

FROM MSA TO CA: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TRANSITIONING TO COLLOQUIAL ARABIC



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From MSA to CA: A Beginner's Guide to Transitioning to Colloquial Arabic (Gomaa)

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This text was compiled on 09/15/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Book

Licensing

About the Author

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Introduction

1: Chapter 1

1.1: Transitioning to CA- Final vowelizing and greeting terms in MSA and CA

1.2: Greetings and Ending Conversations

1.3: Cultural insight- Ending a conversation in a culturally acceptable manner

2: Chapter 2

2.1: Transitioning to CA- WH Question words in MSA and CA

2.2: Requests

2.3: Cultural insights- Giving directions

3: Chapter 3

3.1: Transitioning to CA- Verb tenses

3.2: Dialogues

3.3: Cultural insights- Phone conversations and communicating among different age groups in the Arab world

4: Chapter 4

4.1: Transitioning to CA- Negation in MSA vs CA

4.2: Accepting and rejecting invitations

4.3: Cultural insights- Tips on dealing with culturally sensitive situations

Index

Glossary

Glossary

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About the Book

This book is for students who have studied Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) for one year or more and would like to learn colloquial Arabic basics using their knowledge of MSA. It aims at transitioning learners from Novice Mid level to Intermediate Low through presenting situations useful for living in an Arab country. The book has several features including hyperlinks, practice dialogues with open answers, cultural tips, and more.

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About the Author

Lina Gomaa received an MA in Arabic/English Translation and Interpreting from University of Salford, UK. At Beloit College, USA, she obtained her BA in Creative Writing, with a minor in Journalism. Also at Beloit College, she obtained a certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language. In Egypt, Miss Gomaa obtained a BA in Arabic/English Translation and English Literature from the Faculty of Languages, Alsun, Ain Shams University. At the American University in Cairo, she received the Certificate of Teaching Arabic for non-native speakers. Miss Gomaa has taught Arabic and English to non-native-speakers at several universities in Egypt and the USA. She is a fully certified oral proficiency interviewer by ACTFL. Miss Gomaa's research interests are second language acquisition and translation including holy texts, focusing on the Holy Quran translations into English.

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Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the support of the Arabic Section and World Languages and Literatures department at PSU. The Arabic Section fully encouraged me throughout the process of writing this book. Professor Yasmeen Hanoosh and Professor Jennifer Perlmutter provided full support especially when the book was just a new idea to be introduced to the Open Textbook project.

My dear colleague Cliff Breedlove's insight, suggestions, discussions, editing and support made this book possible. He has been my fresh second pair of eyes; I am grateful to you. I thank Professor Dirgham Sbait for encouraging me to teach Colloquial Arabic and sharing his extensive experience with me.

The library team has been an asset to make this project a reality. Mrs. Karen Bjork's knowledge in copyright, time management, and unlimited resources are priceless. She has been wonderful to work with, easing any hurdles in the way. Mrs. Stephanie Doig's help and insight took the financial burden off my shoulders and allowed me to focus on writing. Thank you.

My dear students, John Flachetta and Mariah Denman, the delightful future of PSU Arabic studies, have been committed to learning Arabic and recording with me the dialogues for this book. Their clear and strong speaking skills are models for PSU Arabic students to follow.

I will not forget to thank all my students, whose questions, comments, and suggestions have shaped my teaching and perception of my own language, just like water is always shaping the rocks.

Thank you, Mum and Dad for your prayers, love, and belief in the importance of education and language learning.

Last but not least, I thank God: You are my light.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and Acronyms	Meaning
CA	Colloquial Arabic
ECA	Egyptian Colloquial Arabic
LCA	Levantine Colloquial Arabic
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
n.	noun
v.	verb
f.s.	feminine singular
m.s.	masculine singular
f.s.2	feminine singular with second person (أَنْتِ)
m.s.2	masculine singular with second person (أَنْتَ)
LM	Literal Meaning (word for word meaning)
IM	Intended Meaning

Before reading this book, please keep in mind the following:

When there are no vowels like damma, kasra, fathā (تَشْكِيل، حَرَكَات) on the last letter of the word, it is considered a sukun °.

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Introduction



Figure 1: "Islamic Architecture - Dome Building" by KingofColesaw

The teaching methodology for Colloquial Arabic continues to engender controversy in the field of Arabic pedagogy. One approach is firstly teaching Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), then teaching colloquial Arabic (CA); another is introducing both MSA and CA at the same time. A third approach is starting with CA then introducing MSA, which is less common in USA and Middle East educational institutions.

At Portland State University (PSU), the Arabic program is designed to teach MSA for at least one year, after which the students can learn CA. Because of how the Arabic program at PSU is designed (similar to many programs in the USA), the importance of this book arises. This transition can be challenging for some students.

Many current texts do not address the transition from MSA to CA. Some authors assume that both varieties are taught at the same time, or that colloquial is taught first. These approaches are not the best fit for the PSU program design. This book provides information needed to transition from MSA to CA and is useful for PSU students and any student who is following the same pattern in learning Arabic.

The book targets students in NM (Novice Mid) who have studied Arabic for a year or more and aims to help them advance to IL (Intermediate Low) according to the [Oral Proficiency Interview standards by ACTFL](#), the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages. This book documents answers to questions from students in CA classes. It is also a reference for students to "get a feel" for MSA and CA similarities and differences.

Content is displayed at the beginning of each chapter. Section A discusses a feature in MSA and compares it with CA. Section B has dialogues with different topics related to section A; each dialogue is preceded by a table that has three columns: the word in Arabic, the word in English, and the equivalent word/expression in MSA. In the second column "the meaning in English," I included both the literal meaning (LM) and the intended meaning (IM). Including the LM, as I noticed in class, makes the words/expressions more memorable to the students and more comprehensible even though it might not sound idiomatic or make full sense in English.

The last section of the chapter (C) is cultural insight related to the main topic, making the students more culturally familiar with acceptable behaviors and offering ideas to consider while living in an Arab country. At the end is a glossary organized in English for easier search.

This book is not meant to be a comprehensive treatment of all the issues arising when learning CA after learning MSA. Its goal is to transition students smoothly from MSA to CA, giving them confidence to explore both varieties while reaching the NH (Novice High) or IL level, navigate predictable social situations in CA, and utilize their previous knowledge in MSA to learn CA. The content and structure are based on my teaching experience and as an ACTFL OPI interviewer to assist students in their quest to speak CA with native speakers with relative ease.

In this book, you will notice several features, one of which is adding a practice dialogue at the end of each chapter to encourage speaking. From my interactions with beginning students, I noticed that they like to practice speaking with Arabic native speakers but are shy or not confident enough or do not know how to reach them. The practice dialogue section is a venue for gaining confidence, where the speaker in the recording pauses during the dialogue, leaving lines for the student to complete orally and in writing. This allows the student to have a real conversation during the recorded dialogue.

In addition, you will find vowelings on some of the words when first introduced to help in correctly reading them. From the second time onwards, the vowelings disappear. Thus, students receive help the first time when they read the full vowelings of the word, then encouragement to remember the correct pronunciation by more practice, while having a reference.

Vowelings is somewhat rare in CA books because this is how Arabic native speakers read. However, I noticed that students have struggled with reading and practicing many words even after listening to them in the audio recording. This is partially because many MSA books are heavily vowelized. For some students studying MSA, switching to CA where the books have no vowels is unsettling. Thus, I have attempted to reach a middle ground between both approaches in this book where vowelings are used only when a new word is introduced then disappear after its introduction.

Transliteration is not employed because the target students of this book have had one year of Arabic or more and can read Arabic script.

One final feature is having hyperlinks to resources, including more information about cultural items and songs. For songs in particular, I am not expecting the students to fully understand what is being said, but the exposure to the language can gradually lead to fluency, increase interest in the Arabic culture, and provide chances to listen to different speakers' intonation and terminology.

Since I grew up in Cairo, this book introduces the Cairene Egyptian dialect; however, it also explains commonly used expressions in the Levant (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel). The goal is to introduce students to more varieties, allowing them to choose which dialect to specialize in and still be able to communicate with Arabic speakers. Although this book does not introduce Gulf dialects, many of the expressions and terms are frequently used in most of the Arab world, and many are derived from MSA.

I sincerely hope that this book will benefit students of Arabic at PSU and elsewhere, reduce their textbook expenses, and help them improve their CA speaking. I also hope that the dialogues (recorded by PSU students of Arabic) will be enjoyable for learners and provide successful examples for others to follow.

This book will be used in classes and the wider online audience. I welcome suggestions and comments to improve the content and format in future editions.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this book, the students should be able to:

- Differentiate between MSA and CA (particularly Egyptian)
- Navigate predictable social situations in CA including:
 1. Greetings in formal and informal settings
 2. Asking questions and making requests
 3. Expressing themselves in the present, future, and past in CA
 4. Using negation in the present
 5. Accepting and rejecting invitations

1: CHAPTER 1

- 1.1: Transitioning to CA- Final vowelizing and greeting terms in MSA and CA
- 1.2: Greetings and Ending Conversations
- 1.3: Cultural insight- Ending a conversation in a culturally acceptable manner

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1.1: Transitioning to CA- Final vowelizing and greeting terms in MSA and CA

- One of the first points to keep in mind is that in CA, final vowelizing is almost absent except for words like: أهلاً، عفواً، شكراً

For example, you say in MSA, “Are you a student?”

هل أنت طالب؟

But in CA, you will drop the final vowelizing as well as هل (we will explain in chapter 2 what changes take place regarding “WH-” words). So, the same question will be:

إنت طالب؟

- You might have noticed that the hamza همزة in تأن has changed from fathā to kasra but no changes have taken place on the ت. These changes will come easily to you with more listening, interacting, and practicing in CA

Greeting terms in MSA and CA: الَسَالَمَات وَالتَّحِيَّات.

- During your studies of MSA, you have probably learned greetings such as:

صباحاً الخير- مساء الخير- كيف حالك؟



Figure 1.1.1: "HANDSHAKE GREETING" BY OCTAVIO LOPEZ

Greetings do not significantly change from MSA to CA, but there are more expressions used in CA (with even some repetition in meaning). It is common to ask “how are you” several times using different expressions, as you will read in the coming dialogues. It is part of the Arabic culture to greet your friends or acquaintances by asking multiple times about them and their families to show warmth and care. Let’s see some examples:

الشرح Explanation	المعنى بالإنجليزية English Translation	الرد بالعامية Response in CA English Translation	المعنى بالإنجليزية English Translation	التحية بالعامية Greeting in CA
In MSA, there is a final damma on the م ; which is dropped in CA. This greeting is used in several settings. For example, when one is passing by a group of people and wants to say hello quickly. It will not be said to ask about how one is doing. In more religious settings, like the mosque, the م and/or final damma will be pronounced. In everyday settings, the م is often deleted and replaced by و .Listen to this funny song [YouTube] that might give you a feel of how native speakers use this greeting.	"On you" is peace, meaning peace be upon you.	عليكم -السال م عليكو السالم	Peace be upon you	عليكم ال سال م
In MSA, the attached possessive pronouns have the case endings: كُ أن ت (كُ كتاب) your book for (أنت) your book for (أنت) your book for In CA, the MSA final vowel shifts to the letter before the attached pronoun; كتابُ becomes كتابك. Similarly, كيف and ك كيف.	Thank God We Thank God We thank God perfect; fine Good When the speaker is male (LCA) When the speaker is female.	-الحمد لله نحمد الله- نشكر الله- تمام منيح منيحة	How are you? male recipient (LCA) female recipient	كيفك؟ كي فك؟
		Same answers as above	How are you? male recipient (ECA)	رك إيه؟ أخبا عا مل إيه؟

الشرح Explanation	المعنى بالإنجليزية English Translation	الرد بالعامية Response in CA	المعنى بالإنجليزية English Translation	التحية بالعامية Greeting in CA
		Same answers as above	How are you? male recipient (LCA) female recipient	رك؟ شو أ خبأ رك؟ شو أ خبأ
The MSA damma on صباح disappears in CA	Morning of light Morning of Jasmine الفل: is a kind of Jasmine [Wikipedia]	صباح الثور صباح الفل و(الباسمين)	Good Morning	صباح ال خي ر



Figure 1.1.1: "JASMINE FLOWER PETALS" BY DORNE

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1.2: Greetings and Ending Conversations

1. Formal Greetings Conversations: At Work

مُحَادَثَةٌ رَسْمِيَّةٌ بِالْعَامِيَّةِ

كَلِمَاتٌ وَتَعْبِيرَاتٌ مَهْمَةٌ:

الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى The equivalent in MSA	المعنى بالإنجليزية The meaning in English	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية The word and expression in CA
اليوم	today	النَّهَارْه
لَكِنْ also in CA	but	بَسْ
عَمَلْ also in CA	work	شُغْلْ
كثيراً Notice that in some dialects (e.g., ECA, LCA), ث sometimes changes into ت. Other dialects (e.g., Gulf) keep it the same as in MSA.	a lot	كثير
أَيْضاً also in CA	as well/ too	كمان
تُمْ / بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ	after this/ then	بعدين
The same expression is used in MSA.	God willing	إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

الجَوَّار رَقْم (1)

This is a conversation between coworkers in a company as an example of a formal setting.

أحمد: صباح الخير يا سارة

سارة: صباح النور يا أحمد، إزيك؟ عامل إيه النهارده؟

أحمد: تمام، الحمد لله، وإنّ عامله إيه؟

سارة: كويسة، بش عندي شغل كثير

أحمد: وأنا كمان والله

سارة: طيب يا أحمد، نتكلم بعدين إن شاء الله.

أحمد: إن شاء الله!



Figure 1.2.1: "Business Executives Talking near Printer" by mconnors

2. Informal Greetings Conversation: At a Friends' Gathering

محادثة غير رسمية بالعامية

كلمات وتعبيرات مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى The equivalent in MSA	المعنى بالإنجليزية The meaning in English	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية The word and expression in CA
:Same word with different internal vowelings نَجَحَ	passed/succeeded	نَجَحَ

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
The word and expression in CA	The meaning in English	The equivalent in MSA
إِمْتِحَانَاتُهُ	his exams: إِمْتِحَان + ات + ه	same
أَحْسَنَ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِ	"LM (literal meaning): "better than the first IM (Intended meaning): the situation is better than before	Almost the same in MSA except for changing one word أَحْسَنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ You can use this above-mentioned expression in CA as well
سُؤَالُكَ (إِنْتِ) سُؤَالُكَ (إِنْتِ)	your question female recipient your question a male recipient	Same word with different internal vowelings (on the attached pronoun) سُؤَالُكَ سُؤَالُكَ
حَبِيبَتِي	my dear one a female recipient Note, if this word is used between two people in love, "it will mean "my loved one	Same word with different internal vowelings حَبِيبَتِي

الجوار رقم (2)

This is a conversation between two female friends at a gathering as an example of greetings in an informal setting.

نورا: أهلاً يا دُعاء، كيفك؟

دعاء: منيعة، نُشْكِرُ الله وأنت؟ كيفك؟

نورا: تمام، الحمد لله. كيف (ال) ماما و(ال) بابا؟

دعاء: بخير، الحمد لله. وشو أخبار ياسر، أخوك، نجح في إمتحاناته؟

نورا: الحمد لله، وكيف صحّة جدّتك؟

دعاء: أحسن من الأول، شكراً على سؤالك (يا) حبيبتي!

3. Practice: Complete the Dialogue

This is an incomplete dialogue in the audio files. Practice speaking by completing the missing parts in this dialogue.

Audio

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

[View this Audio online](#)



هالة: أهلاً! أهلاً! كيفك؟

إنت/ إنت: _____، _____

هالة: تمام، الحمد لله. كيف ماما؟

إنت/ إنت: _____

هالة: وكيف بابا؟

إنت/ إنت: _____، _____

هالة: بخير، شكراً على سؤالك!

1.3: Cultural insight- Ending a conversation in a culturally acceptable manner

It is polite to end a conversation gradually, whether with a coworker, a friend or a relative (especially if elderly or older than you). It is impolite to end a conversation abruptly unless it is an emergency.

A very acceptable and polite way to end a conversation is explaining that you are sorry that you have to leave but will hopefully talk soon or meet soon (especially with older people). It is more relaxed with younger generations. Consider the following template for wrapping up a conversation, whether in person or over the phone:

أنا آسف / آسفة بس لازم أمشي علشان . . . :

I am sorry but I have to leave (go away/ walk away) because:

I have an appointment	عندي ميعاد
I have work	عندي شغل
I have an exam	عندي إمتحان

نتكلم بعدين / قُرَيْب إن شاء الله.

We will talk later/ soon, God willing.

2: CHAPTER 2

2.1: Transitioning to CA- WH Question words in MSA and CA

2.2: Requests

2.3: Cultural insights- Giving directions



Figure 2.1: "Islamic Architecture" by [King of Coleslaw](#)

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2.1: Transitioning to CA- WH Question words in MSA and CA

Generally, there are few internal vowelizing changes in the MSA WH question words when they are used in CA. Let's have a look together:

الشرح Explanation	المعنى بالإنجليزية The meaning in English	أداة الاستفهام بالعامية WH-" word in CA"	أداة الاستفهام بالفصحى WH-" word in MSA
Same uses as MSA	how	كَيْفُ	كَيْفُ
Same uses as MSA	how much/ many	كَمْ	كَمْ
Same uses as MSA	What is the cost ?...of	بِكَمْ	بِكَمْ
Same uses as MSA	where (LCA) where (ECA)	وَيْنُ فَيْنُ	أَيْنَ
Same uses as MSA	who	مَيْنُ	مَنْ
Same uses as MSA	when	إِمْتَى	مَتَى
Same uses as MSA	what	شُو (LCA) إِيَه (ECA)	مَاذَا

الشرح Explanation	المعنى بالإنجليزية The meaning in English	أداة الاستفهام بالعامية “WH-” word in CA	أداة الاستفهام بالفصحى “WH-” word in MSA
Same uses as MSA but slight difference in pronunciation in MSA; it can be أيّ أو أيّ أو أيّ depending on the words used with أيّ and its grammatical position in the sentence.	which	أيّ	أيّ
Not used in CA	for Yes/ No questions	Not used in conversations, replaced by rising intonation for yes or no questions	هل / أ

أمثلة لاستخدام أدوات الاستفهام

Examples of using WH words in short dialogues

أحمد: كيف الحال؟

سارة: الحمد لله، تمام.

أحمد: الساعة كام؟

سارة: تقريباً واحدة.

أحمد: الكمبيوتر ده بكام؟

سارة: ١٠٠٠ جنيه.

سارة: فين الحمام لو سمحت؟

أحمد: على اليمين.

سارة: مين الأستاذة ديه؟

أحمد: ديه أستاذة فدوة، أستاذة الأدب الروسي.

سارة: إمتى الحفلة؟

أحمد: الساعة خمسة.

سارة: تحب تشرب إيه؟

أحمد: شاي لو سمحت.

سارة: شو تحب تشرب؟

أحمد: قهوة من فضلك.

(في الصف)

سارة: الواجب في أيّ صفحة في الكتاب؟

أحمد: عشرين.

2.2: Requests

1. Taxi

الجَوَّار رَقْم (1)

كَلِمَات وَتَغْيِيرَات مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
The word and expression in CA	The meaning in English	The equivalent in MSA
سَوَّاق	driver	سَائِق Usually in CA, the ء is either deleted or changing in form. In this case, it is deleted and is replaced by a و and a ّ (shadda)
التاكسي	taxi	In MSA, sometimes سيارة أجرة is used. LM: "a car with a fare."
آه	This word can mean "yes" in response to questions in Egyptian Arabic (as in the coming dialogue). It can also be a sound made when one is in pain	نَعَمْ Also used in CA
عِنْدُكَ (إنتِ) عِنْدِكَ (إنتِ)	IM: "you have" LM: "at you" because عند means "at" & ك is an attached pronoun	Same word with different internal vowelizing. أَنْتِ عِنْدُكَ أَنْتِ عِنْدُكَ
عَدَّاد	meter	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
The word and expression in CA	The meaning in English	The equivalent in MSA
شَوِيَّة	a little bit شَوِيَّة is the Egyptian for a few or little شَوِي is levant for a few or little. Example: I want a little water, please. عايز شَوِيَّة ميه لو سمحت I want few apples, please. عايز شَوِيَّة تفاح لو سمحت.	The equivalent in MSA is قَلِيلًا and it can mean a few or little.
حُشْ (إِنْتَ)	enter (m.s.2 imperative)	No equivalent
شِمَال	left	It is used in MSA, together with يَسَار. Both are used in MSA and CA. In Gulf countries يسار is used more often
طَيِّب	OK/ alright Note: this word has 3 meanings: 1) ok/alright 2) delicious (food) 3) kind a person)	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
The word and expression in CA	The meaning in English	The equivalent in MSA
شِمَال في يَمِين	left then right In this expression, في means "immediately after" left then right immediately, with no streets/roads in between	Not used in MSA in this manner.

الجَوَّار رَقْم (1)

الزُّبُونَة: مصر الجديدة؟

سَوَّاق التاكسي: آه.

الزُّبُونَة: عُنْدَكَ عَدَّاد؟

سَوَّاق التاكسي: أيوة.

الزُّبُونَة: تَمَام.

بَعْد شَوِيَّة....

الزُّبُونَة: مِنْ فَضْلِكَ خُشْ شِمَال!

سَوَّاق التاكسي: طَيِّب.

الزُّبُونَة: عِنْد السوبر ماركت، خُشْ شِمَال فِي يَمِين

سَوَّاق التاكسي: طَيِّب.

الزُّبُونَة: غَايِزَة أَنْزِلْ هُنَا لَوْ سَمَخْت.

سَوَّاق التاكسي: هُنَا فِين؟

الزُّبُونَة: عند السوبرماركت، إِنْفَضِّل.

سَوَاقِ التاكسي: شكراً.



Figure 2.2.1: "Taxi Cab" by Alvimann

2. Requesting Train Tickets

كلمات وتعبيرات مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة و التعبير المساوي بالفصحى
لَوْ سَمَحْتِ (إِنْتِ)	If you please - female recipient If you please - male recipient	إذا سمحت Used in MSA and more formally
لَوْ سَمَحْتَ (أَنْتَ)		

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالفصحى
من فَضْلِكَ (أَنْتَ) من فَضْلِكَ (أَنْتِ) As you might have noticed, أَنْتَ with the ء on the 'Alif is MSA while in CA, the ء is below the 'Alif, causing the difference in pronunciation; same with أَنْتِ in MSA becoming إِنْتِ or إِنْتِي.	If you please female recipient If you please male recipient	من فَضْلِكَ (إِنْتِ) من فَضْلِكَ (إِنْتِ)
same	ticket In some countries like Egypt and Sudan, the ذ changes in pronunciation to be z. In other countries, like in the gulf, the ذ is pronounced the same as in MSA.	تَذْكِرَة
إلى أين؟	No exact English equivalent except the closest IM: "Where are you heading?" LM: "To where?"	على فين؟
ذاهب It is اسم فاعل or active participle, meaning the doer of the action. It can replace the verb and be translated as "going."	IM is "is/are going" but it is not a verb in Arabic. It could be translated as the "goer" or in this dialogue "are going."	رايح
ذَهَاب وإِيَاب	IM: "return ticket" LM: "going and coming back"	رايح - جِي

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة و التعبير المساوي بالفصحى
ولّا	or	The equivalent in MSA is أو which is used in CA. But ولّا is not used in MSA. (Watch this song in CA [YouTube] where the signer is using ولّا throughout the song).
قَطَر	train Note: the ق in most of Egypt and parts of the Levant is pronounced as ء (a glottal stop). In some dialects, it is pronounced as ج or just like MSA.	قَطَار
الصُّبْح	the morning	الصَّبَاح
باليل	at night	باليل Sometimes in MSA and CA في is used as well in place of ب to mean “at.”
دَرَجَة	In the context of the coming dialogue, it means “class” in a train.	Same and “step” or, if one is talking about the weather, it means درجة الحرارة “degree temperature”
بِسْتَيْن جْنِيه	IM: “60 Egyptian pounds (cost)” LM: “ with 60 Egyptian pounds”	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالفصحى
Same but with the deletion of the initial ل in CA تَقْضَلِي تَقْضَلْ	here (offering s.th.) female recipient male recipient	إِنْتَقْضَلِي إِنْتَقْضَلْ
مَال	money	الْفُلُوس
	IM: "travel safely" LM: "with safety"	بالسلامة



Figure 2.2.2: "Steam Engine Train" by pambenn

الجَوَّار رَقْم (2)

المُساَفِر: لَوْ سَمَحْتَ، مِمَكْن تَذَكَّرَة؟

المُوظَّفَة: عَلى فِين؟

المساَفِر: إِشْكَنْدِرِيَّة إِن شَاء اللّٰه

المُوظَّفَة: رايح بس وَلَا رايح - جَيّ؟

المسافر: رايح بس من قَصْلِكْ

المُوظَّفة: طيب، عَايز قطر الصبح ولا باليل؟

المسافر: ممكن باليل.

الموظَّفة: قطر الساعة كام؟ ستّة ولا تسعة؟

المسافر: تسعة.

الموظَّفة: دَرَجَة أولى ولا ثانية؟

المسافر: بكام تذكرة الدرجة الأولى والثانية؟

الموظَّفة: الدرجة الأولى بـستّين جنيه والثانية بأربعين.

المسافر: درجة أولى، إتَقَصِّلِي الفُلُوس.

الموظَّفة: بالسلامة إن شاء الله.

المسافر: شُكراً.

Note

A very useful expression that is commonly used is “مُمْكِن” which means “It is possible.” When your intonation is rising, “مُمْكِن” means “Is it possible?” as in the previous dialogue.

3. At the restaurant



Figure 2.2.3: "Bell Peppers" by Scarletina

كلمات وتعابير مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير
أهلاً وسهلاً بِكِ (أَنْتِ) أهلاً وسهلاً بِكَ (أَنْتَ)	welcome female recipient (LCA) welcome male recipient welcome female recipient (ECA) welcome male recipient	أهلاً وسهلاً فِيكِ أهلاً وسهلاً فِيكَ أهلاً وسهلاً يِيكِ أهلاً وسهلاً يِيكَ
same	LM: "you (f.) like" IM: "would you like?" when followed by a rise in intonation	تَحْبِي..... (إِنْتِ)
قائمة الطعام Still used in restaurants and newspapers together with the borrowed word المُنْبُو	the menu	المُنْبُو
	I want does not change with speaker's gender	يَدِّي (عايز- عايزة)
same	dish or plate alternatively, unlike English.	طبق
	stuffed leaves (LCA) It is called مَحْشِي (ECA)	مَلْفُوف

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
إشي	something (LCA) حاجة (ECA)	شيء
ثاني	In the context of the coming dialogue, it means "another" but it can also mean "second."	second ثاني آخر "another"
رُز	rice	أرز
حليب	milk (LCA) لَبَن (ECA) In Egypt, yogurt is زَبَادِي while in the Levant, لَبَن is yogurt.	same
شويّ	شويّ is levant for a few or little. شويّة is the Egyptian for a few or little Example: I want little water, please. عايز شويّة ميه لوسمحت I want few apples, please. عايز شويّة تفاح لو سمحت	قليلاً
عَجَبِكْ	"The LM: "pleases you	أعجبك

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالفصحى
طَيِّب	delicious. See taxi conversation for more information	لَذِيذ same word or
الشيك	"LM: "check (n.)" IM: "receipt or bill	.This word can be used in MSA as a borrowed term

الجوّار رَقَم (3)

الجارسونة: أهلا وسهلا فيكي.

الزبونة: أهلاً.

الجارسونة: شو تحبّي تَشْرَبِي؟

الزبونة: أحبُّ أَشْرَبَ عصير لمون / ليمون.

الجارسونة: إتفضلي المنيو، شو تحبّي تَأْكَلِي؟

الزبونة: بديّ مَلُفُوف وطَبَق حُمَص كبير.

الجارسونة: إشي تاني؟

الزبونة: لأ.

الجارسونة: أيّ حَلَوِيّات؟

الزبونة: ممكن زُرْ بالخَلِيب.

بعد شويّ.....

الجارسونة: الأكلُ عَجَبِك؟

الزبونة: كَيّير طَيِّب، ممكن الشيك؟

الجارسونة: إتفضّلِي.

الزبونة: شكراً.



Figure 2.2.4: "Basket of Vegetables" by macrocasin

4. Practice: Complete the dialogue

This is an incomplete dialogue in the audio files.

Audio

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

[View this Audio online](#)



Practice speaking by completing the missing parts in this dialogue:

كلمات وتعبيرات المهمة:

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة بالعربية
(city) square	ميدان
pharmacy	الصَيْدَلِيَّة

الزبونة: ميدان شوبرا؟

سواق التاكسي: _____

الزبونة: عندك عداد؟

سواق التاكسي: _____

الزبونة: خُش شمال هنا لو سمحت عند البنك

سواق التاكسي: _____

الزبونة: هنا لو سمحت.....هنا عند الصيدلية، إتفضل

سواق التاكسي: _____

2.3: Cultural insights- Giving directions

Giving directions in colloquial Arabic is giving hands-on directions, asking the person to take different turns and heavily using landmarks. GPS or Sat Nav has not been in much use in several Arab countries. Many people depend on each other for directions. For example, it is very common in Cairo for taxi drivers to ask pedestrians for directions or even drivers ask taxi drivers while waiting in a stop or sometimes while driving!

Landmarks can be supermarkets, pharmacies, restaurants, banks, etc. You can be given an address whose literal translation sounds like this:

17 Ahmed 'Orabi Street by HSBC bank, first floor, apartment 5.

In Arabic:

١٧ شارع أحمد عرابي بجانب بنك مصر، الدور الأول، شقة ٥

Therefore, when you are going to a new place, leave early and keep the phone number of the destination available to call in case you need further directions.

3: CHAPTER 3

3.1: Transitioning to CA- Verb tenses

3.2: Dialogues

3.3: Cultural insights- Phone conversations and communicating among different age groups in the Arab world

3.1: Transitioning to CA- Verb tenses

In MSA, there are additions, known as prefixes and suffixes, added to the root when the verb is conjugated in the present tense. These remain largely the same in CA, but in some dialects (ECA, LCA), بَ is added at the beginning of the verb to indicate habitual action. For example:

MSA: أَكُلُ التُّفَاحِ فِي الصَّبَاحِ

CA: بَأْكُلُ التُّفَاحِ فِي الصَّبَاحِ

Let's read and listen to more examples of present tense conjugations in MSA and CA:

المعنى Meaning	الفعل المضارع في العامية Present Tense (CA)	الفعل المضارع في الفصحى Present Tense (MSA)	الضمائر المنفصلة Independent Pronouns
I understand	بَافْهَمُ / بَفْهَمُ	أَفْهَمُ	أنا
read (m.s.2)	بَتَقْرَأُ	تَقْرَأُ	إنتَ (أنتَ MSA)
write (f.s.2)	بِتَكْتُبِي	تَكْتُبِينَ	إنتِ (أنتِ MSA)
he eats	يَبْأَكُلُ	يَأْكُلُ	هو
she plays	يَبْتَلَعِبُ	تَلْعَبُ	هي
we drink	يَبْشَرَبُ	نَشْرَبُ	إحنا (نحن MSA)

المعنى Meaning	الفعل المضارع في العامية Present Tense (CA)	الفعل المضارع في الفصحى Present Tense (MSA)	الضمائر المنفصلة Independent Pronouns
you (all) cook	يَتَبَطَّخُوا	تَتَبَطَّخُونَ	إنتو (أنتم MSA)



Figure 3.1.1: "Islamic Architecture: Indoor Sitting Space" by KinfofColeslaw

3.2: Dialogues

1. At the sports club

كلمات وتعابير مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
النادي	the club Unlike English, where the club can be a night destination for dancing and partying, النادي in several Arab countries refers to a sporting club. For nightclub, "disco" or "night club" is used.	same
أنتَ فين من زمان؟	LM: "Where are you from a long time?" IM: "Where have you been?"	أين أنتَ؟ The expression من زمان means from a very long time. Listen to this song .
عاش من شافك (إنّ)	LM: "Whoever sees you will live." A compliment signifying happiness to see the person, usually said when two people have not seen each other in a long time.	N/A
والله	LM: "by God" IM: emphasis	same
مَشغول	busy	same
شُغل	work	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
لدرجة إنك تنسى أصحابك	LM: "to the extent that you forget your friends"	same
باصحى	ب+اصحى I wake up	أصحو أو أشتيقظ
وبعدين	then	ثم
بأفطر	ب+ افطر I eat breakfast	أفطر
على طول	LM: "along the length" IM: "all the time" The expression can also mean "immediately," or "straight" when giving directions, or "honest" when describing a person.	N/A
إجتماعات	meetings singular: إجتماع	same
مناقشات	discussions singular: مُناقشة	same
خناقات	fights and arguments	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
دَوْشَة	noise	صَوْصَاء
أَرْجَع	I return أرجع لـ... أرجع لبيت أحمد I return to Ahmed's house	Same, but the preposition used after this verb is إلى.
ياكل العشا	I eat dinner	آكل العشاء The ء in MSA changes in CA or sometimes deleted.
بانام	I sleep	أنام
يَوْمَكَ	your day (f.s.2)	m.s.2 يَوْمَكَ f.s.2 يَوْمُكَ
مَلِيَان	filled (objects) chubby (person)	مَلِيء
المُدير	boss/ director	same
مَسْئُول عَنْ	responsible for	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
حاجة	something (ECA)	شيء
أولادي	my children	أطفالي same and also
بازاكر	I study	أذاكر
الواجبات	homework (it is plural in Arabic) LM: " assignments"	same and "duties."
باروح	I go	أذهب
ربنا معاكي ومعاك	May God be with you Our = رب + نا God/Lord مع + ا+ ك (ي)= With you LM: "and with you" IM: "May God be with you as well."	الله معك ومعك

لجوار رقم (1)

(في النادي)

هَدى: مَحْمُود...يا محمود!

محمود: أهلا أهلا! هدى! ياه!

هدى: إنتَ فين من زمان؟

محمود: عاش مِن شافِك... أنا و الله مَشغول في الشُّغل

هدى: ليه؟ لدرجة إنك تنسى أصحابك! لا لا

محمود: و الله كل يوم، باصحي بدري حوالي الساعة سِتة و بعدين أسوق للشُّغل و بعدين بأفطر هناك...و على طول إجتِماعات و مُناقشات و خناقات...دوشة... و بعدين بأزجع البيت وياكل العشا و بانام

هدى: ياه! إنت يُومَك مَليان شُغل

محمود: أنا المُدير و مَسْؤول عَن كُل حاجة...إنتِ عاملة إيه

هدى: و الله ، أنا كمان مشغولة مع أولادي...كُل يوم بازاكر معاهم للوَاجِبَات و بارُوح معاهم المَدْرَسَة و بنام الساعة عَشرة بَعد يوم طويل...بَس يَنروح النادي كُل يوم جُمعة

محمود: رَبَّنَا معاكي يا هُدى

هدى: ومعاك يا محمود...تَحب نَلْعَب تَينس؟

محمود: يلا!

How to form the future tense:

In MSA, there are two ways to form the future, by adding سَ as a prefix or the word سَوْفَ , both before the present tense. For example

I play in the (sporting) club. أَلْعَب في النادي.

I will play in the (sporting) club. سَأَلْعَب في النادي.

In CA, the equivalent of سَ is the letter هَ or حَ.

I will play in the (sporting) club. هَالْعَب في النادي.

I will play in the (sporting) club. هَالْعَب في النادي.

2. Missing a lecture at the university

كلمات وتعابير مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
إيه يا نادية؟	What is wrong, Nadia?	It said in several different ways: ماذا بك يا نادية؟ هل هناك شيء ما؟
إنّ عيّانة؟	Are you sick?	هل أنت مريضة؟
عندي برّد	LM: "At me is cold" IM: " I have cold"	same
خارّوح	I will go	سأذهب
خارّوح للدكّثور	I will go to the doctor.	سأذهب إلى الدكتور. أو سأذهب إلى الطبيب. Notice that the preposition after أذهب in MSA is إلى while it is ل in CA.
بكرة	tomorrow	غداً
خاشّيري	I will buy	سأشتري سوف أشتري
دوّا	medicine	دواء

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالمساوي بالفصحى
فيتامين سي	vitamin C	same
سَلَامَتِكَ	May you feel better. (س.ل.م root)	same
الله يَسْلِّمُكَ	response to the previous LM: "May God make you safe/sound"	same
صحيح	"correct" or "by the way," as in the following dialogue.	It means "correct."
فيه واجب فَاتْنِي	There is = فيه LM: "There is homework which I missed/passed by me." فَاتْنِي = فات + ن+ي فات: gone ن is added with the attached pronouns in verbs (an MSA rule extended to CA). ي means mine (an MSA possessive pronouns used in CA).	هناك واجب فَاتْنِي
حنقرا	we will read	سنقرأ سوف نقرأ
الجزء الأول	the first part/ chapter	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالمساوي بالفصحى
الرّواية	the novel	same
لِمُحاضرة	for (the) lecture ل + محاضرة	same
الأدب الإنجليزي	English literature	same
حَيَكْتِب	we will write/compose	سنكتب سوف نكتب
بَحْث	research/paper	same
آخُذْ	I take	أخُذْ In some dialects, the ّ stays the same as MSA and in others like ECA, ّ changes into د.
آخُذْ مِنْكَ	I take from you	آخذ منك
المحاضرات	lectures	same
ديه	this (non-human plural as well as singular feminine)	هذه

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
يوم الخميس	Thursday	same
أكيد	surely	same
حاذيكي	I will give you (f.s.2)	سأعطيك سوف أعطيك
حشوفك	I will see you	سأراك سوف أراك
في الكافيتريا	at/in the cafeteria	same
تعبتِك معايا مافيش تعب ولا حاجة	LM: "I made you tired with me." IM: "I caused you lots of trouble." (an expression to thank a person for help) The response LM: "there is neither tiredness nor anything." IM: "there is no trouble at all."	Complimenting and thanking for people's help is crucial in the Arabic culture. This expression and its response can be said in different ways but the message is the same.
سلام	LM: "peace." (shortened form of good bye) It is used among young people who are close friends. It is considered rude if it is at the end of a conversation with an elder. The response is the same.	same

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالفصحى
نونو	term of endearment In the Arabic culture, they give each other endearing names. If the person's name has a ن like in نادية, the endearing name could be نونو. If the person's name is جمال, the endearing name could be جومي. Also also used with babies and children.	N/A
جَمِيلَة	LM: "beautiful." (Used in this context to express endearment. Only used among close friends and loved ones.)	same

Listen to the conversation between two female friends over the phone; Nadia is sick and has missed lectures at the university.



Figure 3.2.1: "Vintage Brass Phone" by pedrojperrez

الجوار رَقَم (2)

نادية: آلو...مين معايا؟

هُدى: أنا هدى...إيه يا نادية؟ إنت فين؟ إنت مش في الجامعة ولا في النادي... إنت عَيَّانة؟

نادية: أبوة، عَندي بَرْد. خَارُوح لِلدُّكْتُور بُكْرَة و خَاشِيري دوا و فيتامين سبي.

هُدى: سَلَامَتِكَ.

نادية: الله يَسَلِّمَك...صحيح، فيه واجب فَائِني إِنَّهَارْده في الجامعة؟

هُدَى: آه، حنقرا الجزء الأول من الرواية لمحاضرة الأدب الإنجليزي و حنكتب بحث.

نادية: ممكن آخذ منك المحاضرات ديه يوم الخميس؟

هدى: أكيد إن شاء الله حادكي المحاضرات وحشوفك في الكافيتريا يوم الخميس.

نادية: شكرا يا هدى، تعبتك معايا.

هدى: مافيش تعب ولا حاجة...سلام يا نونو.

نادية: سلام يا جميلة.

How to form the past tense

Forming the past tense in CA is the same as MSA except that the final vowel is suppressed to be sukoon and sometimes there are internal vowel changes:

MSA: كَتَبْتُ

CA: كَتَبْتُ

MSA: لَعِبْتُ

CA: لَعِبْتُ

In the first example, the only changes were at the end of the word in CA. The final letter is unvoiced and pronounced with a sukoon. In the second example, two changes took place in the CA. The first is the unvoiced last letter. The second change is the middle letter root of the verb ع. It has a كسرة in MSA, and it changed into فتحة in CA.

The verbs شرب and فهم are examples of verb form 1 on the pattern of فَعَلَ in MSA; this pattern vowels changes to a--a or i--i in CA^[1].

This means that in MSA verbs like شَرِبَ and فَهِمَ with kasra in the middle will be in CA a--a (fatha--fathaa) or i--i (kasra--kasra) on the first and the second letter of the pattern one verb. In some dialects and even within different towns in Egypt, they can be pronounced فَهَمَ and شَرَبَ.

Read and listen to the past tense conjugations sampling form 1 verbs:

الضمائر	الفعل الماضي في الفصحى	الفعل الماضي في العامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	التعليق
أنا	فَهَمْتُ	فِهْمْتُ	I understood	f takes kasra, and the final vowel is sukoon

الضمائر	الفعل الماضي في الفصحى	الفعل الماضي في العامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	التعليق
إنتَ	دَخَلْتَ	دَخَلْتُ	entered (m.s.2)	final sukoon
إنتِ	كَتَبْتَ	كَتَبْتِ	wrote (f.s.2)	no change
هوَّ	أَكَلَ	أَكَلْ	he ate	final sukoon
هيَّ	لَعِبْتَ	لَعِبْتِ	she played	ل takes kasra, and the final vowel is sukoon
إحنا	شَرَبْنَا	شَرِبْنَا	we drank	ش takes kasra
إنتوا	طَبَخْتُمْ	طَبَخْتُو	you (all) cooked	و final



Figure 3.2.2: "Petra Ancient Carved Sandstone Temple" by mandit1990

In the following dialogue, you will find verbs like **إِتَقَرَّجْتَ** and **إِتَكَلَّمْتُ**. These are form 5 in MSA ، **تَقَرَّجَ تَكَلَّمَ**. In CA, **إِ** is added at the beginning of the verb (form 6 also^[2]). In addition, the vowel on the second root letter is kasra.

Examples: Form 5

MSA	CA
تَكَلَّمَ أحمد عن الدرس.	أحمد إنْكَلَّمَ عن الدرس.
تَعَلَّمَتِ الطالبة العربية.	الطالبة إنْعَلِمَتْ عَرَبِي.

As you can see, the l is added in the verb form 5 in CA and kasra in the middle root letter. The root letters of تَعَلَّمَ are ع. ل. م and for تَكَلَّمَ are ك. ل. م.

On a different note, you might have noticed that in CA, the sentences are mostly nominal if the doer is mentioned.

After the following dialogue, some features of the weak verbs used in the dialogue are explained:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
مَالِك؟	What's wrong (with you)? (m.s.2)	مَالِكْ
شَكْلُكَ مِخْتَاكِ نَوْم!	LM: "You look as if you need sleep." IM: "Your appearance needs sleep."	N/A
إِمْبَارِح	yesterday	أَمْس
الشُّغْل	work	الشغل أو العمل
من الساعة سابعة الصُّبْح لعشرة ليل	LM: " from 7 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock at night" من ... ل	من ... إلى

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
باشتغل على	I am working on	اشتغل في أو أعمل في
مَشْرُوع	project	same
رُحْتُ	I went	ذهبتُ note following the dialogue
علشان	because	لأن
جَعَّان	hungry	جوعان
أَخَذْتُ/خَذْتُ	I took	أخذتُ
رَجَعْتُ	I returned	رَجَعْتُ
الساعة إتناشر	12 o'clock	الساعة الثانية عشرة
ليل	at night	بالليل
علشان كده	because of this	لهذا
تَّعْبَان	tired	same
إنهارده	today	اليوم

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
عَمَلْتُ	I made/I did	عَمَلْتُ
السوق	the market	same
إِشْتَرَيْتُ	I bought	إِشْتَرَيْتُ
خُضَار	vegetables	same
إِتَفَرَّجْتُ عَلَى	I watched	تَفَرَّجْتُ Also different meanings including "spread out." You can check its various meanings in MSA using the online Arabic to English Dictionary .
التليفزيون	TV	same and التلفاز
إِتَكَلَّمْتُ مَعَ	I talked with	تَكَلَّمْتُ مَعَ
صَاحِبَتِي	my female friend	صَاحِبَتِي
نِمْتُ	I slept	نِمْتُ See note following the dialogue
الساعة عشرة	ten o'clock	الساعة العاشرة
نُص	half	نُصْف

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
رَبَّنَا يَجْعَلْ أَيَّامَكَ كُلَّهَا حُلُوةً!	LM: "God makes all your days sweet." IM: "May God make all your days pleasant." This is a compliment.	same
وَأَيَّامَكَ إِنَّكَ كَمَا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ!	IM: "And yours as well, God willing." (one response to the previous compliment)	أَيْضاً replaced with كَمَا

3. What did you do yesterday?

Listen to the conversation between two colleagues talking about what they did yesterday.

الجَوَّار رَقَم (3)

يُسرا: مَالِكَ يَا عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ؟ شَكَّلَكَ مِخْتِاجِ نَوْمِ!

عبد الرحمن: فَعَلًا...إِمْبَارَحِ كَانَ يَوْمٌ طَوِيلٌ.

يسرا: عَمَلْتَ إِيَّاهُ إِمْبَارَحِ؟

عبد الرحمن: كُنْتُ فِي الشُّغْلِ مِنَ السَّاعَةِ سَبْعَةَ الصُّبْحِ لَعَشْرَةَ لَيْلٍ عِلْشَانِ بِاشْتُغَلِّ عَلَى مَشْرُوعِ.

يسرا: يَا هُ! عَشْرَةَ لَيْلٍ! وَبَعْدِينَ؟

عبد الرحمن: وَبَعْدِينَ رُحْتُ الْمَطْعَمَ عِلْشَانِ كُنْتُ جَعَّانٌ وَأَخَذْتُ تَاكْسِي وَرَجَعْتُ الْبَيْتَ حَوَالِي السَّاعَةِ إِثْنَا شَرِ لَيْلٍ.

يسرا: عِلْشَانِ كَيْدَهُ أَنْتَ تَعْبَانِ إِنْهَارَهُ.

عبد الرحمن: وَإِنْ؟ عَمَلْتُ إِيَّاهُ إِمْبَارَحِ؟

يسرا: رُحْتُ السُّوقَ وَإِشْتَرَيْتُ خُضَارَ وَبَعْدِينَ إِتَفَرَّجْتُ عَلَى التِّلِفِزِيُونِ وَإِتَكَلَّمْتُ مَعَ صَاحِبَتِي فِي التِّلِفُونِ وَنَمْتُ حَوَالِي السَّاعَةِ عَشْرَةَ وَنُصْ.

عبد الرحمن: تَمَامٌ...كَانَ يَوْمُكَ جَمِيلٌ...رَبَّنَا يَجْعَلْ أَيَّامَكَ كُلَّهَا حُلُوةً!

يسرا: وَأَيَّامَكَ إِنَّكَ كَمَا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ!



Figure 3.2.3: "Sitting Couple" by Kesh

Note

In the previous dialogue, you have seen the weak verbs **نمت** , **رحت** , **كنت**. Let's have a look at their conjugations:

Listen and read conjugations of some weak verbs in CA and MSA:

الماضي في العامية Past tense in CA (نام)	الماضي في العامية Past tense in CA (راح)	الماضي في العامية Past tense in CA (كان)	الماضي في الفصحى Past tense in MSA	المضارع في الفصحى Present tense in MSA	الضمائر Pronouns CA
نِمتْ	رُحْتُ	كُنْتُ	كُنْتُ	أَكُونُ	أنا
نِمتْ	رُحْتَ	كُنْتُ	كُنْتَ	تَكُونُ	إنتَ
نِمتْ	رُحِيتْ	كُنْتُ	كُنْتَ	تَكُونِينَ	إنتِ
نَامَ	رَاحَ	كَانَ	كَانَ	يَكُونُ	هو
نَامَتْ	رَاحَتْ	كَانَتْ	كَانَتْ	تَكُونُ	هي

يَمْنَا	رُحْنَا	كُنَّا	كُنَّا	نَكُونُ	إِحْنَا
---------	---------	--------	--------	---------	---------

4. Practice: Complete the dialogue

This is an incomplete dialogue in the audio files. Practice speaking by completing the missing parts in this dialogue:

سارة: أهلا يا أحمد، عامل إيه؟

أحمد: _____، _____؟

سارة: الحمد لله. عملت إيه إمبارح؟

أحمد: _____.

سارة: صحيح حتعمل إيه بكرة؟

أحمد: _____.

سارة: ياه، أنت مشغول أوي. ممكن تيجي معايا الحفلة بكرة؟

أحمد: _____.

سارة: تمام... على فكرة، لما حنروح الحفلة بكرة، ممكن نتعشى. أنت كل يوم بتتعشى إمتى؟

أحمد: _____، _____؟

سارة: بتعشى حوالى الساعة سابعة.

أحمد: _____!

سارة: إن شاء الله، أشوفك بكرة.

[1] Abbas Al-Tonsi and Laila Al-Sawi, An Intensive Course in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, Part 1 (American University in Cairo 1986)
8

[2] Al-Tonsi,8

3.3: Cultural insights- Phone conversations and communicating among different age groups in the Arab world

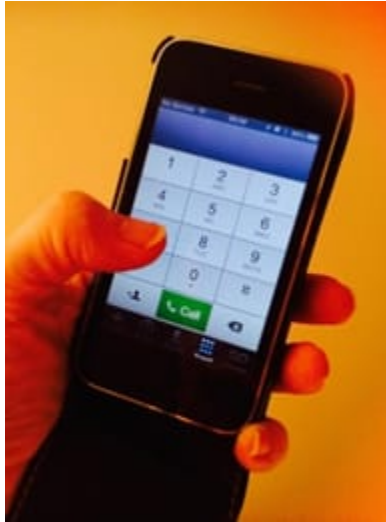


Figure 3.3.1: "Cell Phone Number Pad" by rickyysanne

Between young people in the Arab world, texting and social media like Facebook and applications like WhatsApp are commonly used instead of email to plan an outing or meeting. However, it is culturally inappropriate to only text an older person to set up an appointment. Calling an older person (friend or acquaintance) or a manager (in a work setting) is more appropriate for any kind of communication.

The concept of time is more fluid in the Arab culture where parties can extend for hours; showing up on time is not very common. This is why it is important to have a cell phone to check if the person is on the way to the meeting place or not, especially in big cities where traffic can be an issue.

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4: CHAPTER 4

4.1: Transitioning to CA- Negation in MSA vs CA

4.2: Accepting and rejecting invitations

4.3: Cultural insights- Tips on dealing with culturally sensitive situations

4.1: Transitioning to CA- Negation in MSA vs CA

During your studies of MSA, you have probably noticed that the present tense is negated using لا, past tense using ما, and non-verbal sentences using ليس. There are more tools of negation like لا النافية , لا الناهية , لن, لم. The good news is that in CA, the negation is much simpler with fewer tools to use.

One of the equivalents of ليس in the Egyptian dialect is مش. In the Levant, it is ما, and in the Gulf, مو. You can add مش before non-verbs to negate, regardless of the gender.

Examples:

محمود مش طويل.

Mahmoud is not tall.

سامية مش طويلة.

Samiya is not tall.

الأولاد مش طوال.

The boys are not tall.

الولدين مش طوال.

The two boys are not tall.

Note

The dual is used in CA but treated grammatically as plural. The word طوال is the broken plural for طويل. The dual pronouns like أنتما, هما are not used in CA.

أحمد مش عايز قهوة.

I.M is: Ahmed does not want coffee.

L.M is: Ahmed is not the “wanter” of the coffee/is not wanting coffee.

صفية مش عايزة قهوة.

I.M: Safiyaa does not want coffee.

L.M: Safiyaa is not the “wanter” of the coffee/is not wanting coffee.

Note

عايزة are not verbs in Arabic; they are active participles known as اسم فاعل. Read more [here](#) about the active participle in English. For more explanation and examples on the active participle in ECA, check [this link](#).

To negate verbs, whether present or past, in ECA use ما before the verb and ش after it. For example, “We do not eat” is:

ما بتأكلش

Read and listen to following examples of present tense verbs and their negation:

المعنى باللغة الإنجليزية	الفعل المنفي في المضارع في جملة	الفعل في المضارع	الضمائر
Negated verb in a sentence			
I do not understand French.	ما بفهمش فرنساوي.	بافهم	أنا
You don't read newspapers.	ما بتقرأش جرائد.	بتقرأ	إنت
Why don't you (f.s.2) write in the papers?	ما بتكتبيش في الورق ليه؟	بتكتبني	إنت
He doesn't eat a lot.	ما بتأكلش كثير.	بتأكل	هو
She doesn't play in the sand.	ما بتلعبش في الرمل.	بتلعب	هي
We do not smoke shisha. (بنشرب also means “drink”)	ما بتشربش شيشة.	بتشرب	إحنا
You (all) don't cook in the morning.	ما بتطبخوش الصبح.	بتطبخوا	إنتم

To negate the future, just formulate the future verb in ECA by adding ح before the present tense. The second step is using مش before the verb. For example:

مش حنلعب هنا

We will not play here.

!مش حَاكُل في المطعم ده

I will not eat in this restaurant!

Note

In the future tense, the present-tense “ب” is deleted.

Mini-Dialogues: Examples of using negations and invitations

الكلمة والتعبير المساوي في الفصحى	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
same	LM: “by God” IM: (emphasis)	والله
نَذْهَبْ	we go	نروح
شَرَاب ساقع أو شراب بارد	LM: “something cold” IM: “a cold drink” (incl. soda pop)	حاجة ساقعة
same	I run	أجري
تأتي معي	LM: “ come with me” IM: “ join me”	تيجي معايا
N/A	not free (for a person) not empty (for an object)	مَش فاضي
لكن(also used in CA)	but	بَسْ
الأسبوع القَادم	next (the coming) week	الأسبوع الجَاي

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي في الفصحى
مَشْغُول	busy	same
ما عنديش وقت	I don't have time.	ليس عندي وقت.
فُرْصَة تَائِيَة	LM: "second chance" IM: "There will be another time to meet or do what was planned."	فرصة قَائِمَة
إِمْتِحَان	exam	same
ماباكلش	ما + باكل + ش I do not eat	لا أَكُل
الهندي	Indian	same
الصيني	Chinese	same
عصير قصب	sugar cane juice [Wikipedia]	same
مابشربش	I do not drink	لا أَشْرَب
عصير رُمان	pomegranate juice	same

سارة: تحب ناكل أيس كريم يا تاسيم؟

باسم: لا والله / ميش عايز، بس مُمَكِّن يزوح الكوفي شوب و يشرب حاجة ساقعة.

سامية: أنا عايزة أروح النادي علشان أجري في التراك، تيجي معايا؟

مايكل: والله أنا مشغول وماعنديش وقت، مُمكن فُرصة ثانية؟

نورا: يا مُصطفى، عنْدك وقت يروح السينما يوم الجمعة؟

مُصطفى: مش فاضي، عنْدي إمتحان بس ممكن نروح الأسبوع الجاي.

نادية: يلا نروح المطعم الهندي!

عبد الله: أنا ماباكلش الأكل الهندي، بس ممكن نروح المطعم الصيني.

مُصطفى: تحبي تيجي معايا نشرب عصير قصب؟

فرح: آه، حاجي مَعاك، بس مابشربش عصير قصب، حاشرب عصير زُمان.

4.2: Accepting and rejecting invitations

1. Accepting an invitation to lunch

كلمات وتعابير مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
يَجِبِي تَنْغَدِّي؟ يَجِب تَنْغَدِي؟	Would you (f.s.2) like to have lunch? (m.s.2)	هل تحبّين أن تأكلي الغداء؟ Note: MSA usually requires “أَنْ” between two verbs (except in certain grammatical structures). In CA, you can put two verbs together without “أَنْ”.
معايا	With me (regardless of gender) (ECA) (LCA) مَعِي	مَعِي
بُكرة	tomorrow	غداً
حَوالي	approximately	حَوالي
مُمْكِن	possible (question or statement depending on intonation)	من المُمْكِن (أَنْ)
يَنَاسِبُكَ؟	LM: “Does it suit you?” (f.s.2) IM: “Does it work for you?”	هل يُناسِبُكَ؟

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالمساوي بالفصحى
والله إنت كُلّك دُوق (زوق).	LM: "By God, you are all thoughtful." (compliment) IM: "By God (for emphasis), you are very thoughtful."	
إنت اللي كلك دوق.	LM: "You are the one who is thoughtful." (answer to the previous compliment)	اللي is the relative pronoun equivalent to all of the MSA relative pronouns which include: الذي، التي، الذين... إلخ

الجوّار رَقَم (1)

هشام: أهلا يا مريم، عاملة إيه؟

مريم: الحمد لله وإنت؟

هشام: الحمد لله، تحبي تتغدي معايا بُكرة ومع سارة ومحمود؟

مريم: أكيد... بُكرة إمتى؟

هشام: حوالى الساعة ثلاثة؟ يتأسيك؟

هدى: أكيد... مُمكن طُبعاً، والله إنت كُلك دُوق (زوق).

هشام: إنت اللي كلك دوق.

2. Politely rejecting an invitation to an outing

كلمات وتعبيرات مهمة:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
حَيْظَلَع	we will go	سنذهب
تَعَالِي (إِنْتِ)	Come!	same
مَعَاد	appointment	ميعاد
ما في مُشْكَلَة	(there is) no problem	ليس هناك مشكلة
مَعْكُمْ	with you (plural) (LCA)	same
مُسْتَحِيل	impossible	same

الجَوَّار رَقْم (2)

مايكل: نانسي، كيفك؟

نانسي: نحمد الله / كيفك أنت؟

مايكل: منيح، صحيح، إحنا حنطلع على السينما بُكرة، إنتِ جاية طبعا؟

نانسي: بُكرة؟ صَعْب، عندي معاد عند الدكتور.

مايكل: تَعَالِي على السينما بعد معاد الدكتور، ما في مُشْكَلَة.

نانسي: أحب أكون مَعْكُمْ بس والله مستحيل، مَرَّة تَأْنِيَة إن شاء الله.

مايكل: أكيد إن شاء الله.

3. Practice: Complete the dialogue

This is an incomplete dialogue in the audio files. Practice speaking by completing the missing parts in this dialogue:

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير المساوي بالفصحى
نروح	we go (present tense)	نذهب
مَافِيشْ مُشْكِلَة	(there is) no problem (ECA)	ليس هناك مشكلة

صفية: زَجِبْ نروح السينما؟

ياسين: _____

صفية: ممكن الساعة خمسة؟

ياسين: _____

صفية: ممكن الساعة ستة، مَافِيشْ مُشْكِلَة!

ياسين: _____

صفية: إن شاء الله، مع السلامة!

4.3: Cultural insights- Tips on dealing with culturally sensitive situations



Figure 4.3.1: "Fluffy Kitten Looking Up" by KarolynAnn

Communicating between people of different cultures, speaking in their second or third language is exciting but presents frequent chances for misunderstanding. It is important to keep an open mind, especially if you encounter a sensitive or uncomfortable situation in an Arab country. For example, if you are busy and you are invited to lunch or an outing, but your friend cannot accept your "No," what would you do so as not to offend your friend and still not attend the outing? You can explain the reason and offer to make it up another time. Some of the expressions used in these situations are listed in dialogue 2 and the mini-dialogues in this chapter.

Consider also questions that are culturally accepted in the Arab world in the first encounter but not in the US (for example, age, religion, marital status, etc). If you do not feel comfortable answering them, you can politely refuse by saying that in your culture, it is considered personal. Explaining why you cannot answer could also be a learning opportunity for the other person. Speaking a second language is an ongoing learning process that includes learning the target culture and will always provide perspectives on new ideas and ways of life.

INDEX

No index terms found.

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GLOSSARY

S

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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GLOSSARY

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية
حاجة سافعة	a cold drink
الساعة إثناسر	12 o'clock
شوية	a little bit
حوالي	approximately
إنت عيانة؟	Are you sick?
باليل / بليل	at night
في الكافيتريا	at the cafeteria
جميلة	beautiful
علشان	because
علشان كده	because of this
المدير	boss/ director
مشغول	busy

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
but	بس
Chinese	الصيني
Come! (f.s.2)	تَعَالِي (إِنْتِ)
Come! (m.s.2)	تَعَالَى (إِنْتِ)
LM: "Come with me"	تيجي معايا
delicious/ OK/ kind	طَيِّب
discussions	مُتَاقَشات
dish/ plate	طَبَق
driver	سَوَّاق
Does it work for you? (f.s.2)	يَنَاسِبُكَ؟
English literature	الأدب الإنجليزي
enter (m.s.2)	خُسْ (إِنْتِ)
exam	إِمْتِحَان

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
wrote (f.s.2)	كَتَبَتْ
fights and arguments	خِناقات
filled	مَلِيان
from 7 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock at night	من الساعة سابعة الصُّبح لعشرة ليل
God makes your days all sweet	ربنا يجعل أيامك كلها حلوة!
good	مَنيح
good morning (response)	صباح النُّور
good morning	صَبَاحُ الخَيْرِ
half	نُص
he ate	أَكَلَ
his exams	إِمْتِحَانَاتُهُ
homework	الوَأجِبَات
how	كَيْفُ

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
How are you? (ECA)	أخبارك إيه؟
How are you? male recipient (ECA)	إزّيك؟
How are you? male recipient (LCA)	كيفك؟
how much/many	كّام
hungry	جّعّان
I am working on	باشتغل على
I don't have time	ماعنديش وقت
I eat breakfast	بأفطر
I eat dinner	باكل العشا
I go	بارّوح
I made/I did	عمّلت
I returned	رجّعت
I run	أجري

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية
باناام	I sleep
نَيمت	I slept
بازاكرُ	I study
أخُد	I take
إتكلمت مع	I talked with
أَخَذْتُ / خدت	I took
فهِمْتُ	I understood
باصحى	I wake up
بَدِّي	I want/would like (ECA)
(عايز- عايزة)	I want/would like (LCA)
إتفرّجت على	I watched
رُحْتُ	I went
حَاشْتِرِي	I will buy

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
I will give you (f.s.2)	حاذيكي
I will go	خاروح
I will go to the doctor	خاروح للدكتور
I will see you	حشوفك
I will take from you	آخذ منك
If you please (female recipient)	لَوْ سَمَحْتَ (إنتِ)
If you please (female recipient)	من فَضْلِكَ (إنتِ)
If you please (male recipient)	لَوْ سَمَحْتَ (إنتَ)
If you please (male recipient)	من فَضْلِكَ (إنتَ)
IM: "where?"	على فين؟
IM: "going"	رايح
IM: "I don't have the time."	ماعنديش وقت
IM: "60 Egyptian pounds (cost)"	بستين جنيه

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
IM: "better than before."	أحسن من الأول
IM: "travel safely."	بالسلامة
IM: "You have"	عِنْدَكَ (إِنْتَ)
IM: "You have"	عِنْدِكَ (إِنْتَ)
impossible	مُسْتَحِيل
milk	حَلِيب
Indian	الهندي
correct or by the way (depending on the context)	صَحِيح
possible	مُمْكِن
Lectures (singular محاضرة)	المحاضرات
left	شِمَال
left then right	شِمَال في يَمِين

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
LM: "another chance" IM: "There will be another time to meet or do what was planned."	فُرْصَة تَانِيَة
LM: "by God" IM: For emphasis	والله
LM: "something cold" IM: "a cold drink" (incl. soda pop)	حاجة سَافعة
LM: "all the time"	على طول
IM: "There will be another time to meet or do what was planned to be done but did not."	فُرْصَة تَانِيَة
LM: "at me is cold" IM: "I have cold."	عَنْدِي بَرْد
LM: "by God"	والله
IM: "by God, you are very thoughtful." (compliment)	والله إنتِ كُلِّك دُوق (زوق)
IM: "the receipt or bill"	الشيك
LM: "You are the one who is thoughtful"	إنتِ اللّي كلك ذوق
entered (m.s.2)	دَخَلْتُ
May God be with you	رَبَّنَا معاكِ

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
May you feel better	سَلَامَتِكَ
medicine	دَوَا
meetings	إِجْتِمَاعَات
meter	عداد
money	فُلُوس
my children	أَوْلَادِي
my female friend	صَاحِبَتِي
my loved/dear one	حَبِيبَتِي
next week	الْأُسْبُوعُ الْجَاي
noise	دَوْشَة
not free (for a person) not empty (for an object)	مَشْ فَاصِي
OK/alright	طَيِّب
One of its meanings is "class" in a train.	دَرَجَة

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
or	وَلَا
passed/succeeded	نَجَحَ
Peace be upon you	السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ
pharmacy	الصَّيْدَلِيَّة
please/ go ahead/ here (female recipient)	إِنْفَضِّلِي
please/ go ahead/ here (male recipient)	إِنْفَضِّلْ
pomegranate juice	عَصِيرُ رُمَّانٍ
project	مَشْرُوعٌ
research	بَحْثٌ
responsible for	مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ
return	أَرْجَعُ
return ticket;	رَايَحٌ - جَيِّ
rice	رُزٌّ

الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية	المعنى بالإنجليزية
لعبتْ	she played
حاجة	something (ECA)
إشي	something (LCA)
ميدان	square
ملفوف	stuffed leaves (LCA)
عصير قصب	sugar cane juice
أكيد	surely
التاكسي	taxi
الساعة عشرة	ten o'clock
النادي	the club
الصبح	(the) morning
ما في مشكلة	(there is) no problem (LCA)
مافيش مشكلة	(there is) no problem (ECA)

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
the menu	الْمُنْيُو
the novel	الرَّوَايَة
then	وبعدين
There is no trouble	ما فيش تَعَب ولا حاجة
There is homework which I missed	فيه واجب فَأَتْنِي
this	ديه
Thursday	يوم الخميس
ticket	تَذْكِرَة
tired	تَعْبَان
today	إِنَّهَارْده
tomorrow	بُكْرَة
train	قَطَر
TV	التليفزيون

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
vegetables	خُضار
vitamin C	فيتامين سي
we drank	شَرِبْنَا
would you like?	تحبِّي ... (إنتِ)؟
Where are you from a long time?	أنتِ فين من زمان؟
we go (present tense)	نروح
we will go	حَنِطَلَع
we will read	حنقرا
we will write/compose	حَنِكْتِب
welcome for a female recipient (LCA)	أهلا و سهلا فيكي
welcome for a male recipient (ECA)	أهلا و سهلا بيك
What?	إيه - شو؟
What is the cost of...?	يَكَام؟

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
What is wrong, Nadia?	إيه يا نادية؟
what is wrong?	مَالِك؟
when?	إمْتَى؟
where? (ECA)	فَيْن؟
where? (LCA)	وَيْن؟
which?	أَيُّ؟
who?	مَيْن؟
LM: "Whoever sees you will live!" (compliment)	عاش من شافك (إنت)
With me (regardless of the gender)	معايا
with you (plural)	مَعَكُمْ
work	الشُّغل
Would you (f.s.2) to eat lunch? Would you (m.s.2) to eat lunch?	تَجِبِّي تَتَغْدِي تَجِب تَتَغْدِي

المعنى بالإنجليزية	الكلمة والتعبير بالعامية
yesterday	إمبارح
you (all) cooked	طَبَخْتُو
You are forgetting your friends!	لَدَرَجَة إِنَّكَ تَنْسَى أَصْحَابَكَ
You (m.s.2) look as if you need sleep	شَكَّلَكَ مِخْتَا ج نوم!
your day (f.s.2)	يَوْمَكَ
your question (male recipient)	سُؤَالَكَ
your question (female recipient)	سؤالِك
ما + باكل + ش I do not eat	ما باكلش
ما + بشرب + ش I do not drink	ما بشربش



Figure 1: "Ornate Doors" by microdot

تمت بفضل الله

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