

Looking for
“Using Interpreters During
Assessment – Part 2”?
The companion article to
“Using Interpreters During
Assessment – Part 1”
(February 2012
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will appear in a future
issue. Stay tuned!

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

By: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Task Force Members

The Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) Corner was created in an effort to provide information and respond to questions on cultural and linguistic diversity. Members of the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (TSHA) Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Task Force answer questions. Members for the 2011-2012 year include **Ellen Stubbe Kester**, PhD, CCC-SLP (co-chair); **Margarita Limon-Ordonez**, MS, CCC-SLP (co-chair); **M. Ruth Fernandez**, PhD, CCC-SLP; **Rachel Aghara**, PhD, CCC-SLP; **Lisa Carver**, MA, CCC-SLP; **Tracey Gray**, MA, CCC-SLP; **Scott Prath**, MA, CCC-SLP; **Ivan Mejia**, MA, CCC-SLP; and **Sarah Panjwani**, BA. Submit your questions to ellen.kester@bilinguistics.com. Look for responses from the CLD Task Force on TSHA’s website (www.txsha.org) and in the *Communicologist*.

THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY (CLD) TASK FORCE IS LOOKING FOR A NEW STUDENT MEMBER WHO IS A FIRST- OR SECOND-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT. FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT ELLEN KESTER AT ELLEN.KESTER@BILINGUISTICS.COM.

The Arabic Language

Arabic is a Semitic language. According to Kaye (2008), Semitic languages fall within the Afro-Asiatic family and are dissimilar to Indo-European languages, which include the Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch), Indo-Aryan languages (Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi), and Iranian languages (Persian, Pashto).

Classical Arabic, fous-ha, is the original version of Arabic and used mainly in the Quran and in highly formal situations. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is highly similar to classical Arabic, but it has evolved and has incorporated some contemporary words. It is the primary language used in schools, universities, and formal writing. Children are most often not introduced to MSA until they enter schools. Colloquial Arabic is the common language spoken in the streets and homes and has many dialects that vary by region (Kaye, 2008). The dialects differ so significantly that speakers of different dialects are often unable to understand each other. Persons who speak dialects from regions that are close by (such as Syria and Lebanon or the Gulf region) have an easier time understanding each other, and these differences may be equated to the differences between British English and American English. Some consonants are consistent among the dialects; others can have several acceptable forms, which can be problematic for the monolingual

speech-language pathologist (SLP) assessing an individual.

Arabic is an example of a diglossic language. Diglossia occurs when different variants of a language co-occur in a community. MSA and colloquial Arabic have different social functions, but both are standardized to a degree. MSA is the more formal of the two and has a higher social prestige (Ling, 2003). When providing assessment and intervention services to a young child, the clinician should be sure to find out if the child has been exposed to MSA in addition to his colloquial dialect. Since grammar and vocabulary can vary significantly between dialects, the clinician must take into account the individual's dialect when assessing. This article will serve to highlight the major aspects of Arabic that most dialects share.

Phonology

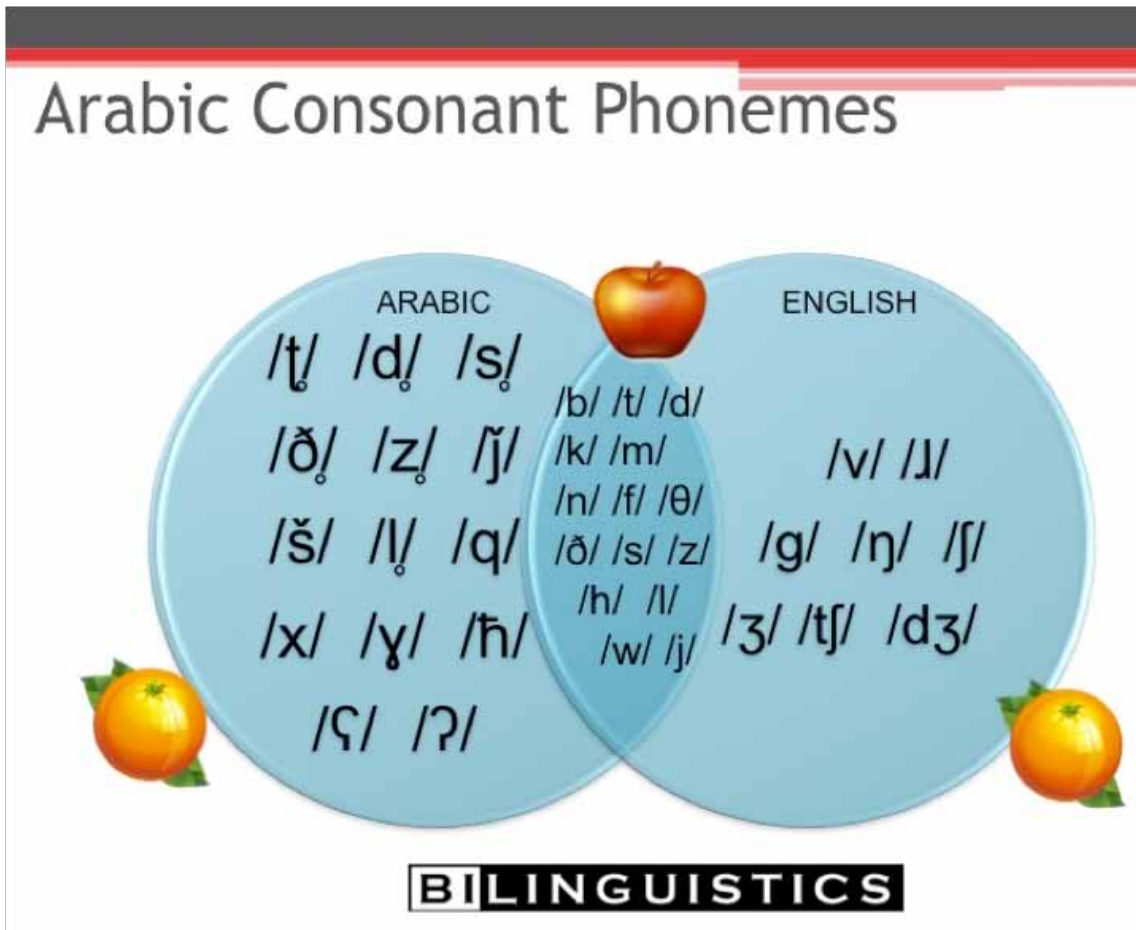
The following chart shows the consonant inventory of Modern Standard Arabic (Kaye, 2008) as compared to the consonant phonemes of English. Every consonant in Arabic may be geminated, produced for an audibly longer period of time (Kaye, 2008). Some dialects of Arabic can have an additional stop, affricate, and/or three additional fricatives. Places of articulation that differ from the

English language include uvular and pharyngeal placements (Amaryeh, 2003). One of the unique features of Arabic phonetics is the emphatic consonants. All emphatic consonants, except the /q/, have a nonemphatic cognate. The emphatic consonants are produced with a secondary articulation in which the root of the tongue is retracted into the pharynx. The /t/, /χ/, and /ʁ/ are emphatic only in certain phonetic environments, while /d/, /t/, /s/, /D/, and /q/ can be emphatic in any phonetic environment. Another consonant, /z/, is also emphatic in certain dialects and in certain words (Amaryeh, 2003). Vowels around emphatic consonants are usually lower and retracted or centralized as compared to vowels around nonemphatic consonants (Kaye, 2008). Specifically, when produced next to a front vowel, emphatic consonants cause the front vowel to be further back in the mouth (Amaryeh, 2003).

Classical Arabic does not have a /p/; however, some modern dialects of Arabic do devoice the /b/ when it is in front of a voiceless

consonant. For example, [habs] becomes [haps] (imprisonment). Other modern dialects (e.g., Iraq) have a /p/ and an emphatic /p/. Thus, Arabic speakers may often produce the /p/ as a /b/ when speaking English. Similarly, classical Arabic does not have a /v/; however, the /v/ may occur in modern dialects (Kaye, 2008).

The Arabic phonetic inventory includes three vowels, /a/, /i/, and /u/, which may be produced as short or long vowels. In addition, Arabic has two diphthongs “aw” (/θwr/ [bull]) and “ay” (/bayt/ [house])

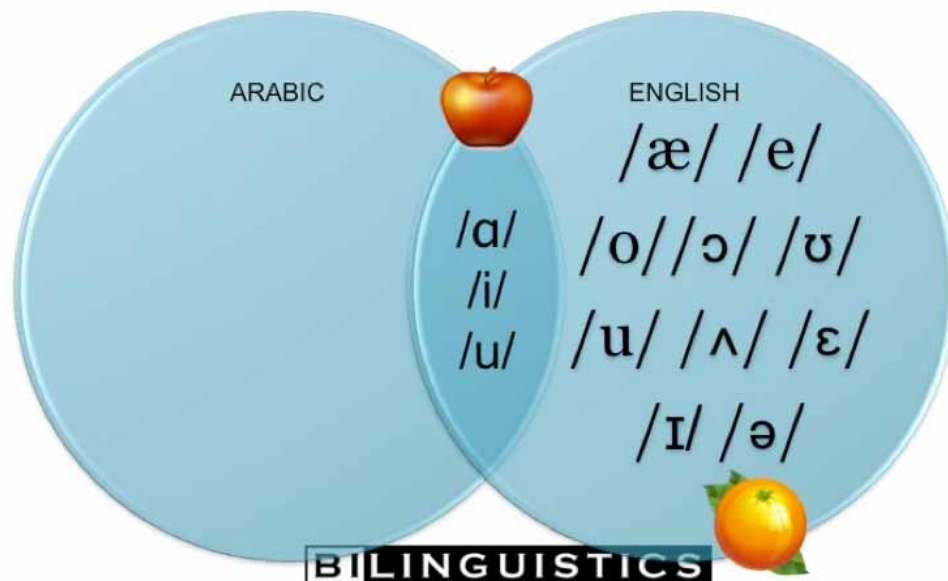


(Kaye, 2008). Some Arabic dialects have developed other vowels such as /ə/, /e/, and /o/. Arabic vowels have a larger number of allophonic variations than Arabic consonants because they can take on coloring from adjacent emphatic consonants or be produced higher and less centralized due to nonemphatic consonants (Kaye, 2008).

Amaryeh and Dyson (1998) studied the acquisition of Jordanian Arabic consonants in 180 normally developing children from 2 to 6.4 years of age. The following table is a simplification of the information presented in Amaryeh and Dyson (1998). It presents the ages of acquisition for sounds common to Arabic and English at 75% mastery in all word positions. When using this chart in a clinical setting, it is important to remember that the study was conducted on monolingual speakers of Arabic and English.

Dyson and Amaryeh (2000) studied the phonology of 50 children who speak Jordanian Arabic. They found that children speaking Arabic demonstrate the same errors with fricatives, stopping, and

Arabic Vowel Phonemes



a suffix to the noun without making changes in the body of the word. Additionally, there are six different classes of irregular plurals that require changes within the word (Ling, 2003).

Verbs

The semantic system of Arabic is quite different from any of the Indo-European languages. The imperfect and perfect tenses in Arabic can refer to the past, present, or future. Most Arabic verbs can be static or dynamic. In contrast, English often uses different verbs to reflect time (Kaye, 2008). Changes in the tense of the word can be made with vocalic changes or changes within the word (Ling, 2003).

stridency deletion as children speaking English. Fronting of back consonants is also a common error between speakers of English and Arabic. An error pattern not common in English is the lateralization of /r/. Although children who speak English most often glide the /r/, lateralization of the /r/ does occur occasionally in English. Dyson and Amaryeh (2000) found that most Arabic-speaking children who produce the /r/ incorrectly are highly likely to lateralize instead of glide.

Morphology

There are approximately 10 verbal forms in Arabic. Each form has its own set of active and passive participles and verbal nouns. In addition, there is an internal passive for each of the verb forms, and it is formed by a vocalic change from the corresponding active. Person, mood, and aspect are marked by using prefixes and suffixes (Kaye, 2008). In Arabic, the plural can also be expressed by adding

Syntax

Since English is a much more analytical language than Arabic, many more words are required to express an idea in English than in Arabic. For example, three words are required in English to say, "He is sad," whereas in Arabic, one would say, "Hazina." The basic word order in classical Arabic is verb-subject-object, which is

Order of Acquisition of Consonant Phonemes Common to English and Arabic

	BY 3;6	BY 3;6	BY 4;0	BY 5;0	BY 6;0	BY 7;0
ARABIC	t, k, f, m, n, w	b, d	l		S, ʃ, h, r	θ, ð, z, dʒ, j
ENGLISH	w, t, d, k, m, h, n, w	f, j		s, ʃ, h, dʒ	θ, ð, z, l, ʃ	

Information adapted from Amaryeh & Dyson (1998)

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different from the English word order subject-verb-object (Kaye, 2008). The English “Mohammad went to school,” would be expressed as, “He went Mohammad to the school,” (?inna muhammadan dahaba ?ila l-madrasati) in Arabic (Kaye, 2008). In Arabic, adjectives follow the subject, while in English, the adjectives precede the subject. For example, the English “the sweet girl” would be “the girl sweet” in Arabic. The basic word order in many colloquial Arabic dialects is subject-verb-object as in English (Kaye, 2008). Familiarity with word order in Arabic will assist the SLP to rule out a syntax error during assessment, as speakers of Arabic who are learning English often use the verb-subject-object word order.

The nominal sentence, also referred to as the equational sentence

or zero copula, is one of the most common sentence structures in Arabic. The nominal sentence has two parts. The first part is the topic or subject, and the second part is the comment or predicate. The subject is usually a noun or pronoun, and the predicate can be nominal, pronominal, adjectival, adverbial, or prepositional phrase. For example, the English “The university library is a beautiful building” would be “Library the university building beautiful” in Arabic (Kaye, 2008).

When comparing the sound systems and the linguistic structures of English and Arabic, there are a number of differences. When assessing and setting goals for the bilingual speaker of Arabic and English, any errors that are consistent with the differences between the two languages should be considered a result of second-language influence. ★

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May is Better Hearing and Speech Month



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The Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (TSHA) would like to remind you that May is Better Hearing and Speech Month. There are 42 million Americans with speech, voice, language, swallowing, and/or hearing impairments.

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month!

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM), which provides an opportunity for you to raise public awareness of hearing, speech, and language disorders that affect people across the country.

Use this opportunity to promote the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology and the life-changing impact our services make in the lives of the students, clients, and patients that we serve who experience difficulties with speaking, understanding, swallowing, or hearing.