



## CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTIC ENGLISH PHONOLOGY VS. ARABIC PHONOLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

*Phonology is a wide area of study in any language specially English & Arabic Language, it needs books to cover every single part of these languages. This review paper aims at providing Arab learners and English learners with stem footnotes of these two languages in area of phonology, to ease their learning of English and Arabic languages as foreign or second language, this review paper provide learners with the main differences and rules of English and Arabic languages alphabets that the researcher gathered during her teaching of English language to Arab speakers. The information in this paper is presented in a comparative systematic order to be beneficial for researchers to add in the same area (Phonology) and to do further studies in the fields of: 1- Morphology. 2- Syntax. 3- Super segmental.*

**Keywords:** Linguistic, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Super segment.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

There are many languages in the world, Oliver Wendell Holmes in the quote garden stated "Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow." Contrastive linguistic help speakers of different languages to be competent in these languages; however, there are very few studies in this field. As Arabic language and English language are the most used languages in the Arab world and as good pronunciation is very important for a good spoken communication, this paper will review a comparison between English language and Arabic language in the field of: Phonology to provide foundation for learner of English as a second or foreign language, and learner of Arabic of other languages ASOL.

This comparison may be helpful for native speaker of both languages to excel their performance of the second language and motivate researchers to do further review papers in the field of 1- Morphology. 2- Syntax. 3- Super segmental.

## 2. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Arabic language and English language are the most used languages in the Arab worlds, having clear comparison between the phonology and the morphology of both languages will help learners of these languages to master them in better and easier way, no matter if this language is a second or a foreign language for Arabic native speakers or English native speakers.

Daniel (1996) stated that "language learner should (1) study phonetic theory and (2) do when necessary exercised based on that." He also said "The analysis of speech sound in general and the differences in articulation between English sound and foreign sound which resemble them may, if desired, be investigated and demonstrated by means of specially designed apparatus."

Contrastive linguistic helps learners to learn English language and Arabic language in easier way. This paper will review the contrastive between English language and Arabic language in area of Phonology, but before starting let us clarify that there are three types of Arabic language: a- Classical Arabic (founding the language of Quran) b- Standard Arabic (found in some dialect, but not all) c- Colloquial language (not educational).

Organs of speech seem to be the same in all languages, same for English language and Arabic language(Appendix 1 &2).

On this paper we will focus on the comparison between English language and classical Arabic.

### 2.1. English Letters and Sounds

According to Pronunciation tips from [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com)

- 1- There are 26 letters in the English alphabet but there are over 40 sounds in the English language. This means that the number of sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of letters. For example: The word 'CAT' has three letters and three sounds but the word 'CATCH' has five letters but still only three sounds. If we write these words using phonemic symbols, we can see exactly how many sounds they have. CAT is written /k æ t/, CATCH is written /k æ tʃ/ In 'CATCH' the three letters TCH are one sound represented by one phonemic symbol /tʃ/.
- 2- English letters are divided to **21 consonants** letters and **5 vowels**.
- 3- There are **5 vowel** letters "a, e, I, o, u", but there are **20 sounds** for these vowels, short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs. (Appendix3).
- 4- English letters can come initially, in the middle or finally in words.
- 5- The English Alphabet has 26 letters. In alphabetical order, they are: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.

According to ([English Alphabet English Club](#)), Five of these letters are "vowels". Twenty one are "consonants":

5 vowels	a	e	i	o	u
21 consonants	b c d	f g h	j k l m n	p q r s t	v w x y z

Each letter may be written as a "large letter" (capital) or "small letter".

Capital letters	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Small letters	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

**Note:** learning English symbols (transcription) represent sounds is very important to learn pronunciation and use dictionaries.

## 2.2. Arabic Letters and Sounds

Aiman (2012) in Arabic showed that:

1- In Arabic there are 28 Alphabetical letters three of them are vowels, and 29 pronounced letters the 29<sup>th</sup> is in red

أ. ب. ت. ث. ج. ح. خ. د. ذ. ر. ز. س. ش. ص. ض. ط. ظ. ع. غ. ف. ق. ك. ل. م. ن. هـ. و. ي.

These letters are gathered in eight words: أبجد هوَّزُ حُطِّي كلُّمُن سَغَفَص فَرِشْت تَخَذَ صُنْظَع

2- There are 29 Arabic letters in the Arabic alphabet each letter has three sound according to the mood (بَ بِ بُ) ( َ ِ ُ) there are three sounds for the letters (ب) according to the mood.

3- Arabic letters are divided to:

A. 1- **Sun letters**, these letters are 14 letters (ت - ث - د - ذ - ر - ز - س - ش - ص - ض - ط - ظ - ع - غ - ف - ق - ك - ل - م - ن) these letters cause not to pronounce the (ل) in (ال) when it is written; the (ل) is silent when it precedes them, and the following letters to (ل) is always geminate as in: التَّوْحِيد - التَّرْتِيَاب - الدَّجَاج - الدَّنْب - الرَّسُول - الزَّمَان - السَّلَام - النُّور - اللَّبَن - الظَّلَام - الطَّاعَة - الضُّبَاب - الصَّبَاح - الشَّمْس

B. **Moon letters**, these letters are 14 letters (أ - ب - ج - ح - خ - ع - غ - ف - ق - ك - ل - م - ن - هـ - و - ي) these letters cause to pronounce the (ل) in (ال) when it is written preceding them, and the (ل) takes the ( َ ِ ُ ); as in: الجَبَل - البَئر - الأَرْض - اليمِين - الوَرَع - الهَجْرَة - المَسْجِد - الكِتَاب - الفِقرَان - الفِقه - الغفلة - العقيدة - الخَيْر - الحديث

4- Arabic letters can come initially, in the middle or finally in words.

## 2.3. Comparison between English and Arabic in Phonology.

Arabic language is a consonant language, but vowels letters are more in English language.

### A- Plosive Consonants

According to Daniel (1996) and Aiman (2012) in Arabic

English Letter sound	Transcription	Arabic Letter sound
P (pen)	/p/	پ
b (boy)	/b/	ب
t (tea)	/t/	ت
d (door)	/d/	د
k (king)	/k/	ك
g (goat) (general)	/dz/ /ž/	—

Notes:

- I. The sound of /g/ is not found in classical Arabic, but we find it standard Arabic such as جمال.
- II. /t/ is alveolar but /ت/ is dental.
- III. /t/ has different sounds sometimes is voiced when it comes:

- a- Between two vowels e.g. (butter).
  - b- Between /n/ & /y/ e.g. (twenty).
  - c- Between two voiced vowels (at another).
  - d- Before syllabic /l/ e.g. (settle).
  - e- Before stressed vowel and preceded by /l/ e.g. (malted).
- But** /ك/ in Arabic has the same sound.

## B- Fricative Consonants

According to Daniel (1996) and Aiman (2012) in Arabic

English Letter sound	Transcription	Arabic Letter sound
f(for) , ff (off), gh (cough), ph (philosophy)	/f/	ف
v (van)	/v/	_____
th (the)	/ð/	ذ
th (this)	/θ/	ث
s (see)	/s/	س
s (son)	/s/	ص
z (zoo)	/z/	ز
sh (wash)	/ʃ/	ش
ʒ (measure)	/dʒ/	_____
r (road)	/r/	ر
h (hot)	/h/	ه

### Notes:

- I. /ʒ/ sound is taken from French and it is not found in classical Arabic but at the end of some words in standard Arabic.
- II. /f/ & /v/ sounds have only one phoneme in Arabic /ف/ not like English.
- III. /ð/ sound stand for /ذ/ & /θ/ sound stand for /ث/, if not taught at schools, there will be a blinder between these two sounds and the sound /ð/ may stand for /ذ/ or /ز/, and /θ/ may stand for /ث/ or /س/.
- IV. /s/ sound can stand for /س/ as in (sun); /s/ can stand for /ص/ as in son.

(Judy, 2011) defined that pair of sounds are formed in exactly the same place in the mouth are sister sounds such as:

Air Out (voiceless sound)		Air In (voiced sound)	
/p/	pen	/b/	big
/t/	to	/d/	do
/k/	came	/g/	game
/f/	fan	/v/	van
/s/	sip	/z/	zip
/th/	thigh	/th/	they
/ch/	cheap	/j/	jeep
/sh/	shone	/zh/	genre

## C- Nasal Consonants

Daniel (1996) and Aiman (2012) in Arabic identified

English Letter sound	Transcription	Arabic Letter sound
m (man)	/m/	م
N (near)	/n/	ن
Ng (bring)	/ŋ/	_____

### Note:

ŋ sound is not found in Arabic

### D- Lateral Consonants

Daniel (1996) and Aiman (2012) in Arabic postulates

English Letter sound	Transcription	Arabic Letter sound
Clear "l" (clear, leave)	/l/	ل
Dark "l" (feel, people)	/ɫ/	ل
I. Clear "l" before vowel such as in (live) & (leave) and before j (jelly).		
II. Dark "l" is only used before all consonants such as (cold) in (and finally such as (vessel).		
III. Both clear "l" and dark "l" stand for the Arabic letter "ل".		

### E- Semi Vowel

Daniel (1996) and Imtithal (2011) (in Arabic) claimed

English Letter sound	Transcription	Arabic Letter sound
"w"	/w/	و
"y"	/y/	ي

Notes:

- 1- "W" seems bilabial when make our lips round but it is velar sound.
  - 2- We call them semi vowels because they behave as vowels.
- e.g. a- go /gou/, /gow/      b- day /dei/, /dey/

### F- Vowels

Daniel (1996) and Aiman (2012) in Arabic claimed

English Language vowels & sounds vs. Arabic Language vowels and sounds.

English main vowels are: "a" "e" "o" "I" "u" but Arabic vowels are: "أ" "إ" "و" "ي".

- 1- Some English vowel sounds are exchanged by mood in Arabic such as: / َ /, / ُ / // ِ /.
- 2- /i/ such as in **bit**, it is difficult in Arabic.
- 3- /i:/ such as in **beat**, in Arabic it is higher sound.  
/ɛ/ **not** found in Arabic but it can be compared to " ِ ".
- 4- /e/ it is found in Arabic / bed/.
- 5- /e/, /e:/, /æ/ are various in English phoneme (separate phoneme) not like Arabic same Phoneme /ɛ/.
- 6- /ʌ/ **such** as in "**cut**", it looks like " ُ " in Arabic.
- 7- /u/ stand for " ُ " in Arabic.
- 8- /u:/ stand for " ُ " in Arabic.
- 9- It is difficult for students to differentiate between /u/ like in "**book**" and /u:/ like in "**spoon**".
- 10- /ɔ/ such as in "**hot**" not found in Arabic.
- 11- /ɔ:/ such as in "**tall**" not found in Arabic.
- 12- /θ/ most common sound in English but not found in Arabic.  
/ð:/ not found in Arabic, instead mood is used in Arabic such as /a/ َ /u/ ُ /i/ ِ
- 13- Stress is used in English language such as in "**seat**" but in Arabic there is gimation, / َ /

### G- Contrastive Linguistic English Language Writing System to Arabic Language Writing System"

#### English Language Writing System

- 1- Writing from left to write.
- 2- There are capital and small letters.
- 3- There is italic in writing.
- 4- There is a different between typing and writing.
- 5- There are no identical letters.
- 6- Most of the letters are written

#### Arabic Language Writing System

- 1- Writing from right to left.
- 2- One form and no capitalization.
- 3- No italic in writing.
- 4- There is no different between typing and Writing.
- 5- There are identical letters in forms but the different in dotes such as: ت, ث, ب, and

- above the lines.
- 7- There is a difference between pronouncing and writing.
- ج،ح،خ.
- 6- Some letters are written below the line.
- 7- There is no difference between pronouncing and writing.

### 3. CONCLUSION

This paper may be a stem for learner of English as second / foreign language (ESL/EFL) and learner of Arabic of other languages, however, the information in this paper seems to be as small as a fish in an ocean, but it may encourage researcher to add to phonology area of this paper and do further studies in the field of Morphology, Syntax, and Super segmental to have clear resources for learners of English Language and Arabic Language.

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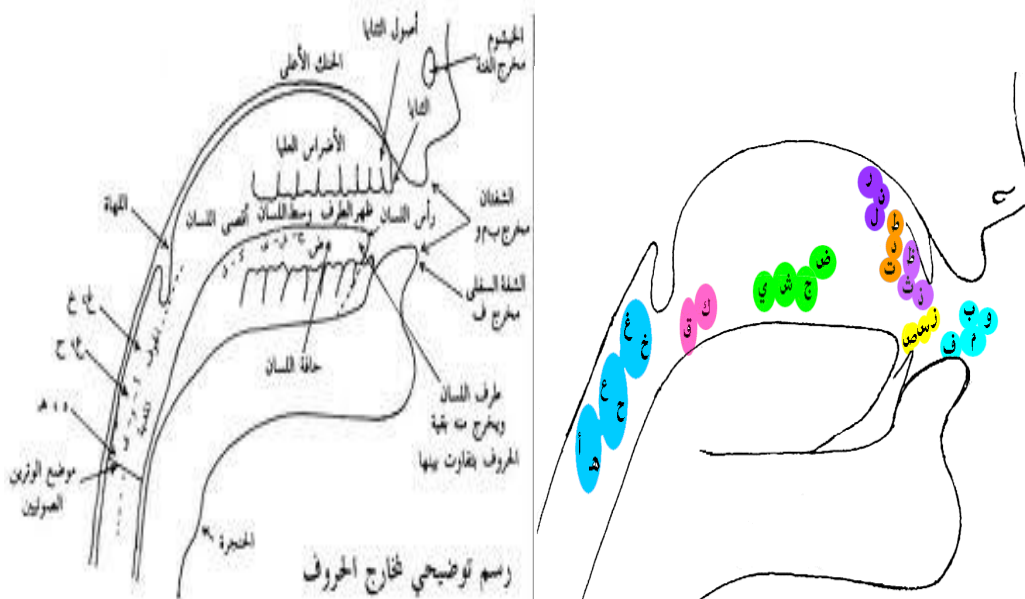
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### Appendix 1

#### Organ of speech for Arabic Letters

مخارج الحروف 2

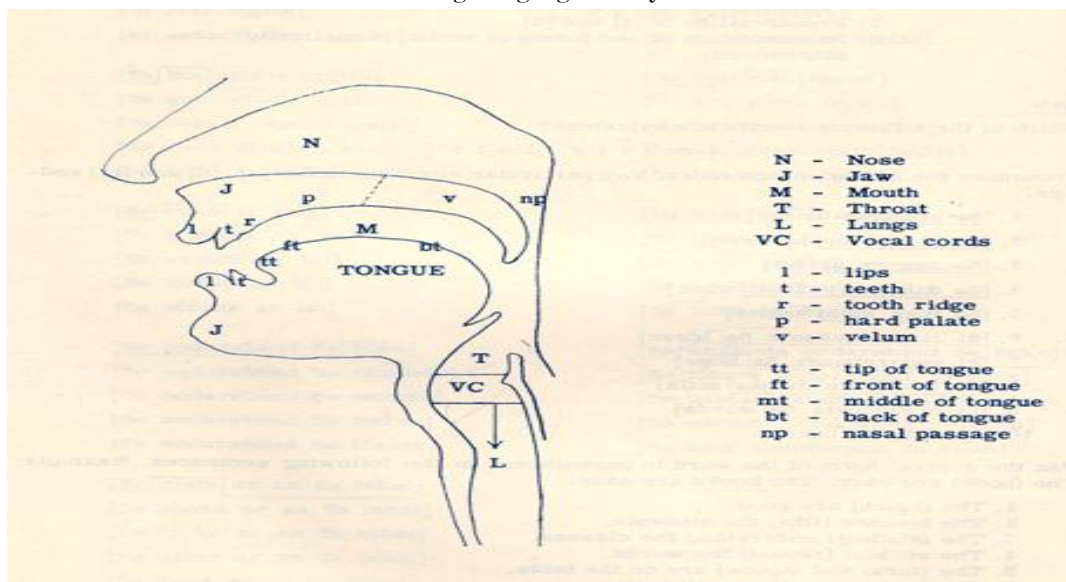
مخارج الحروف 1



### Appendix 2

#### Organ of Speech for English Letters

Teaching Language as a System

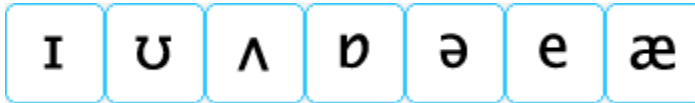


### Appendix 3

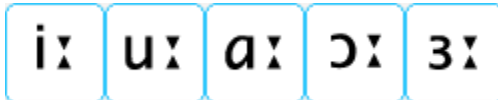
#### The Sounds of English

##### Sounds of English

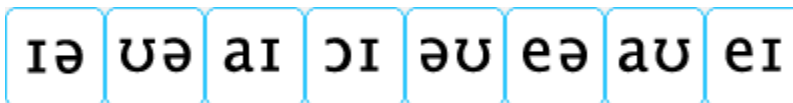
###### Short vowels



###### Long vowels



###### Diphthongs (double vowel sounds)



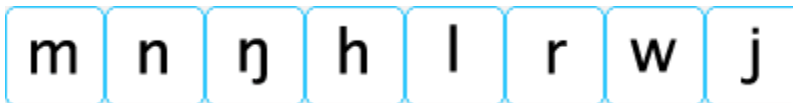
###### Voiceless consonants



###### Voiced consonants



###### Other consonants



(BBC Learning English).com

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