

Characteristic of the Arabic Language

DR TAJAMMUL HAQUE

ASST. PROF. IN ARABIC

MAHITOSH NADY MAHAVIDYALAYA, JANGIPARA, HOOGHLY

What is Arabic and its origin?

- ❑ Arabic language is one of the most important and living ancient languages, it dates back to 512 CE. It is spoken globally by nearly 467 million people as well as it the religious language of 1.8 billion Muslims across the world. There are more than 26 countries where Arabic is an official language. It is also the second official language in some countries. It is one of the six official languages of the UNO and official language of various international organisations.
- ❑ Arabic ranked fourth among the major international languages.
- ❑ This language originated and flourished in Arabian Peninsula and later spread all over the world.
- ❑ It belongs to Semitic group of languages.

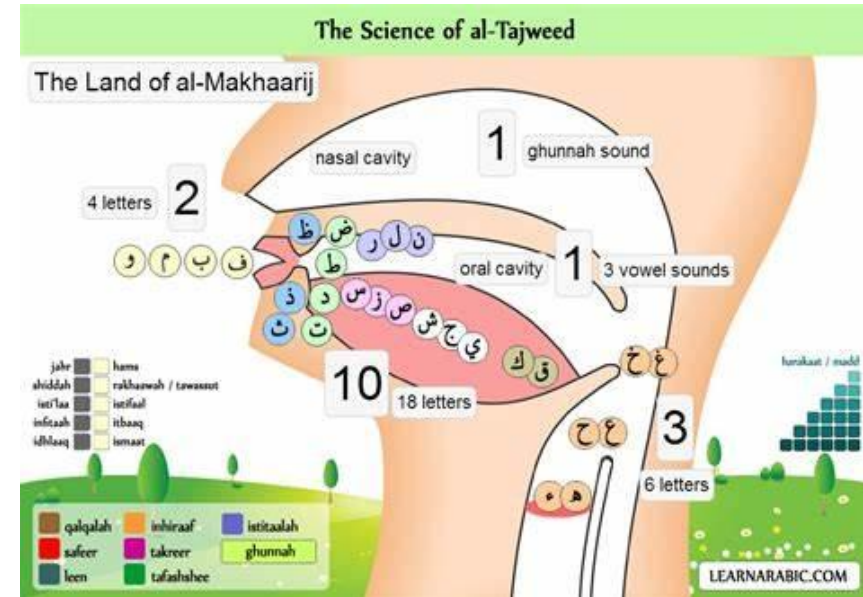
Origins of Arabic Alphabet

Can be traced to the writing of the semi-nomadic Nabataean tribes between 500-600 CE.

They inhabited southern Syria and Jordan, Northern Arabia, and the Sinai Peninsula.

ARABIC ALPHABETS

kh-aa خ	H-aa ح	j-eem ج	th-aa ث	t-aa ت	b-aa ب	a-lif ا
S-aad س	sh-een ش	s-een س	z-aa ز	r-aa ر	dh-aal ذ	d-aal د
q-aaf ق	f-aa ف	gh-ain غ	3-ain ع	Dh-aa ظ	T-aa ط	D-aad ظ
y-aa ي	w-aaw و	h-a ه	n-oon ن	m-eem م	l-aam ل	k-aaf ك



Arabic Style

- ▶ Arabic reading & writing style is right to left.
- ▶ No difference between upper- and lowercase letters.
- ▶ shapes of letters usually vary depending on whether they are in an initial, medial, or final position in a word.
- ▶ The Arabic alphabet consists of eighteen shapes that express twenty-eight phonetic sounds.
- ▶ The same letter shape can form a "b" sound (when one dot is placed below as ب), "t" sound (when two dots are placed above as ت) or a "th" sound (when three dots are added above as ث).

Some distinctive features of Arabic language are as follows:

- **Morphology:** The morphology is based on the root system of words. Arabic verbs are trilateral or four lateral. All verbs has certain forms and methods to denote first person, second person, third person, absent and present, gender, singular, dual , plural and tenses. In nouns, It is possible to convert the singular to dual or plural and this method is unique to the Arabic language.
- **Grammar:** This is the basis of the sentence in the Arabic language, divided into a nominal sentence and a verbal sentence. The rules of grammar and grammatical foundations are key to the learning of this beautiful language that Allah SWT Himself chose as the language of the most important book; The Qur'an.
- **Vocabulary:** Large number of words/ one thing but many names; for a Lion there are 150 or 300 words, some are like Asad, Laith, Gazanfar. (Al-Mazhar-lis-Suyuti, vol. 1, pp. 325)
- ▶ Another example like 'عَيْن': 'Gold', 'Cash', 'Eye', 'Mouth of a well', 'Same very thing', 'To reduce', 'Spy', 'Rain', 'Stream', 'Un-levelling of pans of scales', 'Coming under the influence of evil eye', 'Mouth of a leather bag', etc. Apart from the mentioned meanings, the linguistic scholars have mentioned many other meanings too. (Al-Muzhir by Suyuti, vol. 1, pp. 372)

Continue...

- ▶ Harakaat; that comes at the end of every word shows its worth or status, for example: **زيد ما احسن زيد** actual meaning of the mentioned Arabic phrase will remain ambiguous if Harakaat are not added. Check the meaning of the phrase after adding Harakaat mentioned below:

: Zaid did not carry out a virtuous act. **مَا أَحْسَنَ زَيْدٌ.**

: What a great pious person Zaid is. **مَا أَحْسَنَ زَيْدًا.**

:I will not do good to Zaid. **مَا أُحْسِنُ زَيْدًا**

Goodness was not done to Zaid. **مَا أُحْسِنَ زَيْدًا:**

Continue...

- ▶ Meaning derived from the visible form of word;

With the help of the root words, many other words are formed with a slight change so the meanings of many words are easily understood. For example, **الْجَنِّ**, **الْمَجْنُونِ**, **الْجَنِّينِ** origin of all these words is **ج،ن،ن** respectively. Different structural forms give the following meanings: 'hidden', 'concealed' and 'covered'.

Jinns are hidden from our eyes. Jannah [Paradise] cannot be seen in the world and is hidden from our eyes. **مجنون** [Mad] (the one whose intellect is gone i.e. hidden) and **جَنِين** (is that fetus who is hidden from our eyes due to being in the womb of his mother). (Tafseer-e-Nasafi, pp. 38)

Continue...

- **Calligraphy:** actually resembles illumination more than writing as In the past, calligraphy was used to decorate religious Arabic texts. Even we find it figurative patterns, drawings of animals using Arabic letters, and multi-colored ornamentation as well.

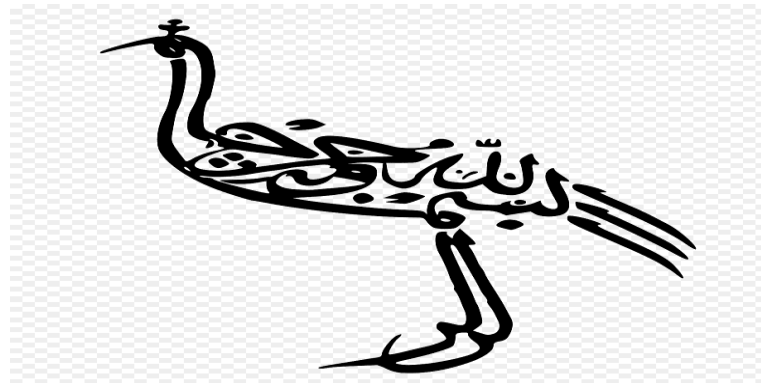
Some examples of Arabic calligraphy as

1- Hubb (love)



shutterstock.com · 1143027137

2- Bismillah



3- Allah- Muhammad



Continue...

- ▶ Citizens of the Arab world may proudly boast that the Arabic language has 60,000 words, which is quite impressive when compared to the average native English-speaker's vocabulary of 20,000 words.
- ▶ The Arabic language is estimated to be made out of millions of words. ibne Manzoor (13th century lexicographer) collected nearly 80 thousand root words of Arabic while Samuel Johnson's English dictionary (18th Century) has nearly 43 thousand words.
- ▶ According to Ernest Renan (1823-1892), French writer, linguist, philosopher, and historian, there are
 - 80 words in Arabic for honey,
 - 200 Arabic words for snake,
 - 500 ways to say lion,
 - 1000 words in Arabic for camel and sword,
 - 4400 ways to express sadness,

Continue...

- ▶ Arabic has sounds that don't exist in other languages; such as ح which is a "h" sound as in "hub" (love), خ which is a "kh" sound as in "Khair" (good).
- ▶ English has many words of Arabic origin; English has many words acquired either directly from Arabic or indirectly from Arabic words that have entered into Romance languages before passing into English. Examples include: alcohol, algebra, algorithm, alkaline, (the article "al" in Arabic denotes "the"), amber, arsenal, candy, coffee, cotton, ghoul, hazard, lemon, magazine, sherbet, sofa, tariff ... and many more.
- ▶ The algebraic letter "x" that represents an unknown number, originates from the Arabic word "shay" (thing), which eventually became translated to "xay" in Spain, leading to its final abbreviation and use in algebra as "x".

Arabic calligraphy clips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvG7xTBnfn4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ql4zbjY5zU0>

Interaction

Question- Answer



The End

THANK YOU !!