

مسافرون ١—Main Dialect Points

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

Bridge

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

MSA	Moroccan	Egyptian	Levantine	Gulf
جِسْر	قَنْطَرَة	كُبري	جِسْر	جِسْر

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	كتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ عَم بِتَحِبُّ	بِتَحِبُّ	دِتَحِبُّ