are stylistic and lexical, rather than grammatical. However, she posits that the journalistic style of MSA has more flexible word order, coinage of neologisms, and loan translations from
Western languages. For example, journalistic-style MSA uses the *ida:fa* construction (genitive “of construction”) to create neologisms for compound words or complex concepts. Bateson (1967: 84) posits that there are three kinds of changes between MSA and CA. MSA is characterized by having a simpler syntactic structure and being different in lexicon, because of modern technology, and being stylistically different, due to translations from other languages and the influence of bilingualism.

There is also the question of how different is the linguistic context of countries where more than one language is in everyday use, such as in Tunisia, where some people are also fluent in French? In such countries, the term “diglossia” is too narrow for the type of situation that exists.

Ferguson considered—only to a very limited extent—the fact that there can be switching between both varieties (H and L) in the same stretch of discourse. Again, this is because he did not set out to reflect the realistic situation in Arab countries, but rather to give an idealized picture of diglossia.

Furthermore, Ferguson did not discuss the sociolinguistic significance of the competing varieties. He did not propose that social factors may have a part to play in the negotiation of choice of variety in a diglossic community in specific sets of circumstances. This may be because, as he said himself, social factors of this kind were not in fashion at the time that the paper was written. They were not considered “true science” (1996: 60). Instead, Ferguson greatly emphasized the “external situation” in determining language choice. He claimed that in certain set situations H is appropriate, while in others L is appropriate, without taking into account the possible significance of the individual in negotiating [or deliberately subverting] “socially agreed” patterns of language choice (and ultimately changing them). Having reviewed these recent reformulations and revisions to his general theory, let us now briefly review the contributions Ferguson made to the study of Arabic diglossia.

Ferguson drew the attention of linguists to the existence of two language varieties in the Arab world and the fact that people have different attitudes towards these two varieties, although the term “diglossia” had been used earlier by the French dialectologist William Marçais with specific reference to Arabic (Fasold 1995: 34).

Despite all the subsequent criticism of Ferguson’s theory, his proposal that there are two poles, an H and an L, is still valid, although they both formally and functionally overlap. Indeed, Mejdell (1999: 226) posits that the H–L division still has validity. After Ferguson’s article, linguists tried to refine Ferguson’s concept by proposing intermediate levels, but still these intermediate levels cannot be understood unless one presupposes the existence of two “poles”—H and L. It may be that “pure H” or “pure L” does not occur very often and that there are usually elements of both
I recognized the existence of intermediate forms and mentioned them briefly in the article, but I felt then and still feel that in the diglossia case the analyst finds two poles in terms of which the intermediate varieties can be described, there is no third pole.

Ferguson certainly spurred linguists to examine diglossia, but he did not provide definite answers to a great number of questions. As Walters (2003: 103) puts it:

Our understanding of these phenomena [i.e. sociolinguistic phenomenon] would be far less nuanced than it is today had Fergie not taught us to look at Arabic as he did, looking past the norm and deviation paradigm that too often still characterizes discussions of Arabic and all diglossic languages. In so doing, he encouraged us to examine with care specific varieties and specific sets of linguistic practices as ways of better understanding the sociolinguistic processes found across speech communities that at first glance might appear quite disparate.

Note, also, that Fishman (1967), in line with Ferguson, identified specific domains to define diglossia. For example, speech events can fall under different domains, like a baseball conversation and an electrical engineering lecture. The major domains that Fishman identifies are family, friendship, religion, education, and employment (see also Myers-Scotton 2006). He also claims that these speech events are speech-community specific.13

I.3.1.3 The concept of prestige as different from that of standard
There has been a growing realization since the mid-1980s that variation in Arabic speech is not merely (or even mainly) a question of H interference in L. According to Ibrahim (1986: 115), “the identification of H as both the standard and the prestigious variety at one and the same time has led to problems of interpreting data and findings from Arabic sociolinguistic research.” This identification is the result of applying Western research to the Arab world, without noting the different linguistic situation. In research within Western speech communities, researchers have generally been able to assume that the standardized variety of a language—the one
that has undergone the conscious process of standardization—is also the
variety accorded the most overt prestige.

Many studies have shown that for most speakers, there is a prestige
variety of L, the identity of which depends on many geographical, politi-
cal, and social factors within each country and which may, in certain
circumstances, influence speech. In Egypt, for non-Cairenes, it is the
prestige variety of Egyptian Cairene Arabic; for Jordanian women from
Bedouin or rural backgrounds, on the other hand, it may be the urban
dialects of the big cities [Abdel-Jawad 1986: 58].

In a diachronic study conducted by Palva [1982], materials from Arabic
dialects spoken, recorded, and collected since 1914 in the Levant, Yemen,
Egypt, and Iraq were compared. Palva examined the occurrence of pho-
nological, morphological, and lexical items in the dialects over a period
of time. He found that certain dialectal variants gradually become more
dominant than the “standard” variants. For example, the glottal realiza-
tion /ʔ/ of the historical /q/, which is a phonological feature of several
vernaculars in the area, became widespread and dominant rather than
the MSA /q/ [1982: 22–4]. Holes [1983a; 1983b] discusses the influence
of MSA on two Bahraini dialects from both a phonological and lexical
viewpoint. Amongst other observations, he shows that the degree of
influence of MSA on the speech of educated Bahrainis is dependent on the
social status of the speakers. The socially prestigious Sunni speakers are
not influenced much by the standard, while the speech of the low-status
Shiite speakers is relatively more influenced by the standard [1983b: 448].

Abu-Haidar, in her study of the Muslim and Christian dialects of
Baghdad, posits that [1991: 92]:

Apart from MSA (the H variety for all Baghdadis), CB speakers [Christian
Baghdadi] use their own dialect as a L variety in informal situations at home
and with in-group members, while they use MB [Muslim Baghdadi] as another
H variety in more formal situations with non-Christians.

It has been realized that MSA is not the only source of linguistic prestige
and that in virtually every Arab speech community that has been exam-
ined, there is a dominant L that exerts influence on the other lower-status
Ls in that country or surrounding region. The reasons for its influence
are various, but principle among them is factors like the socio-economic
dominance of the city over the countryside (for example, Cairo) or the
influence of a ruling political group (for example, the royal families of the
Gulf). The dialects of these entities become a symbol of their power and
exercize a potent influence over those who come into contact with them
or who have to interact with speakers of these dialects.

Because this book is more concerned with attitudes, ideologies, and
discourse strategies than describing the differences between Standard Arabic and Cairene Arabic as the prestigious variety, I will stick to the term Standard Arabic to include CA and MSA, since Egyptians do not make the distinction between both. I will also start with the assumption that Cairene Arabic, as spoken in some quarters of Cairo, is the prestigious variety used in Egypt. This is not to deny the real diversity of Egyptian society and linguistic practice. However, while there are diverse dialects within Egypt, as well as distinct ethnic and linguistic communities (especially outside urban areas; these include the Bedouin and Nubians), public discourse attempts to portray a unified picture of Egypt as a primarily urban civilization that emerged from the clustering of people in the cities in ancient times (this is the historical narrative that is put forward in school textbooks, among other media). It can be shown that Cairene Egyptian Arabic is the variety that is primarily used to speak about and represent “the Egyptian”; diversity is generally downplayed and undermined, while the “distinct” character of Egypt as an ancient, immutable entity—one that contains one ethnic group unified by different shared characteristics—is always in the foreground.

All this stands in contrast with linguistic realities. While one can argue that Egypt has less ethnic and linguistic diversity than some other countries in the region and that it is a centralized state built around cities rather than villages or provinces, there are still different dialects within Egypt that may carry their own covert prestige (see Trudgill [1972] for an explanation of this concept), especially in the south of Egypt. These regional dialects have deep historical roots and go back to patterns of population movement and settlement. For a more detailed map of dialects in Egypt and a historical perspective of their evolution, see Behnstedt and Woidich (1985).

I.3.1.4 Identity and code-switching in Egypt

So far, studies on diglossic switching as part of code-switching in Egypt have not directly correlated identity and code-choice using the linguistic tools adopted in this work. There are no studies that adopt the theories of stance or subject positions directly to code-switching in Egypt. There are also no studies that use orders of indexicality to explain cases of code-switching and code-choice in the Arab world. In addition, there are no studies that adopt an interdisciplinary framework such as the one adopted in this work, which regards language as a resource, access to which is unequal and negotiated. However, there are a number of studies that have indirectly alluded to the speaker’s role in code-switching between SA and ECA. Some of these studies are mentioned chronologically below.

There have been a number of studies that have attempted to explain switching between ECA and SA in Egypt, whether in written or oral
performance. Holes (1993) examines the relationship between language form and function in Nasser’s political speeches. He attempts to explain cases in which Nasser switches between ECA and SA. Holes detects that there can be an element of conscious choice in using one code rather than another. In general, “[s]peakers are free to move up and down it [the stylistic spectrum] in accordance with what they perceive to be the moment-by-moment requirements for appropriate language use” (1993: 15). He stresses the role of the speaker by claiming that speakers always have “intentions” and “strategies,” and these two factors influence their language choices at both the micro and macro levels. In a similar vein, Mazraani (1997) examines language variation in relation to three political figures in Egypt, Libya, and Iraq and how these three political leaders use language variation as a “rhetorical strategy” (1997: 25).

Mejdell (1996) examines stylistic variations in spoken Arabic with reference to recordings of the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz talking about his life, trying to explain the kinds of processes that motivate stylistic choices by matching certain discourse functions with the use of one variety rather than another. She comes to the same conclusions suggested by Holes (1993): that people often switch from SA to ECA when giving examples, explaining, rephrasing, or commenting on a previous statement in SA. She also alludes to the fact that code-choice is related to the way in which one perceives oneself, as well as to the way in which one perceives others. In a later article (Mejdell 1999), she studies the interaction between SA and ECA in the spoken performance of Egyptian academics and writers “in settings where community norms require a mode of speaking that is more formal” (1999: 228). Mejdell suggests that code-choice should be examined in relation to the speaker’s change of role, vis-à-vis her or his audience (1999: 231). Mejdell concludes that she considers “the access to both varieties [SA and ECA], with the wide span of cultural and social connotations attached to them, a rich stylistic resource for speakers to use creatively” (1999: 227; see also Mejdell 2006. Note that there is no determinism here: speakers can choose how they speak, though within socially prescribed limits). Bassiouney (2006) also applied theories of code-switching including markedness theory to different forms of monologues, which include political speeches, mosque sermons, and university lectures.

In all of the studies above, identity has been referenced indirectly, but not in relation to the stance-taking process and not in direct relation to indexes. There is no study to date that does so. This book takes on this task.
I.3.2 Public discourse

This book will concentrate on data drawn from public discourse, since, as Wodak (1999: 8) contends: “Discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it.”

Identity construction is an ongoing process; for example, in order for us to understand and analyze the way that language was employed at the time of the January 25 Revolution of 2011, we have to start as early as the beginning of the twentieth century and consider how the development of national identity and language ideology and attitudes took shape and were influenced by the relationship of Egyptians towards “the other,” whether that “other” be a colonial power or a powerful neighbor-state.

Before discussing the nature of the data, I will first define public discourse.

Johnstone (2010: 36) defines discourse as follows:

Discourse is a continual process of mutual coordination in making sense of the world; “languages” “grammars” and “identities” emerge in the course of this process, as humans’ reflexivity—our ability to see what people do as an illustration of how to do it, and to arrange things in ways that encourage others to attend to these illustrations—links together sets of actions, linguistic and otherwise, into registers of conduct.

Johnstone emphasizes the fact that discourse is not just related to meaning, but to society at large, and that language is a product of the process of humans attempting to coordinate their existence in relation to actions, communities, and other individuals. Language is related directly to habits, both behavioral and linguistic.

Public discourse, on the other hand, refers to media discourse, educational discourse, political discourse, and scholarly discourse (Van Dijk 2008). Media discourse, which, in my opinion, is the main component in public discourse, refers to the organizations that produce communication devices, such as the press, cinema, broadcasting, publishing, and so on. Note that the term “media” is also used to denote the cultural and material products of these organizations and entities, such as the “forms and genres” of news and soap operas, for example, which then take the forms of newspapers, paperback books, films, tapes, discs, and so on (Lister et al. 2003: 12; Thompson 1995: 23–5).

In general terms, as Androutsopoulos (2007: 215) posits, “rather than always speaking in their ‘own voice,’ media performers use language to stylize an array of social identities, relying for this purpose on the cultural and sociolinguistic knowledge they assume to share with their audience” (see also Coupland 2001). According to Androutsopoulos (2007: 215), the
identities constructed and assumed by media performers may be claimed by the performers themselves and also projected to their audience. It may also be “ascribed to social types in the bilingual community.” That is, it may reflect a social stereotype prevalent within a particular community.

According to Lister et al. (2003), there are now new patterns of organization and production of media, such as computer-mediated communication: e-mail, chat rooms, and blogs. These new forms are commonly called “new media.” The main characteristic of new media is its availability to everyone, with little or no ownership regulations or censorship. According to Eickelman and Anderson (2003: 2), new media “feeds into new senses of a public space that is discursive, performative, and participative, and not confined to formal institutions recognized by state authorities.” This may explain why Lister speaks of media as “a fully social institution” (2003: 12).

In addition, a main component of public discourse is institutional discourse. Institutions are usually associated with physical buildings, such as hospitals, schools, and courts. Institutions are directly connected to powerful groups and mainly serve their interests (Agar 1985). They also produce binary roles, such as the role of the expert, who is the institutional representative and has authority, and the non-expert (client), who must accommodate and listen to institutional norms. Institutional public discourse that is relevant to this book is educational discourse, primarily textbooks, which are the main vehicle of conditioning and indoctrinating minds. Van Dijk claims that:

> like the mass media, educational discourse derives its power from its enormous scope. Unlike most other types of texts, textbooks are obligatory reading for many people, which is a second major condition of their power [...] The knowledge and attitudes expressed and conveyed by such learning materials, again, reflect a dominant consensus, if not the interests of the most powerful groups and institutions of societies. (Van Dijk 2008: 61–2)

However, public discourse is a process that is interactional, rather than binary. A community adds to public discourse as much as it is influenced by it. It is noteworthy, however, that as Heller (2007: 341–2) posits, at a time when we are “imagining other, more complicated and fluid ways of organizing ourselves . . . both language and identity are being commodified, often separately.” This commodification of identity in public discourse is essential to this work, as well as in more general terms, since this commodification at times highlights preconceived perceptions, while at others creates them. As Coupland (2007: 118) argues, public discourse is loaded with ideological concepts, socio-cultural frames, and stereotypes. He posits that:
the mass media certainly play an important role in reshaping the sociolinguistic environment, which is of course a matter of normalized attitudes and ideological meanings for language as well as a matter of how language forms and varieties themselves are distributed. (2007: 185)

Public discourse is an outcome of a mutual benefit relation between producers and consumers.

In this section, I have shed light on different types and genres of public discourse. It is important to know that in general public discourse, the seemingly simplistic or conversely sophisticated mirror attitudes and ideologies within a specific community, whether large or small. Audience plays a vital role in public discourse and the shared concepts and perceptions between audience and producers are essential for the success of public discourse (see also Bell 1984).

The question posed by Spitulnik (2009) is echoed throughout this work, which is basically: how can we speak of a homogenous speech community across the nation-state, where there may be millions of people who do not know each other and may not even all speak the same language? The answer lies to some extent in public discourse and, in the case of Spitulnik, specifically in mass media. When discussing the relation between speech community and mass media, Spitulnik (2009) argues the following (2009: 95):

The repeating, recycling, and recontextualizing of media discourse is an important component in the formation of community in a kind of subterranean way, because it establishes an indirect connectivity or intertextuality across media consumers and across instances of media consumption. Returning to the earlier discussion about speech communities, then, this indicates that even for large scale societies, it is possible to speak of a density of communication and frequency of interaction in a lateral sense.

Spitulnik contends that a speech community is usually described by three features: density of communication, frequency of interaction, and shared linguistic knowledge. However, according to Spitulnik, these three features can be realized through mass media. For example, density of communication can be indirectly achieved through large-scale exposure to radio drama or soap opera. Frequency of interaction can also be indirectly achieved through the frequent and dense consumption of mass media, rather than direct face-to-face interactions. Finally, shared linguistic knowledge can be achieved by media institutions that provide “common linguistic reference points” (Spitulnik 2009: 94–5). Any speech community, whether imagined or real, requires “some experience of belonging.” Linguistic practices can then create possibilities “for shared identities to
be imagined” (Spitulnik 2009: 95). This connection between an imagined coherent speech community and public discourse that relates directly to identity is pertinent in this work.

I.3.3 Choice and nature of data

The relevance of the data analyzed was drawn from how this data is related directly to identity construction and how this identity construction is related directly to language form and content.

This book does not always provide a quantitative study, but rather focuses on producing a qualitative study of identity and language in Egyptian public discourse. As will be clear in the discussion of identity in Chapter 1, identity, as Blommaert (2005: 203–4) contends, is context dependent and involves “a semiotic process of representation,” which includes symbols, narratives, textual genres, national categories, and socially constructed categories, such as age, gender, and profession. It is more appropriate for this work to include different forms and genres of public discourse that all have in common—at least, to some extent—a similar and at times stereotypical conception of an Egyptian identity.

What the data has in common is that Egyptian identity is discussed explicitly or implicitly. The analysis will concentrate on issues pertaining to the Egyptian personality, identity, and portrayals of “Egyptianness” throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

While with blogs I choose the most recent ones, with songs and novels I choose the most dominant and relevant ones from the beginning of the twentieth century through to the present. The reason for this is that blogs and novels are different forms of public discourse and so consequently have a different lasting effect on the audience. While I analyze a talk show that took place during the revolution and which aimed to cast doubt on the identity of the protestors in Tahrir Square, for example, I need to sometimes go back approximately 100 years to examine a song composed by Sayyid Darwish (1921), so as to show that the issues relevant to Darwish are still resonating in the same square where the protests took place in January 2011.

Therefore, I draw upon data from patriotic songs, novels, books, newspaper articles, films, blogs, talk shows, and poetry to show how language is used as “a set of ideologically-defined resources and practices” (Wodak 1999: 8).

While newspapers, for example, have been analyzed before as an essential form of public discourse (although not in Egypt as related to identity construction), there are fewer studies on films, blogs, novels, and patriotic songs as related to identity construction, although they are not less important.
In this book, I concentrate on specific forms of public discourse (mostly oral, for reasons mentioned below), but also written. Patriotic songs and films are the main form of oral data analyzed in detail throughout this work (Chapters 3 and 4). The main form of written data discussed in detail is novels that deal with themes of identity (Chapter 5) and also books in which language and identity are discussed together. Newspaper articles in which language and identity are discussed will also be mentioned and analyzed, especially in Chapters 2, 3, and 6. Talk shows and caricatures are discussed in Chapters 3 and 6, respectively. Poetry is discussed in Chapter 6.

Textbooks and blogs are referenced in order to give evidence at times and add new dimensions at others, but they are not analyzed systematically in this work.

It is noteworthy that the data analyzed presents mainstream public discourse to a great extent, rather than fringe or more extreme discourse, unless fringe discourse is used to contrast with mainstream discourse.

All the data in this work is selected with several factors in mind:

- Frequency: for example, how frequently the movies in question are broadcast on TV.
- Saliency: this refers to how effective or relevant this data is for Egyptians. For example, a song that is usually sung in school assemblies is salient.
- Wide scope of distribution: how available and popular the data is. A song that is available on YouTube or an article that is available and can be read by anyone for free has a wide scope of distribution.

The data covers up to the year 2013. It is essential to consider that changes to public discourse are slow, rather than sudden. This is because public discourse depends on intrinsic shared conceptions and assumptions for its appeal and maintenance over time.

In the next couple of paragraphs, I will highlight some of the reasons I decided to concentrate on these genres of public discourse.

1.3.3.1 Egyptian oral culture: films, patriotic songs, poetry

One of the main media genres analyzed in this book is the performance genre, including comedy movies, television shows, and popular music. This is because linguistically in the performance genre, speech, whether bilingual or monolingual, is subject to planning and editing (Androustopoulos 2007: 212). In these genres, construction of identity is intentional and premeditated. Linguistic resources, including code-choice and code-switching, are built not just on linguistic realities, but on ideologies and attitudes.

Egyptian nationalism during the beginning of the twentieth century
was, to a great extent, a product of oral media (see Fahmy 2011). Egyptian oral culture has always played a pivotal role in the formation of Egyptian identity in general. It is a normal part of children’s learning processes in Egypt to memorize quotes from movies, slogans from patriotic songs, or excerpts of religious texts. Oral culture in the Arab world, whether in the modern or pre-Islamic world, has always been a powerful tool of communication. Poetry in the Arab world (again, whether in the standard language or the colloquial) was powerful enough that it could lead its poet to either death or perpetual fame (Holes 2011). Egypt is no exception (see Abu-Lughod 2002; Armbrust 1996). In Egypt, not just poetry, but films, songs, and other forms of oral media have always, for Egyptians, formed the crux of self-perception (Fahmy 2011). Oral media has the task of positioning the Egyptian within Egypt, on the one hand, and within the wider context of the world, on the other. As far as I know, there has not been a linguistic study on the effect of oral media on the Egyptian perception of self so far. This book attempts to fill this void.

To give but an example, Egyptian cinema started producing films with unique Egyptian traits and themes as early as 1917 (Shafik 2007). In 1939, Egyptians produced twelve films, while in 1986 Egyptians produced ninety-two films. Egyptian films have helped spread ECA throughout the Arab world as a semi-standard variety, understood by a vast number of Arabs. Film production, although a commercial endeavor, was also a powerful cultural tool that helped mold Egyptian ideologies and perceptions (see Gordon 2002; Armbrust 1996).

Patriotic songs are part of the performance genre of media (see Androutsopoulos 2007 (above)); as such, they have always formed an important role in emphasizing a strong sense of Egyptianness. There is usually a clear pattern of usage of sociolinguistic variables in patriotic songs. What is also interesting in Egyptian patriotic songs is that a great number of them are rendered in ECA. A number of recent Egyptian patriotic songs rendered in ECA are performed by non-Egyptians: ʔumm id-dunya: (“The mother of the world”) is performed by Latīfah, a Tunisian female singer; ʕazi:ma ya: maṣr (“Egypt, you are great”) is performed by Wadīʿ al-Ṣāfî, a Lebanese male singer; and, finally, ana: maṣrī: (“I am Egyptian”) is performed by Nānsī ʿAjrām, another female Lebanese singer. What also makes patriotic songs significant for a study of language and identity is the fact that within the two main patriotic songs that place Egypt in an Arab context and in which the Arab world is called upon by singers from all over the Arab world, ECA is dominant (I refer here to al-waṭan il-akbar (“My greater homeland”) and il-hilm il-ṣarabi: (“The Arab dream”)). During the Egyptian Revolution—which was a relatively peaceful one—songs were used as a weapon to inspire individuals to revolt, but also to send a challenge to the pro-Mubarak group. The
Palestinian singer Reem Kelani has a unique perspective on the tumultuous events in Egypt in early 2011—while in Cairo to research the music of Sayyid Darwish (1892–1923), she found herself watching history unfold. Caught up in the revolution, she saw Darwish’s music taking on a new and urgent topicality, alongside the creations of contemporary songwriters […] Reem recorded protestors raising their voices against Mubarak, by singing Darwish’s songs—not only those dealing with nationalism and social justice: even love songs by Darwish moved protestors during the days of mass protest […] The overwhelming reality was of a host of unknown and unsung singing heroes who led those around them into a musical formulation of pent-up political frustration.

From Kelani’s perspective, songs have many connotations. They were reflecting the frustrations, strength, and identity more generally. As mentioned before, Egypt is not the only Arab country with a strong oral culture. Oral culture is dominant throughout the Arab world. To give an example of studies that examined code-switching in songs, Bentahila and Davies (2002) analyzed Algerian Rai music lyrics. They concluded that when there is switching between Arabic and French in these songs, Arabic was the matrix code. They also argued that the pattern of code-switching in these songs resembles code-mixing in an urban Algerian community. However, Bentahila and Davies did not analyze patriotic songs or Rai music from an identity perspective. This book takes a different approach. To my knowledge, this is the first book that studies patriotic songs and relates them directly to language and identity.

I.3.3.2 Written media: books, newspapers, novels, caricatures

This book will provide examples from newspapers, books, and also novels. While the importance of books and newspaper articles that deal with language and identity may be obvious for this work and has been analyzed before (Suleiman 2003; Bassiouney 2009), novels that deal with issues of identity have not been analyzed before from such a linguistic perspective. I will concentrate in this section on the importance of narration in identity work.

Narration can be an excellent vehicle for constructing, as well as reflecting, identity or at least a facet of it. As Georgakopoulou puts it: “narratives are seen as a privileged mode for self-construction and a unique point of entry into trans-situational features of the self and identity as those emerge in a person’s ongoing life story” (Georgakopoulou
As a “unit of discourse” (cf. Schiffrin 1984), narratives can yield surprising insights into the way that individuals perceive themselves in relation to their community and other communities. Stories in general are a mode of defining ourselves and our attitudes and conceptions of reality (cf. Bastos and Oliveira 2006; see also De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Chapter 5 tackles a number of novels that deal directly with the modern Egyptian identity within different facets of its modern history.

Books in which the main theme is Egyptian personality or identity are also relevant. Newspaper articles that relate language to identity are mentioned as well. This genre of data will highlight the salient differences between oral and written discourse in Egypt.

Caricatures and posters are a novel kind of data that are not frequently analyzed; the ones chosen for inclusion in this book, mainly mentioned within Chapter 3, are sourced from online resources. This brings us to the importance of online data.

I.3.3.3 Online media: general importance

While this book does not concentrate only on online media, it must be mentioned in this introduction that online media played a vital role in the Egyptian sense of identity during the January 25 Revolution of 2011. What differentiates online media from other forms of media is the ability to spontaneously interact and express opinions. As Greg Myers contends: “online media users produce as well as consume the content” (2010: 264).

Blogs fit this category perfectly, since, as Greg Myers argues, anyone with access to the internet can read a blog, write a blog, and post comments on a blog [see Fairclough 2000; Wright 2004]. The Egyptian Revolution has been called a media revolution first and foremost; blogs, Facebook pages, and internet access were one of the main components of its success. The joke goes that when two drunkards were sitting together on the floor in Cairo, one suddenly asked the other: “What is Facebook?” The other replied: “It is something they use to get rid of presidents with.”

The impact of online media is underscored in this joke and the danger that wide access to this form of communication poses on autocratic political regimes is even more apparent. In fact, Mills posits that much of our understanding of “democratic processes” is dependent on the concept of “public or publics”:

Public communications are so organized that there is a chance immediately and effectively to answer back any opinion expressed in public. Opinion formed by such discussion readily finds an outlet in effective action, even against—if necessary—the prevailing system of authority. And authoritative institutions do not penetrate the public, which is more or less autonomous in its operations. [Mills 1956: 303–4]
I.4 Chapter outline

In addition to the introduction, this work has six chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 provides the necessary theoretical background and also sets the framework of data analysis. The term “identity,” especially Egyptian identity in relation to public discourse, will be defined and explained. The chapter will then outline the adopted approach, which perceives language as both a social process and social practice (Heller 2007). This approach will then be expanded and developed to encompass theoretical methods of analyzing discourse that include positioning theory, stance, and indexicality. In order to provide a systematic mode of analysis, I will rely on what I term “linguistic resources.” These resources are then divided into structural resources and discourse resources. These resources will be explained and exemplified. Code-switching and code-choice, as linguistic resources, are discussed in relation to orders of indexicality. The chapter will argue that language, for the purpose of this work, is considered both as a social variable and a resource.

Chapter 2 provides the necessary background on the formation of the modern Egyptian identity during the twentieth century. The relationship between language and identity will also be highlighted throughout. Crucial concepts that directly influence the associations of different codes will also be discussed, including nationalism, language policy, language ideology, and language attitudes. Poetry and songs will be referenced.

Chapter 3 attempts to analyze and discuss associations or indexes of codes in relation to language ideology and language attitude in Egypt, with reference to concrete examples from public discourse, including talk shows, films, newspaper articles, and books. Rather than depend on attitude surveys that are, at times, methodologically flawed and non-exhaustive, I depend on examples from public discourse, such as the attitude towards Arabic teachers in Egyptian films. These data will help explain what I refer to as “direct” and “indirect” indexes, as well as the process of indexical layering that takes place during “talk about language.” Although this is not an attempt to replace attitude surveys, it is an attempt to offer a perhaps more subtle and fresh look at orders of indexicality and diglossia. This new look at language as referenced in oral and written discourse in Egypt aims to provide a more thorough understanding of language indexes in Egyptian public discourse. As with other chapters, language will be regarded as “fundamentally a social phenomenon” (Heller 2007), as part of a wider frame of historical, political, and social events, and essentially related to a process of perpetual patterning of ideologies, both linguistic and otherwise.

Chapter 4 discusses the social independent variables used in Egyptian public discourse to demarcate a cohesive and unique “Egyptian identity.”
Linguistic resources outlined in Chapter 1 will be used to analyze data in this chapter, as well as in the next two chapters. Data used in this classification process includes mainly patriotic songs, but also films, textbooks, blogs, online newspaper articles, as well as print newspaper articles. In this chapter, language will also be discussed as an independent social variable—a classification category. Variables analyzed include ethnicity, historicity, locality, character traits, religion, the notion of “Arabness,” and language. It will be argued in this chapter that, as a consequence of the employment of these linguistic resources in public discourse, especially patriotic songs, Egyptians are depicted as forming a large, coherent community.

Chapter 5 continues the discussion of social variables that elucidate Egyptian identity. However, this chapter will depend on a different kind of data: novels. There are four novels analyzed in detail: Qindil Umm Ḥāshim ("The saint’s lamp") (1944), al-Ḥubb fi al-manfā ("Love in exile") (1995), Awrāq al-narjis ("The leaves of Narcissus") (2001), and Kitāb al-rin ("The book of rinn") (2008).

The chapter will show how authors employ linguistic resources to highlight social variables attributed to Egyptian identity. These social variables include historicity, ethnicity, religion, and locality. The chapter will then focus on language as a social variable and highlight discussions of language ideologies in novels. However, the main contributions of this chapter are in showing how authors use code-choice and code-switching in dialogue within novels to both appeal to ideologies and reflect identity. The concept of orders of indexicality will be used to explain the use of code-switching in dialogue in novels.

Chapter 6 revolves around one theme: the contestation of identity before, during, and after the January 25 Revolution of 2011. As the last chapter in this book, it will act as a bridge, bringing together the layers and structures of the intricate relationship between identity and language, relating the micro and macro levels of analysis, the indexes and resources. Language as a classification category will be discussed both before and after the Revolution, and language as a resource will also be analyzed. Data in this chapter includes newspaper articles, television programs, films, and poetry. The concepts of access and resources, as well as the concept of linguistic unrest will be explained and exemplified. This acts as a concluding chapter, followed directly by the general conclusion, laying the foundation for future research and answering questions asked at the beginning of this book, as well as posing future ones.

The book will end with a general conclusion that roughly recaps all discussions and issues mentioned throughout, enunciating the contributions of this work and the framework proposed. Access to resources as a framework straddles many of the theories discussed.
I.5 Contributions of this book

This book will fill a gap in the field. To my knowledge, this is the first book that relates Egyptian identity to language. It draws upon new kinds of data and utilizes recent sociolinguistic theories to explain this data and relate it to a wider perception of a collective identity. It is also, to my knowledge, the first book that draws on such a varied range of public discourse. It deals with a crucial diglossic community that has undergone political, economic, historical, and anthropological changes during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

While situating identity in time and space is not a new phenomenon (cf. Herman 2010), analyzing how this is done linguistically within media, such as blogs, films, and patriotic songs, is indeed new. The book will further our understanding of the interaction between identity and language in general and will explain the enormous role played by the media in highlighting specific aspects of identity and undermining others at different times and in different circumstances. The book aims to become a model for other studies in other parts of the Arab world and the world at large. Each collective identity is unique in its own way and each nation has its way of foregrounding its uniqueness. It is almost impossible for an outsider to realize and understand this subtle yet obvious relationship between language and identity within a specific community. This book attempts to do so.

There is an urgent need for studies that relate identity to language and offer a more comprehensive and eclectic view of the relationship between language as a symbol, impregnated with ideological indexes, and the formation of a nation and or a nation-state, which feeds into identity construction. Suleiman (2011: 39) expresses this need when he posits that:

Having read widely around the topic of the rise and progress of Arab nationalism, I was struck by how many times scholars have pointed to the importance of the Arabic language in nation building; but I was struck even more by the absence of any sustained study that explains the ways in which Arabic was used in this respect. The same is true of the role of Arabic in articulating political and social conflict in society or of the role of Arabic literature, especially poetry, in the formation of national consciousness.

Suleiman also focuses on the significance of studying the relationship between language and identity, especially in conflicts between different groups (2011: 22).

This study will attempt to do just that: to relate ideology to language and language to identity in a particular nation-state, Egypt. I propose to do this by employing sociolinguistic theories and, in the process, test
these theories, modify them, and develop them. This process will involve a rigorous methodological framework that incorporates different concepts and draws upon linguistic resources in order to make the research watertight, rather than over-interpretive or subjective.

One of the main arguments of this work is that different theories of code-switching, of stance-taking as a process, or of indexicality can be understood and analyzed together within the framework of access and resources. That is, this book offers a different theoretical framework, in which theories related to identity and language can all be incorporated and articulated in a clearer fashion.

The book also offers a novel approach of studying code-switching in which codes are analyzed as resources and individuals have different levels of access to these resources. Individuals in a community may also perceive each other as sharing access to resources or not sharing access to resources. Sharing the associations of codes as resources is also essential for a community. This new perspective can explain cases of diglossic switching as part of code-switching in the data discussed in this work. The concept of orders of indexicality will be employed to provide a clearer framework of the study of diglossia in Egypt and beyond.

From a different perspective, while Arab countries are almost always lumped together, especially by outside media, into one entity called “The Arab World,” this book will show that Arab countries are distinct, not just in a historical and political sense, but more importantly in the way that they perceive themselves in relation to others. As Suleiman posits, “nation-state identities have become entrenched in the Arabic speaking world” [Suleiman 2011: 51]. This is true to a great extent, but also the perception of the Arab nation is called upon by public discourse at different historical stages in Egypt as part of the Arab world, as will be clear in this book.

Note that the book concentrates on Egypt, but offers examples from other parts of the world, particularly the Arab world. The aim of the work is to set the reader thinking about general issues of identity. At the culmination of this book, the reader should compare the situation in Egypt to that of his or her own country—that is, to position his or her identity in a wider context in relation to access to resources, both linguistic and otherwise.

I.6 Readers of this book

This book aims to adopt an interdisciplinary approach in analyzing the relationship between language and identity in Egypt. Although the book resorts to sociolinguistic and anthropological theories, it does so assuming no prior knowledge of the field. That is to say, the book does not
assume prior knowledge of Arabic or linguistics. This will make the book accessible to a wider audience. Having said that, the book still maintains a rigorous theoretical approach to the topics discussed and data analyzed and will provide a modified framework of analysis, in which identity in public discourse is situated in a social–linguistic context. Thus, it will be of interest to sociolinguists specifically.

It should also be of interest to researchers in fields ranging from Arabic studies, linguistics, anthropology, political science, history, psychology, media, and communication.

Because of its focus on the intersection of language and identity, of private and public discourse, it will provide unique material and valuable analysis to the general public with a general interest in issues of identity, language, and culture.

## I.7 Limitations of this work

Public discourse assumes that “we all agree on who we are,” which is, indeed, not true. It assumes unanimity where it does not exist. However, this assumption by public discourse in Egypt is neither unexpected nor exclusive to Egypt. Fridland, when studying African-American speakers, also notices the same phenomenon, not just in public discourse, but also in research about African-Americans. She posits (2003: 6):

> The interpretation of such research, however, often assumes a unanimity among African American communities, which may obscure the fact that there are competing norms within the community which demonstrate different levels of integration and contrast within the larger community.

As Fought (2006: 148) contends, not all members of an ethnic community “behave” in the same way. Thus, it is almost impossible to expect that all members of a whole country like Egypt act in completely similar ways.

The media and public discourse more generally are supposed to provide a clear answer to a complicated question. Media has to fix an entity that is in a perpetual state of flux: identity. A collective public identity in Egypt provides a safety haven; it provides psychological stability for an ever-changing social world and an economically fluctuating state. What kept the country together for a long time may be, as Goldschmidt (2008) puts it, the loyalty to Egypt and Egyptians, rather than to a political system that was perceived by many as corrupt or archaic.

Loyalty to the “country” as such is related to how we define ourselves in relation to this entity that we call the “homeland.” The definition is not always positive, but it is mostly nostalgic and refers to “the Egyptian” past and present.16
Notes

1. Al-Ghīṭānī in his most recent, award-winning novel Kitāb al-rinn—a semi-autobiography—explains how he feels detached from all his surroundings, including his immediate family. It is only with an ancient Egyptian statue that he feels any affinity. He stares at the statue, claiming that he is a close friend and relative, and relating his past to his present and future. This complete identification with a three thousand-year-old statue is of great significance.

2. Notable exceptions are the two studies by Haeri (1997; 2003); the former uses social class as a variable to analyze Egyptian society and the latter is about Egyptians’ attitudes towards SA and ECA. Thus, both are markedly different in focus from the proposed study. Neither study relates language directly to identity. In addition, neither study uses the kind of data used in this book.

3. The Tunisian pop singer Latifah produced a song called “The mother of the world.” Of course, she sang the song in ECA. More recently, the metaphor has been challenged by Arab intellectuals. A Lebanese intellectual called Egypt “the mother of the world and the widow of cities.” This postulation caused anger among Egyptian intellectuals (see ‘Abd al-Salām 2008).


7. The Fatimid Caliph al-Hākim bi-Amr Allāh is said to have threatened to cut off the tongue of Egyptian mothers who spoke to their children in Coptic. The repressive measures taken by this ruler, together with other factors, is said to have caused the quick death of Coptic. See “Coptic Language, Spoken.” In The Coptic Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, ed. by Karen J. Torjesen and Gawdat Gabra: 604a–607a. Claremont, CA: Claremont Graduate University. Online. http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cce/id/520, accessed 6 June 2012. Note that that the author of this particular page writes in SA. As a linguist, one realizes that drastic measures do not have to be resorted to in order for language death to occur. Political and economic power associated with a language is sufficient to facilitate its spread, even if it means the death of other languages.
8. Language planning refers to the efforts to manage, modify, or influence the habitual practice of individuals as part of a community. There are two kinds of language planning: status planning and corpus planning. Status planning refers to the process of selecting a language or variety for use. Corpus planning is the process by which the language or variety selected is codified—that is, choices are made to standardize spelling, grammar, lexicon, and so on.

9. It is important to mention at this stage that native speakers and constitutions in Arab countries do not specify what “Arabic” refers to. However, it usually refers to Modern Standard Arabic. Native speakers also do not make a distinction between Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic. For them, there is only one kind of Standard Arabic, which is called “fusha.”

10. Note that this H and L labelling reflects, first, language attitudes among users and, second, the superposed nature of the H. Likewise, it is worth mentioning that sociolinguists may feel discomfort with these labels, since clear covert prestige attaches so strongly to the L and also since the L has sometimes been the target of attempts in Egypt and Lebanon among others to be considered the national variety. This issue of territorial nationalism as opposed to pan-Arabism will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 4.

11. Fishman (2002) defines diglossia slightly differently from Ferguson. For him, a diglossic situation is one in which roles of both varieties are kept separate; there are clear group boundaries between both languages and varieties. The access to the H variety or language is usually restricted to an outsider. He gives the example of pre-World War I European elites who spoke French or another H language or variety, while the masses spoke a different and not necessarily related language or variety. In his definition, the H variety or language is a spoken standard, while in Arabic it is not the spoken variety of any country.

12. The question of how different the two varieties should be was perhaps not the main issue for Ferguson, who was more interested in the conditions that could give rise to diglossia in the first place.

13. After Ferguson’s 1959 article on diglossia, Blanc (1960), Badawi (1973), and Meiseles (1980) thought proposing intermediate levels between H and L would give a more accurate description of the situation in the Arab world. Thus, they recognized that people shift between H and L, especially when speaking, but often do not shift the whole way, resulting in levels which are neither fully H nor fully L. For a comprehensive critique of these levels, see Bassiouney (2009). Another idea that sprung from Ferguson’s definition of diglossia is that of Educated Spoken Arabic, as developed by Mitchell. Mitchell claims that “vernacular Arabic [meaning dialectal/colloquial Arabic] is never plain or unmixed but constantly subject to the influences of modern times” (Mitchell 1986: 9). According to him, Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) is not a separate variety, but is “created” and “maintained” by
the interaction between the written language and the vernacular. For a more detailed critique of this idea, see Bassiouney (2009).


15. Another joke that emerged during Mubarak’s trial in September 2011 is the following:
   Judge: What do you say to the witnesses’ testimony?
   Mubarak: I have no comment.
   Judge: Not even a “like”?

16. Independent variables, such as gender, social class, and even age will not be discussed in detail in this work, since the work aims to examine the identity of “Egyptians”—a loose and yet inclusive term. There are a number of studies that concentrate on some of these variables; Haeri’s (1996) study is a case in point.
Zūzū: “What would you say to someone who does not answer a question?”
Professor: “If it is a question with no answer, then there is no problem if you refuse to answer it.”
Zūzū: “Well, why didn’t you answer my question?”
Professor: “Because it is the most difficult question in the world. ‘Who are you?’ Do you actually know how to answer it yourself? And by the way, why do you ask me this question Miss Zūzū?”
Zūzū: “Because this is the main issue here. If someone comes to speak to me, I need to know who he is first in order to know why he said what he said. Once I know who you are, I will also know what you want.”
Professor: “I just noticed that your Arabic pronunciation is very good.”

(Khallī bālak min Zūzū, “Take care of Zūzū,”
Dir. Hasan al-Imām, released in Egypt in 1972)

Zūzū is a young Egyptian female student who comes across as intelligent, ambitious, bold, and yet tormented by her shameful family background. Her mother is an old belly-dancer who lives in a lower-class Cairene alley. While forging a different identity for herself, she is also conflicted throughout between allegiance to her old one and struggling to maintain a respectful new one. The moment she lays eyes upon the professor who will be directing a play at her university, she is swept off her feet. In a discussion session in which students write questions for the professor to answer, she writes down the apparently simple question “man anta!” (“Who are you?”) The professor refrains from answering. She follows him to his car and engages him in the conversation quoted above.

A simple love story for some, this film was released at a critical time in Egyptian history. Behind what seems like a romantic veneer, there are