In the Arabic language, there is a difference between the formalized “Modern Standard Arabic,” and its wide variety of regional dialects. While strongly rooted in standard Arabic, colloquial dialects vary greatly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. These differences are the result of hundreds of years of contact, including the influence of the Arab conquests, as well as colonialism. The result is a rich, layered, and unique cultural reflection of a people and their history.

This map takes the common question of “What are you doing?” to show how widely it varies throughout the Arab World. Dialects transcended political and cultural borders, therefore the areas presented should be viewed as fluid and ever-changing approximations.