

Main Dialect Points—الجمعة روتين مريم يوم

Here are some items you will hear in this video that vary between dialects. Remember, at this point in your Arabic career, you are just working to understand and predict variation—you don't need to be able to say these phrases in every dialect

The letter ق

This letter has three common variants in Arabic that you should get used to hearing: q (like k but farther back in your throat), ʔ (glottal stop), and g (like the g in get). This is an approximate geographic distribution, but there is significant variation.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
q	q/g	ʔ	ʔ/g	g

The letter ج

This letter has four common variants in Arabic that you should get used to hearing: dʒ (like the j in judge), ʒ (like the z in azure), g (like the g in get), and y (like the y in yellow). This is an approximate geographic distribution, but there is significant variation.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
dʒ	ʒ	g	dʒ	ʒ/y

The letter ذ

This (along with other interdental sounds you make putting your tongue between your teeth such as ظ and ث) tends to become an alveolar sound (hitting the alveolar ridge behind your teeth), either d or z. This is an approximate geographic distribution, but there is significant variation.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
ð	d	z	z	z/ð

The letter ث

This (along with other interdental sounds you make putting your tongue between your teeth such as ذ and ظ) tends to become an alveolar sound (hitting the alveolar ridge behind your teeth), either t or s. This is an approximate geographic distribution, but there is significant variation.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
θ	t	s/t	s/t	s/θ

The letter ظ

This (along with other interdental sounds you make putting your tongue between your teeth such as ذ and ث) tends to become a pharyngealized alveolar sound (hitting the alveolar ridge behind your teeth), either dʕ or zʕ. This is an approximate geographic distribution, but there is significant variation.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
ðʕ	dʕ	zʕ	zʕ	zʕ/ðʕ

Hamza

The glottal stop is dropped in most dialects (or represents the sound of ق). So, الصحراء in MSA becomes الصحرا in many dialects.

After that

The phrase for “after that” can mark whether a speaker is using dialect or MSA.

MSA	Multiple Dialects
بعد ذلك	بعدين

Eat Breakfast

The word for “eat breakfast” is also a common dialect marker.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf	Iraqi
يَفْطُر	يُفْطِر	يَفْطَر	يَفْطِر	يَتَرِيق	يَتَرِيق

Half

The word for a half is نِصْف in MSA, but most dialects use the word نُصّ instead.

Go

The word for “to go” is also a common dialect marker, mostly showing a difference between MSA and dialects.

MSA	Multiple Dialects	Levantine
أَذْهَبَ	أَرُوح	أَفُوت

Go to sleep

The word for “lie down/sleep” is also a common dialect marker. Here are some common variants.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf	Yemeni
يَنَام	يَنْعَس	يَنَام	يَنَام	يَنَام	يَرْقُدُ

Wake Up

The word for “wake up” is also a common dialect marker.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf	Yemeni	Iraqi
يَسْتَقِظُ	يَقِيقُ	يِصْحَى	يِصْحَى	يَقْعَدُ	يِصْحَى	يَقْعَدُ

With

The word for “with” is also a common dialect marker.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf	Iraqi
مَعَ	مَعَ	مَعَ	مَعَ	وَيَّا	ويا

Progressive Markers on the present tense verb

In many Arabic dialects, a prefix is added to the present tense verb that gives a progressive (ongoing) meaning. The key thing is to listen for the verb itself, rather than being thrown off by different consonants at the beginning.

English	MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf	Iraqi
You like/love	تُحِبُّ	كْتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ عَم بِتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ	دِتَحِبُّ

Future Tense Marker

In both MSA and Arabic dialects, a word or letter is added to the present tense verb that gives a future meaning.

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
سوف س	غادي	ح ه	راح رح	راح رح

سوف أطبخ سأطبخ	غادي نطيطو	حنطبخ هنطبخ	راح نطبخ	راح نطبخ
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