

Difficulties for Arabic Speakers

Difficult Sounds

ch	chin	th	thin
g	go	th	then
ng	ring	a	man
p	pot	e	egg
r	red	i	sit
sh	ship	o	hot
t	ten	u	up

SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Arabic uses a non-Roman script alphabet. Reading and writing are from right to left. Traditionally, a book will be opened from the left.
2. Both nouns and adjectives have articles.
3. Adjectives follow nouns. The brown shoes > the shoes the brown.
4. Although accent varies in Arabic speaking countries, the language will be generally understood by educated Arabs.
5. Verb phrases do not occur in Arabic.
6. Since vowels are not written separately in Arabic, they may be left out when an ESL student attempts to write in English. In many cases, street > strt; dress > drs, etc.

POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

- The **R** is formed in the front of the mouth, and it is trilled or rolled.
- • The aspirated **P** as in "put" does not exist. The sound will resemble a **B** sound.
paper > baber
- • The **TH** sound does not exist in Arabic.
 - Voiceless initial **TH** will be replaced with **S**. thin > sin
 - Voiced initial **TH** will be replaced with **Z** or **D**. that > zat or dat
- The aspirated **T** will sound more like **D**. too > doo
- • **CH** does not exist. It is replaced by **SH**. cheep > sheep
- • There is no hard **G** as in go. The **G** is always soft as in gentle.
- The short vowel sounds can cause difficulties for the ESL learner.

On Speaking Terms: A Practical Guide to Pronunciation Produced by Northeast ABLE Resource Center, Euclid, Ohio 1994

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