



Arabic for Dummies





Nada Shaath

Bell High School

Bell, California

2007- 2008



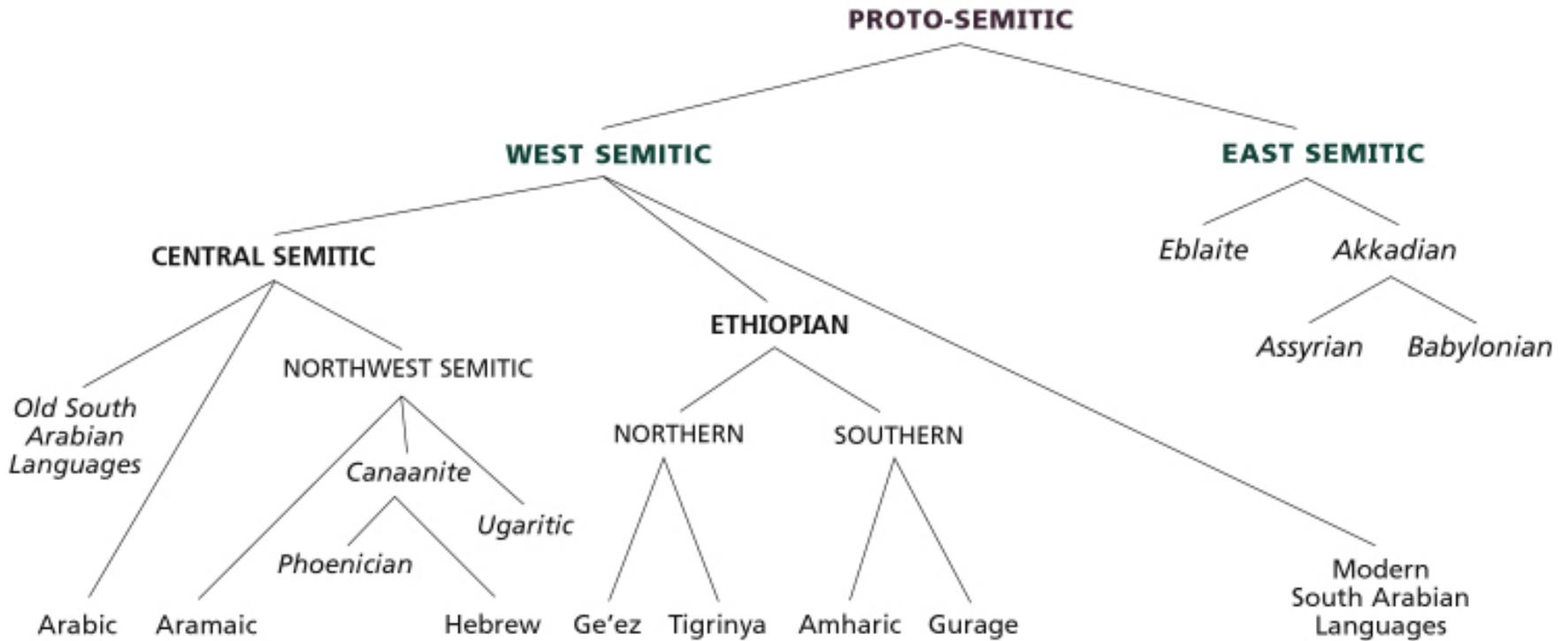
What is the Arabic Language?



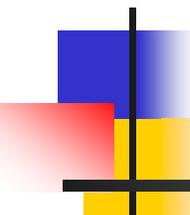
- An alphabetical Language with 28 letters
- Has its own alphabetical characters
- Of Semitic origin (root)
- Spoken by about 186 million people in 28 countries
- Considered a very difficult language due to its vast vocabulary and special grammatical characteristics
- Can be classified into 3 forms:
 - Classical Arabic
 - Modern Standard Arabic
 - Local dialects



The root of Arabic



السلام عليكم Greetings (Peace be upon you)



Arabic alphabet





Arabic alphabet



IPA	Latin	Name	Final	Medial	Initial	Isolated	IPA	Latin	Name	Final	Medial	Initial	Isolated
[ʔ]	ʔ	tāʾ	طاء	ط	ط	ط	[ʔ]	ʔ(a)	'alif ألف	ا	—	—	ا
[z]	z	zāʾ	ظاء	ظ	ظ	ظ	[b]	b	bāʾ باء	ب	ب	ب	ب
[ʕ]	ʕ	'ayn	عين	ع	ع	ع	[t]	t	tāʾ تاء	ت	ت	ت	ت
[ɣ]	ɣ	ḡayn	غين	غ	غ	غ	[θ]	t̪	tāʾ ثاء	ث	ث	ث	ث
[f]	f	fāʾ	فاء	ف	ف	ف	[dʒ]	ɟ	ḡīm جيم	ج	ج	ج	ج
[q]	q	qāf	قاف	ق	ق	ق	[ħ]	ħ	ḡāʾ حاء	ح	ح	ح	ح
[k]	k	kāf	كاف	ك	ك	ك	[χ]	ħ	ḡāʾ خاء	خ	خ	خ	خ
[l]	l	lām	لام	ل	ل	ل	[d]	d	dāl دال	د	—	—	د
[m]	m	mīm	ميم	م	م	م	[ð]	d̪	dāl ذال	ذ	—	—	ذ
[n]	n	nūn	نون	ن	ن	ن	[r]	r	rāʾ راء	ر	—	—	ر
[h]	h	ḡāʾ	هاء	ه	ه	ه	[z]	z	zāy زاي	ز	—	—	ز
[w]	w	wāw	واو	و	—	و	[s]	s	sīn سين	س	س	س	س
[j]	y	yāʾ	ياء	ي	ي	ي	[ʃ]	ʃ	šīn شين	ش	ش	ش	ش
		hamza	همزة	ء	—	—	[s]	ʂ	ṣād صاد	ص	ص	ص	ص
							[d]	d̪	dād ضاد	ض	ض	ض	ض



Arabic alphabet: History



- The Arabic alphabet was used to write the Nabataean dialect of Aramaic,
- The first known text in the Arabic alphabet is a late fourth-century inscription from Jabal Ramm (50 km east of Aqaba), but the first dated one is a trilingual inscription at Zebed in Syria from 512.
- The epigraphic record is extremely sparse, with only five certainly pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions surviving, though some others may be pre-Islamic.



Arabic alphabet: Structure



- 28 basic letters and
- Is written from right to left.
- There is no difference between written and printed letters
- The writing is unicast (i.e. the concept of upper and lower case letters does not exist).
- Most of the letters are attached to one another.
- The Arabic alphabet is an impure abjad



“Dots” in the Arabic alphabet



- Arabs relied on their extensive knowledge of their language to distinguish one letter from another having the same shape.
- Later “Dots” were added above and below the letters to differentiate them
- The first surviving document that definitely uses these dots is also the first surviving Arabic papyrus, dated April 643.



Diacritics in the Arabic alphabet



- Short vowel and hamzas were added, beginning sometime in the last half of the sixth century,
- Initially, this was done by a system of red dots, said to have been commissioned by an Umayyad governor of Iraq, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf: a dot above = a, a dot below = i, a dot on the line = u, and doubled dots gave tanwin. However, this was cumbersome and easily confusable with the letter-distinguishing dots, so about 100 years later, the modern system was adopted. The system was finalized around 786 by al-Farahidi.



Arabic short vowels



- The Arabic language graphically has only three short vowels.
- These vowels aren't written in the body of the word, but they are added above or under the consonant to which they refer.
- In general, Arabic is written without short vowels.
- The "fat70:" and the "kasr0:" are represented by a dash put respectively above and under the consonant they are associated with. The "Damm0:" instead it is like a small "wAw" (see the alphabet table) and it is written above its consonant
- When the target languages of the transliteration are European in origin (Germanic or Arabic, the short vowels are "a," "i," and "u." verses Long vowels ("aah," "ee," "oo")
- Arabic Short vowels need not be added during vowelization.
Transliteration and Roman name generation



Vowels in the Arabic alphabet



- Vowels in Arabic can be short or long (, i.e., held for a longer time)
- The Arabic alphabet does not represent the short vowels at all, and has symbols for only the three vowels, [aa], [ii], and [uu]:

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Sound</i>	<i>Description</i>
-	[a]	varies from the [a] in English <i>cat</i> to the [a] in <i>car</i>
ا	[aa]	the long variety of [a]
-	[i]	the same sound as in English <i>bit</i>
ي	[ii]	long [i], the same sound as in English <i>beet</i>
-	[u]	the same sound as in English [put]
و	[uu]	long [u], the same sound as in English <i>boot</i>
-	[oo]	a long vowel (the short counterpart is rare), the same sound as in English <i>bone</i> or <i>boat</i>
-	[ee]	a long vowel (no short!), the same sound as in English <i>bait</i> or <i>day</i>



Consonants in the Arabic alphabet



- Arabic has some "back" and "heavy" consonants
- **"Heavy" consonants are:**

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Sound</i>	<i>Description</i>
ص	[S]	like [s], but with tongue raised at the back
ض	[D]	like [d], but with tongue raised at the back
ط	[T]	like [t], but with tongue raised at the back
ظ	[TH]	like the [th] in <i>this</i> , but with tongue raised at the back



Consonants in the Arabic alphabet

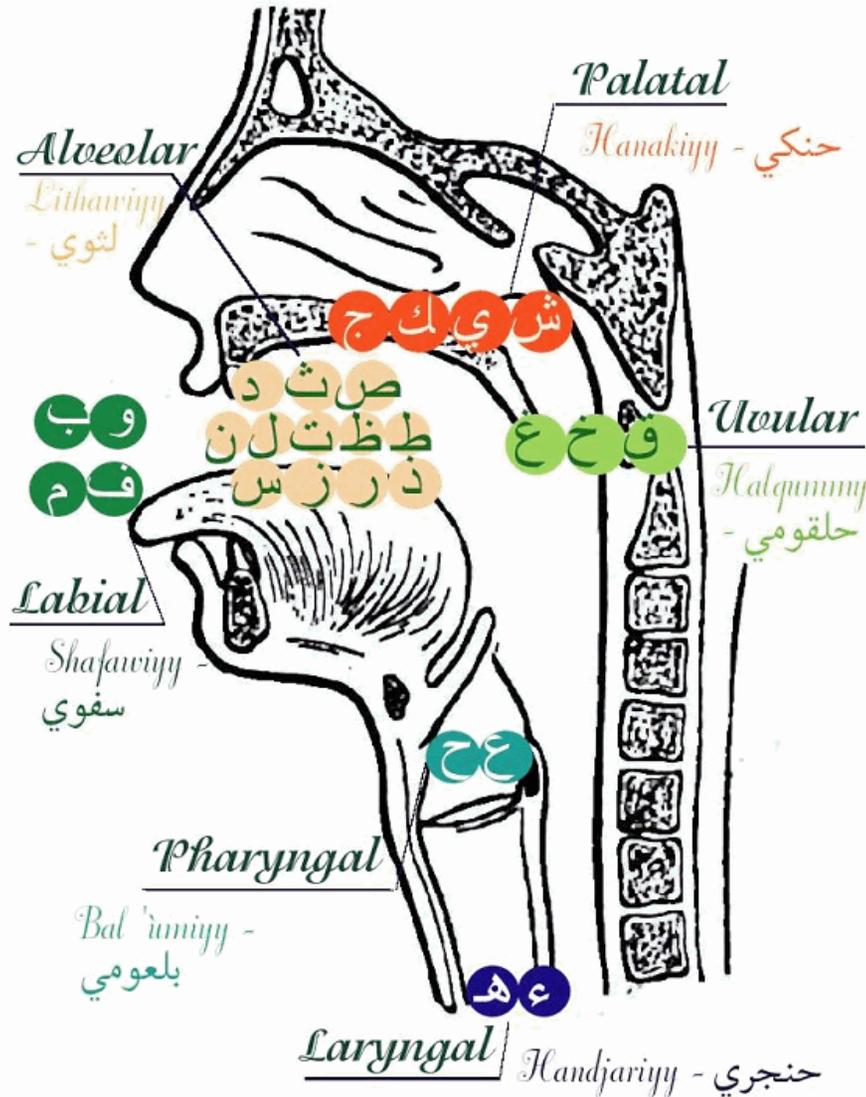


■ "Back" consonants:

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Sound</i>	<i>Description</i>
خ	[kh]	a scrape made with the back of the tongue and the soft palate; same sound as in German <i>Bach</i> or Scottish <i>loch</i>
غ	[gh]	like [Kh] but with the vocal cords vibrating; much like a French <i>r</i>
ق	[q]	like [k], but pronounced at the very back of the mouth; in Iraq, it is often pronounced like [g] as in <i>go</i> .
ح	[H]	a harsh [h], pronounced by constricting the throat
ع	[']	no close equivalent in English; pronounced in the pharynx like [H], but with voicing; sounds like strangling!



Alphabet Pronunciation



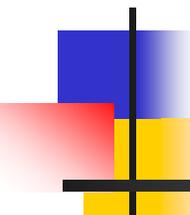
examples of points of articulation



Non Arabic Languages that use Arabic Alphabet



- Hausa 39 million
- Kashmiri, 4.5 million
- Kazak 8 million people
- Kurdish
- Kyrghyz,. 1.5 million speakers
- Malay 18 million
- Morisco: No longer used
- Pashto19 million
- Persian/Farsi
- Sindhi 9 million speakers
- Tatar 9 million speakers
- Turkish 70 million speakers (now it's using Latin alphabet)
- Uyghur 7.6 million
- Urdu 104 million speakers



Grammar



The basic grammar of the spoken language differs considerably from English.



Word Structure: Tri-literal Root System



- Words has one root that is the three letter past tense of the verb.
- The three-letter root system is best described by an example:
The three letters k-t-b, for example, carry the basic meaning "write."
Various combinations of the letters—always, however, in the k-t-b order—with vowels and other consonants produce words that are variants on the basic meaning "write." For example:

'book'	[kitaab]	كتاب	'desk', 'office'	[maktab]	مكتب
'books'	[kutub]	كتب	'scribe', 'writer'	[kaatib]	كاتب
'he wrote'	[kataba]	كتب	'written'	[maktuub]	مكتوب

- (Most educated Arabs can readily list many words from one root.)



Word Structure: The Arabic Article



- The definite article [al - the Arabic word for "the."] It is prefixed to the following word, and, depending on what consonant that word starts with, the [l] may be dropped and the first consonant doubled.
- Many English words that have been borrowed from Arabic still have the definite article attached—for example, *alkali*, *alcohol*, *alchemy*, *algorithm*, *algebra*, and *almanac*.
- Many Arabic masculine names also include the definite article.



Word Structure: Nouns and Adjectives



- All Arabic nouns (including those which denote inanimate objects) are masculine or feminine, with the feminine nouns usually ending in [-a] -.
- The plural marker for masculine nouns is the suffix [-iin]
- The plural for feminine nouns is the suffix [-aat].
- There are also many irregular plurals in Arabic, which have to be memorized individually, like the irregular plurals in English ('child–children', 'mouse–mice', etc.)



Sentence Structure: Word Order



- Written Language: Word order is verb-subject-object.
- Spoken language: Word order is subject-verb-object
- Most noticeable are the differences in word order. For example, adjectives come after nouns, instead of before: "the teacher good" instead of "the good teacher."



Punctuation in Arabic



- Most punctuation marks used.
- Arabic punctuation is now similar to western style punctuation,
- Some of the symbols are inverted or reversed, e.g. a reversed question mark and comma.
- The use of full stops and commas is more relaxed than English.



Vocabulary in classical Arabic



- Spoken Arabic is close to written Arabic
- Numerous similarities among dialects.
- vocabulary differences are related to the local environment, including local dress, tools, names of plants and animals, for example (Jameed in Jordan).



Antonyms in Arabic



- A strange phenomenon
- The reason is attributed to the Bedouin origin and it is believed that the contradictory extremes of life seem to be the same in essence
- There are words that mean one thing as well as its opposite.
e.g Saleem = one who is cured
Saleem = one who just been bit by a snake
- “Love” has 77 names (Hawa, ishq, hayam, fitna, fanaa)
e.g Fanaa = love
Fanaa = To Fanish



Arabic is a flexional or analytic language.



- The Arabic language allows expansion of vocabulary by adding the combination of long and short vowels e.g Yaktob, Kaateb, Maktoob, Kataeb, Ketabah, ... etc this gives the Arabic language vocabulary to be more flexible and more accurate.
- The Arabic language is measured same as music measurements and has its own rules when it comes to writing poetry.

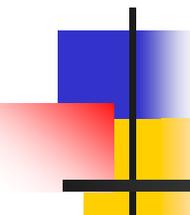


Classical Arabic, literature: classical poetry



- Literary works written in the Arabic language.
- The great body of Arabic literature includes works by Arabic speaking Turks, Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Jews, and other Africans and Asians, as well as the Arabs themselves

الى اللقاء See you (later)



Historical View





Pre-Arabic in the Middle East



- In Egypt the common language was some form of Coptic.
- The Levant was even more complex: The Jewish people spoke Aramaic as their native tongue, but used Hebrew as their liturgical language.
- Some Christians had developed Syriac, a special form of Aramaic.
- Greek was the language of the administration.
- In Sinai Desert of Egypt, the Negev Desert of Israel and most of Jordan and the Golan region of Syria Ghassanids spoke Arabic.
- In Mesopotamia Pahlavi was spoken by the population and was also the official language of administration.



Theories about Pre-Islamic Arabic



Comparison of opinions about features of pre-Islamic Arabic

	OSA had i'raab	PK & OSA same	East/West dialect split	Bedouin OSA lasted after Islam	ecological structure important	Nabati Arabic important
Blau	very likely	YES	YES	YES	not mentioned	NO
Cadora	less in urban areas	NO	YES, but see ecostructure	YES, and see ecostructure	very	It plays a role
Comiente	not Nabatean	NO	YES	Not important, since OSA isnt PK	not mentioned	YES
Rabin	Maybe not	NO	YES	not mentioned	not mentioned	not mentioned
Versteegh	YES	YES	not important PSA=OSA	YES	not mentioned	not mentioned
Ziadeh	not mentioned	NO	not mentioned	Not important, since OSA isnt PK	not mentioned	not mentioned
Zwettler	NO	NO	OSA had many dialects	Not important, since OSA isnt PK	not mentioned	YES



Classical Arabic literature Pre Islam 4th-7th Century



- The poems are strongly personal qasida
- The qasida survive only through collections, chiefly the Muallaqat, Hamasa, Mufaddaliyat, and Kitab al-Aghani
- Popular Poets: :
 - Amru al-Kais,
 - Antara, and
 - Zuhair..



Classical Arabic literature Pre Islam 8th Century



- In Baghdad a group of young poets arose who established a new court poetry
- Popular Poets:
 - Abu Nuwas,
 - Abu al-Atahiya,
 - Mutanabbi,
 - Hariri,
 - Abu al-Ala al-Maarri,
 - Omar Ibn al-Faridh



Islam and the Arabic Language



- Islam has kept the Arabic language from vanishing by connecting it to the Quran.
- Islam added new vocabulary that was not used before.
- Some of the pre-Islam vocabulary has vanished
- Adding new meanings as a way of expanding the vocabulary: Moemen, Salat, zakat.
- Creating new proverbs that enriched the Arabic language



Quran



The Quran:

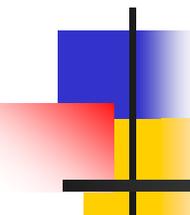
- The Holly Book of Islam, and the word of God according to this monotheistic faith was originally revealed to Mohammad in Arabic
- The Quran kept its original form from its revelation until now
- Is considered the ultimate script for classical Arabic



Classical Arabic Literature/ post Islam



- 19th cent., printing in Arabic began in earnest, centered in Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus.
- Newspapers, encyclopedias, and books were published.
- Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and Dialects were used.
- New forms developed (novel, drama, and short story)
- Novelist Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize in Literature,
- The playwrights Ahmad Shawqi and Tawfiq al-Hakim,
- The poets Hafiz Ibrahim, Badr Shakir as-Sayyab, Nazik al-Malaikah, Abdul Wahab al-Bayati, Mahmoud Darwish, and Adonis,
- The short-story writer Mahmud Tymur



Forms of Arabic





Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and Colloquial Arabic



- Classical Arabic:
The text of the Qura'an
- Modern Standard Arabic:
Standardized form of Classical Arabic used in all countries of the Arab world. It is used in printed material, media, and in all official delivery (speeches, radio, television).
- Colloquial Arabic:
Colloquial Arabic is the form of language used in daily communication between common people



The current form of Arabic – Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)



- MSA is Arabic, some sources do not distinguish between MSA and Classical Arabic at all.
- Practically, in a classical Arabic text, you can expect very rich vocabulary (for instance, the sword can be expressed using dozens of names!), while in MSA your expectation are to read without having to reference a dictionary.
- MSA is the lingua franca used and respected by educated Native Arab Speakers and Muslims throughout the entire world.
- MSA is used in the media (TV, newspapers, magazines), for education and for religious communications (mosques and churches).
- Some universities in the west use MSA
- People from different countries (i.e., different dialects, e.g., a Moroccan and a Kuwaiti) tend to use MSA when the local dialect fail in communication.



Current geography of dialects



- Maghreb Arabic
- Andalusí Arabic (extinct)
- Egyptian Arabic
- Sudanese Arabic
- Levantine Arabic
- Iraqi Arabic
- Gulf Arabic
- Najdi Arabic
- Yemeni Arabic



Is it hard to learn Arabic?



Yes and No

Easy when you understand it:

- The root system of Arabic
- Grammar, especially since irregularities are not common
- The normal word order of a sentence is verb/subject/object
- It is logical

Tough to handle unless you gave it proper time:

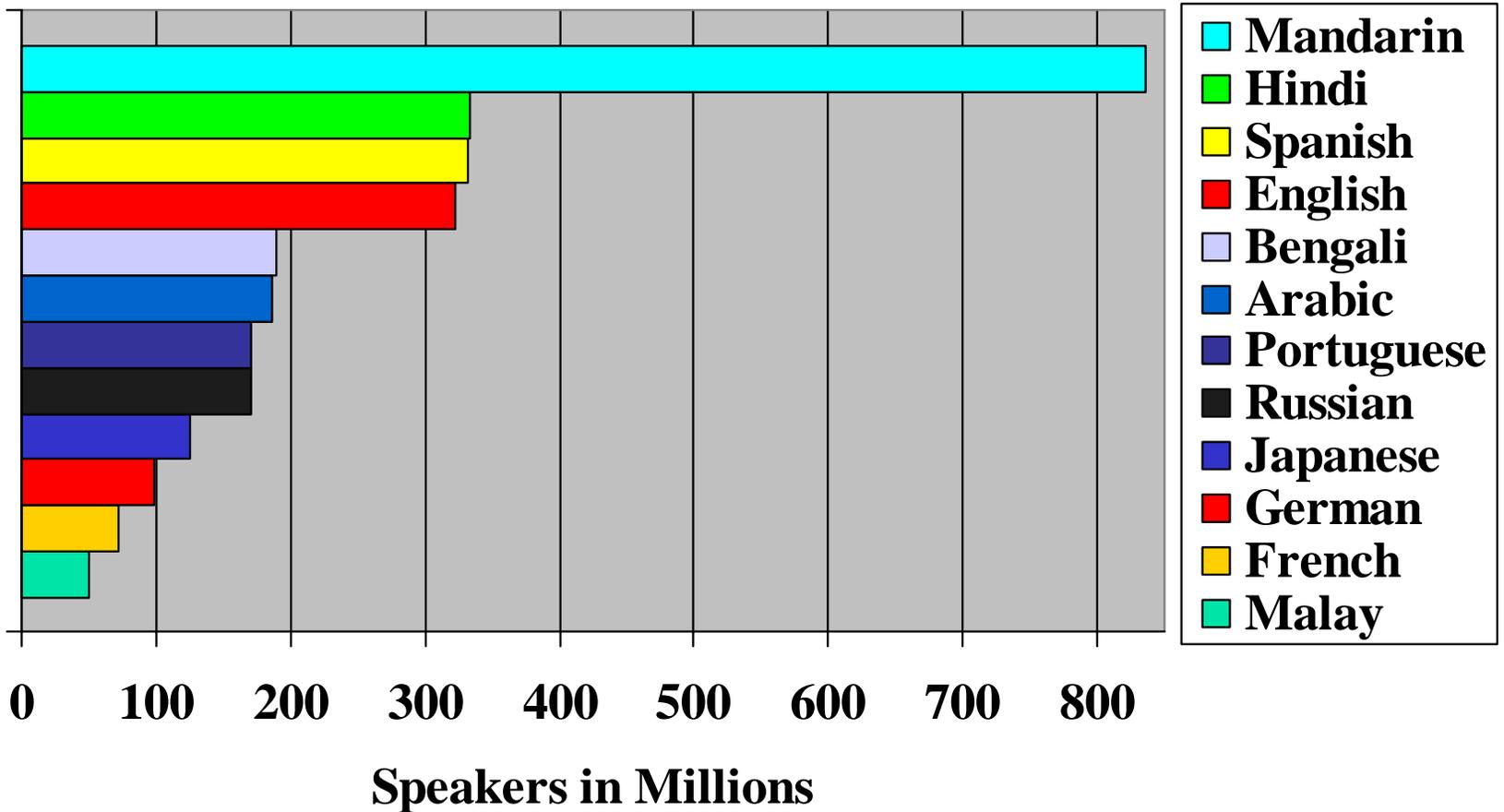
- The rich and extensive vocabulary
- Arabic has many regional dialects
- The correct pronunciation of "heavy" letters of the Alphabet



Arabic Native Speakers



Top 12 Languages of the World





Words of Arabic origin in English



Admiral, adobe, **alchemy**, **alcohol**, alcove, alembic, alfalfa, **algebra**, **algorithm**
Alkali, **almanac**, amalgam, aniline, apricot, arsenal, arsenic, artichoke, assassin
Aubergine, azure, barbarian, bedouin, benzine, Betelgeuse, bint, borax, cable
Calabash, calibre, caliph, camel, camisa, camphor, candy
Coffee, **cotton**, damask, dhow, dragoman, elixir, fakir, fellah, garble, gauze
Gazelle, ghoul, Gibraltar, giraffe, grab, **guitar**, hashish, hazard, henna, hookah
Jasmine, kafir, khamsin, khan, kohl, lemon, mosque, muezzin, mufti, mullah
Nadir, orange, ottoman, racket, safari, sesame, sheikh, sherbet, sofa, spinach
Sultan, sultana, syrup, talc, tariff, tarragon, Trafalgar, vega, vizier, wadi, zenith
zero

Thank you

شكرا لكم

