

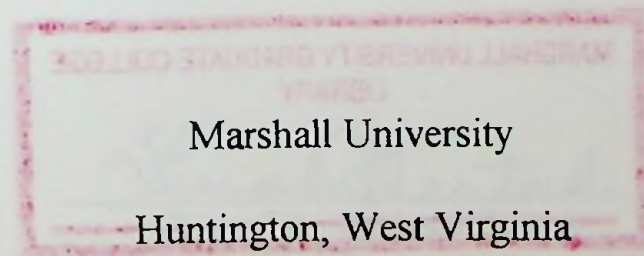
**GENDER PROBLEMS: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE
GRAMMATICAL GENDER PROBLEMS THAT FACE THE
LEARNERS OF ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

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Dedication

This work is affectionately dedicated

To my father, Mohammad Issam Hemmoudeh

To my mother, Haifaa Imam

To my brothers, Mohammad Ghassan Hemmoudeh

Mohammad Anass Hemmoudeh

Mohammad Waseem Hemmoudeh

And to my husband, Dr. Mohammad Burhan Dalati

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¹ The auditorium, Room 402 at Drinko Library, is a high tech large and sophisticated room where the attendees can follow up the PowerPoint presentation, prepared by the researcher, on wall screens.

² See Appendix 1.

Had it not been for the encouragement and assistance of everybody, this work could have never been completed. Everyone assured me that with hard work and enough patience, the work will be finished and the aim will be achieved.

Abstract

The aim of this sociolinguistic study is to examine the grammatical gender difficulties that non-Arabic speakers face when they learn Arabic as a second language (ASL). This work concentrates on English and French speakers and compares the errors each make while learning Arabic. The choice of these two languages resulted from two factors: (1) since the author is fluent in English and French, she conducted her research on speakers of both languages; (2) since both Arabic and French are considerably more marked morphologically than English, the researcher is interested in examining the type of errors made by the speakers of the two languages. This similarity leads her to predict two findings: (a) the errors that are made by French ASL learners are different from those made by the English learners, and (b) It is easier for French speakers to comprehend the Arabic grammatical rules and make fewer errors than the English speakers whose language does not support a rich grammatical gender system.

After briefly defining Arabic gender and tracing its origin to the Semitic languages, the author presents the Arabic grammatical gender rules to clarify how all words are classified as masculine or feminine. Then she categorizes and analyzes the errors that were made during the interviews she conducted. In the final part of the study, she provides some steps, and strategies that ASL teachers and learners can follow to overcome several obstacles during the teaching and learning of the Arabic grammatical gender.

Chapter One: Introduction

The study of grammatical gender in the Arabic language has attracted the attention of many scholars and researchers. The author's primary interest in writing about this issue arose from hearing the often repeated phrase, "Arabic is a difficult language to learn, particularly when it comes to grammatical gender." Since the author has been teaching Arabic as a second language, ASL, for over eleven years now, and has seen several common mistakes that learners of the language make, she conducted this sociolinguistic research to find out how the different types of errors vary according to the mother tongue of the learners. She also wanted to categorize and analyze those errors so that teachers can apply effective methodology to follow when they teach ASL to learners with or without gendered mother tongue.

1.1 Study Objectives

The present sociolinguistic study discusses the gender of the Arabic language within a grammatical framework assuming that the audience is anyone interested in learning or teaching ASL. The specific objectives of this work can be summed up as follows:

1. To determine precisely the specific areas of difficulties that English and French speakers face with regards to the Arabic grammatical gender.

2. To compare those difficulties to the differences in the grammatical gender systems of English and French.
3. To present solutions for some of those difficulties. Such solutions resulted from the analysis of the data that has been collected throughout the study.

1.2 Assumptions

Interference from the mother tongue language of ASL learners is one of the major sources of difficulty in second language learning: "Those elements that are similar to the (learner's) native language will be simple for him, and those areas that are different will be difficult" (Robinett and Schachter 197). The learners of a target language, L2, base assumptions about the new language on the knowledge they already have of their own language, L1. If the constructions of each language are similar, the learners will transfer the rules of their native language to the target language. The problem lies in the translation and transfer from one language to the other. Here the learners might forget that a certain rule in L1 might be completely different in L2. For example, a masculine word in a language might be feminine in a second or even neuter in a third. The word "key" is neuter in English¹, masculine in Arabic [muftaH,] and feminine in French² [une clé.] This preview indicates how the transfer from L1 to L2 constitutes one of the chief sources of errors.

¹ See Appendix 2 for a brief preview of the English grammatical gender system.

² See Appendix 3 for a brief preview of the French grammatical gender system.

1.3 Methodology

The process of collecting errors made by second language learners is not new. Experienced classroom teachers have long used the error collection and classification technique to guide their teaching process (Robinett & Schachter 145). While constructing this study, the researcher has followed the same pattern: she collected mistakes, categorized and analyzed them, then presented helpful strategies to be used by ASL teachers and learners.

This section is divided into two parts: (1) Subjects, and (2) Data Gathering Procedure.

1.3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study form two groups of different ages, gender, mother tongues, and educational backgrounds. The first group, whose members were interviewed in Syria at the “Arabic Teaching Institute for Foreigners,” contained six non-Arab ASL learners, who, in this study, will be called “learners A→ F.” The second group, whose members were interviewed in the United States, includes a native American, to be called “learner G,” who is studying Arabic as a hobby; and a ten-year-old boy, “learner H,” who is born in the United States to an Arabic speaking Syrian family. Since the boy attends American schools, he is more fluent in American grammar than in the grammar of Arabic.

Learner	Gender	Mother Tongue	Country of Origin	Arabic Level	Interviewed in
A	Female	English	England	Intermediate	Syria
B	Male	English	USA	Advanced	Syria
C	Female	French	France	Advanced	Syria
D	Male	English	USA	Intermediate	Syria
E	Female	English	USA	Advanced	Syria
F	Female	French	France	Intermediate	Syria
G	Male	English	USA	Intermediate	USA
H	Male	Arabic	Syria	Intermediate	USA

Table 1. Subjects

1.3.2 Data Gathering Procedure

The research material for this sociolinguistic study was based on analyzing the data collected during the author's latest trip to Syria, in summer 1999, and in the United States in fall 1999. The study consisted of a written language survey given to the ASL learners, and oral interviews conducted by the researcher.

Written Language Surveys

This part of the research aimed to elicit the grammatical gender errors that the ASL learners make when they use the written form of the Arabic language. In section one, the learners were given four sentences with some blank spaces, and were asked to fill them with the correct form of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. In section two, they had to translate five sentences from their mother tongue language into Arabic. The learners considered section three to be the most difficult where they were asked to write a short paragraph about a specific topic in the target language, Arabic.

Oral Interviews

Similarly, this phase was broken into three parts: in the first part, the researcher asked cultural questions which covered social topics such as food prepared for dinner, time for kids to go to bed, and so on. The aim of these questions was to elicit general cultural information, and to put the students at ease. In the second part, the immediate translations were related to deeper issues that illustrated more grammatical depth, and ranged in difficulty. In the last part, the learners were asked to tell a short story about a topic of their choice. Again, this part took place in the target language, Arabic.

After collecting data and analyzing it, the researcher reached two important conclusions. First of all, ASL learners can follow certain steps and strategies to help them learn the language more easily. Secondly, teachers can also follow certain steps in order to eliminate several problems that ASL learners might face during the learning process. At the end, the study sheds some light on future works and suggests the areas for future research.

1.4 Limitations

Since the main part of the study concentrates on classifying and analyzing the errors that were made by ASL learners, the researcher provides a brief history of the Arabic language, and of the evolution of grammatical gender. The aim behind giving this historical background is to clarify the origin of those grammatical gender rules so as to enable the audience to understand the topic more easily. The present work studies the gender of the Arabic language within a grammatical framework; thus, this study will not touch on the feminist gender theory. Another limitation is that a very small sample is used; only eight subjects participated.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This study comprises six chapters. The objectives of the study, the assumptions, the methodology, and the limitations are presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 introduces the review of literature regarding some major prior gender studies. Chapter 3 overviews briefly the history and the importance of the Arabic language, the origin of the Arabic grammatical gender, and the impact of Islam and poetry on the codification of Arabic. Chapter 4 presents the Arabic grammatical gender rules, while Chapter 5 presents, analyzes, and categorizes the grammatical gender errors that the ASL learners made during the interviews. In Chapter 6, the researcher offers strategies for ASL teachers and learners. The findings and their pedagogical implications, in addition to the required future research, close the chapter.

Chapter Two: The Review of Literature

In this chapter, using books, articles, and earlier dissertations concentrating on Arabic grammar, the researcher conducted a sociolinguistic study in which she analyzed the grammatical gender errors that ASL learners, particularly English and French, make when they learn Arabic as a second language. In the United States and internationally, the issue of grammatical Arabic, English, and French genders has been widely explored, and these previous studies helped the author in using research material from the following diverse libraries: Marshall Graduate College Library: Charleston, WV; Drinko Library: Huntington, WV; Morrow Library: Huntington, WV; Cabell Public Library: Huntington, WV; Putnam Public Library: Hurricane, WV; Princeton University Library: Princeton, NJ; University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, MI; Damascus University Library: Damascus, Syria; and Al-Assad Public Library: Damascus, Syria.

This review of literature concentrates on the foundation works as well as on present works. The former covers earlier textbooks and articles that discuss grammatical gender for all three languages, while the latter shows how the study of the same topic has changed and developed over the years. In two sections, this chapter presents works that supported this study: section (1) Arabic review of literature, and section (2) English and French review of literature. These two sections are not classified by chronological order, but by the relationship between their component parts; however, they still start with the earliest studies.

2.1 Arabic Review of Literature

This section is subdivided into two parts: Part 1 presents the books that dealt with the history and the importance of the Arabic language, in addition to the origin of grammatical gender and its evolution; Part 2 presents the books that concentrated on the grammar of the Arabic language.

Historical Review

Philip Hitti, a former scholar at Princeton University, writing about Professor Chejne's book, *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, 1969, concluded,

It is a commendable attempt to introduce the Arabic language, with its features ... to students and nonspecialists, to tell the story of its dramatic evolution from a tribal dialect to one of the few carriers of world culture, to indicate its unique relation to the religion of Islam and its role in the development of modern Arab nationalism. The book ... sums up what is already known and presents the contributions of the author. The documentation is generous. It adds an element of authenticity to the narrative and provides those who seek further information with a satisfying bibliography. (Chejne v)

This valuable piece of literature was of great help in presenting the historical facts of the Arabic language in chapter three of this study.

Although the Arabic language has been preserved since the seventh century, it has passed through some dark ages during which the language was not supposed to be used. Another historical book *min Hadir al-lugha al-arabiyya*, 1971, by Said Al-Afaghani, a leading Syrian linguist, outlines some of the policies of Turkification of the Arabic language that were implemented in Syria at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Ottoman occupation. Turkish, the language of the Ottoman Empire people, was the language of instruction in the government-sponsored schools in all subjects, including the teaching of Arabic. Therefore, those who taught Arabic spoke it with a Turkish accent. Students at government schools were not allowed to use Arabic among themselves even during the recesses, and those unfortunates who were caught speaking it were punished. Scholars and Arab linguists demanded the reuse of Arabic as the official language in all the primary schools in the provinces of the Fertile Crescent. They also called for the building of new secondary schools in which Arabic would be the language of instruction. As a result of the demands, the Arab activists and the Ottoman authorities reached an agreement as follows: two secondary schools were started, one in Damascus and the other in Beirut.

Another important work that helped the researcher to construct the third chapter of her study was the interesting dissertation, *A Study of Gender*, by Hasan Ibrahim, 1970. Ibrahim demonstrated how grammatical gender in its origin was an accident of linguistic history, and that as a grammatical category it owes its emergence and existence to various linguistic forces. He also proved that grammatical gender was merely a means to classify nouns according to their suffixes without any allusion to sex.

The final book that contributed in developing the historical background, in Chapter Three, was *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs* by Ignac Goldziher. In this book, Goldziher studied the roots of the Arabic language saying that Arabic is nothing but the dialect of Quraysh, the tribe to which Prophet Muhammad belongs. This tribe lived in Mecca and enjoyed an unexcelled reputation among all other existing tribes. Goldziher moved on to discuss the importance of the Quran and the pre-Islamic poetry in the codification of the Arabic language. He also talked about Abul-Aswad Al-Du'ali (d. 688 A.D.), the first person to have written a grammatical work on the Arabic language. He wrote, "Al-Du'ali is the man whom we can consider to be the founder of the Arabic language" (3).

Grammatical Review

In *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 1904, Robert Sterling devoted a chapter to discuss the gender of nouns. He first discussed all nouns in general and then moved on to discuss their two kinds: "masculine" and "feminine." He subdivided the feminine nouns into two categories: "Feminine by Form" and "Feminine by Meaning". At the end of this chapter, Sterling gave two lists: the first contained thirty-one nouns that were considered feminine though they lacked the feminine ending, while the second included forty-four words that could be used as either masculine or feminine. Grammarians noticed that Sterling did not explain the terminology he used. For example, when he indicated the kinds of feminine words, he wrote,

“Feminine nouns are of two kinds:

(a) Animate مؤنث حقيقي, as امرأة woman

(b) Inanimate مؤنث مجازي, or مؤنث غير حقيقي, as الشمس the sun

Then he immediately listed the other rules, giving no explanation to what “animate,” “inanimate” meant, in addition to all other used terms. Though the work contained only lists of words and lacked clarifications, ASL learners consider it a great reference to use when they are asked to categorize a list of words.

Another book that seemed to echo Sterling’s is *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 1964, by Al-mufaddal Ibn Salama. In this book, Ibn Salama summarized the grammatical gender rules of the Arabic language, listing terminology and giving examples without much explanation. But in *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*, the authors J. A. Haywood and H. M. Nahmad emphasized the increasing demand for studying the Arabic language whether to enjoy its literature or to gain a deeper insight into Islamic institutions and history (v). Therefore, they aimed to present an easy-to-understand grammar book that covers several issues and concentrates mainly on pronunciation. The book presented the words in English, gave the meanings in Arabic script, and transcribed the Arabic pronunciation using the English alphabet. The authors explained the issue of gender in two chapters, suggesting that they had carefully studied the earlier books that were written about the Arabic language to construct as much complete a study as possible. Though they produced a rich work, it is important to point out that to use the book, students require a teacher’s guidance and help. This thorough study that contained the grammatical rules of the Arabic language, and was intended to be used by ASL teachers and not solely by ASL learners.

Another grammatical book that supported this study was *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 1988, in which the author, William Wright, gave a detailed explanation of gender, its types, its divisions, its subdivisions, and its regular and irregular grammatical rules. The book has been translated from German into English, and a note at the beginning of the book indicated that this translation has been edited incorporating numerous additions and corrections. An important point that should be mentioned here is that the organization and presentation of the information were somewhat confusing, as a few listings were not presented in the correct place. Even with this problem, ASL teachers liked the book and considered it a valuable reference for ASL learners because it covered almost all the rules of Arabic grammatical gender.

Studying grammatical gender, Ayatollah Labadi's dissertation, *A Contrastive Study of Gender in English and Arabic*, 1990, provided a formal description of gender in English and Arabic and followed it by a juxtaposition of the two gender systems. His findings indicated that the speakers of English who learn Arabic face more difficulties in learning gender than the speakers of Arabic who learn English. The difference between Labadi's work and the present study is that the former discusses Arabic and English languages only, whereas the latter concentrates on the grammatical gender difficulties that face not only the English speakers, but also the speakers of French who learn Arabic as a second language.

Moving to deeper grammatical and technical issues, Al-khal wrote in his article, "al-mu'annathat al-samaiyya" *المؤنثات السماعية* about the *al-mu'annath al-majazi*, *المؤنث المجازي* "the metaphorical feminine group of words", a group that includes inanimate nouns with or without the feminine ending. Al-khal emphasized that grammarians made

lists of such words but the contents of each grammarian's list varied as each grammarian depended upon the dialect or dialects of his/her informants. The final result was that grammarians fully agreed on 100, out of 240 words, which are supposedly feminine without an overt feminine marker.

Grammarians have continually concentrated specifically on the issue of grammatical gender agreement among the component parts of a sentence. During the 1994's International Linguistics Association Conference, Pavlos Pavlou and Terry Potter discussed "The Difficulty of Avoiding Gender-Biased Language in Highly Inflected Languages: A Comparison of Greek and Arabic." Two of the major points that they emphasized were "1. ... Conjugated standard Arabic verbs are inflected for grammatical gender... 2. Agreement rules also dictate that masculine and feminine nouns modifying adjectives should agree in gender" (4). While Pavlou and Potter discussed the gender agreement among the components of the sentence, the researcher designated a good portion of her error analysis phase to concentrate on mistakes that were related to the lack of gender agreement among all the components of a sentence.

The most recent book that deals with the grammatical gender issue is *qawa'dul Nahu Wal Sarf wal I'mla'*, 1999, by Hayat Husaini. In this book, Husaini devoted chapter six to the rules of the masculine and feminine nouns. She defined every term and gave not only examples of words but she used those words in sentences. She also gave examples from the Quran, the Muslim's sacred Book, and included some lines of poetry. The importance of the Quran and its impact on the Arabic language, in addition to the importance of poetry, will be discussed in chapter three of this study. The difference between Husaini's book and this work is that Husaini discussed the grammatical gender

topic concentrating on native Arabic speakers, whereas this study went a step deeper and connected the grammatical gender to the problems that face the non-Arabic speakers when they learn the Arabic language. This makes the present study a good reference for teachers of ASL as well as for learners of ASL.

The last book presented in this section is not related to the Arabic grammar but to the error analysis procedure. *Second Language Learning*, 1983, by Robinett and Schachter, is an excellent reference that is intended to serve as a valuable learning tool for teachers, teacher trainers, and students in linguistics and other disciplines. The book is divided into three sections: contrastive analysis, error analysis, and related aspects. The articles in the error analysis section presented various viewpoints that helped this researcher in categorizing and analyzing the errors of her interviewees.

2.2 English and French Review of Literature

This section enabled the researcher to associate the reasons for the studied errors to the differences in the gender systems of the three languages. The two books that were consulted were written for learners of the language and not for native speakers. Zouheir Samhoury's book, *Modern English Grammar*, 1981, presented the English grammar for Arab university students in an easy and interesting way. The book is indebted to the great pioneering works of both traditional and modern grammarians, and is considered an essential part of the curriculum that the English Department at Damascus University offers. The first reason for the importance of this work is that it succeeded in presenting the English grammatical rules in a simple, and comprehensible way. Secondly, it

contained carefully selected drills that aimed to facilitate the practical application of the various topics that were fully explained in the theoretical part.

While Samhoury was interested in writing about English grammar, G. Mauger focused on studying the grammar of the French language. In his book, *Course de Langue et de Civilisation Francaises*, 1967, he presented the French grammatical rules in a clear and easy to understand form. He also added pictures to the textbook and this made studying the book and learning the language easier, especially for those who like to adopt the visual learning method. At the end of each lesson, Mauger used drills and practices that were intended to serve as a test of the learned information.

Summary

This review of literature proved that from the earliest times until today, studying the Arabic language has attracted the attention of many scholars. Different topics are studied and the issue of grammatical gender has been the focus for many grammarians and linguists; Arabs and non-Arabs. Similarly, the researcher believes that the present study is important for many reasons: first of all, this work will be helpful to both ASL teachers and learners. Secondly, the work presents the grammatical gender rules and discusses the mistakes that non-Arab speakers make when they learn the Arabic language. Thirdly, the study is a continuation of the same topic, and it adds a new flavor for those who are interested to know more about the Arabic language.

In the following chapter, the author will present the history and the importance of the Arabic language, in addition to the origin of grammatical gender and its evolution. The reason for giving some historical background is to connect the grammatical rules to their origin; this connection will enable the audience to understand these grammatical rules more easily.

Chapter Three:

The Arabic Language... The Arabic Grammatical Gender

Philip Hitti, a former scholar at Princeton University, wrote, "No people in the world, perhaps, manifest such enthusiastic admiration for literary expression and are so moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs. Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such irresistible influence as Arabic" (Chejne 5). What makes the Arabic language so influential is the richness of its words and images in addition to its musicality and power over both the reader and the listener. In the first part of this chapter, the author points out the origin of the Arabic Language, the two varieties of Arabic, the important impact of Islam and poetry on the language, and the roles of the Arabic language, culturally and socially. In the second part of the chapter, the author concentrates on the origin of the Arabic grammatical gender, its development and evolution.

3.1 The Arabic Language: Origin and Varieties

The origin of the Arabic language can be traced to the Semitic languages. The name "Semitic" is applied to a group of languages (Syriac, Phoenician, Aramaic, Akkadian...) that were spoken in Western Asia, and characterized by common elements in their morphology, phonology, vocabulary, and syntax (Moscati 1). These elements, including the way word endings are formed, the similar sounds of their letters and words,

and the masculine and feminine genders, have not changed despite lapse of time and change of place. Arabic, which has remained stable since the seventh century, enjoys a universality that makes it one of the world's greatest languages along with English, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese.

In his book *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs*, Ignac Goldziher explains the role of the Qurayshite dialect in the Arabic language saying, "What could be called the Arabic language of the educated... is nothing other than the dialect of Quraysh¹; and Arabic grammar is nothing else but the codification of the usage of this dialect" (10). Anwar Chejne discusses the codification issue of the Arabic language and presents the models which were adopted by the philologists as follows,

(1) the Quran, considered by virtue of its divine origin to be a paragon of purity and eloquence; (2) the Quraysh and neighboring dialects; (3) pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry and proverbs; (4) the sayings, correspondence, and speeches of the prophet and those of his immediate successors and other leading men of early Islam; (5) the language of the desert... the standard-bearer of purism and eloquence...; and (6) the *rawiyah*² راوية (transmitter) of poetry, who knew a great deal about poets and poetry and who formed a part of a group known as the *fusaha' alarab* فصحاء العرب "eloquent of the Arabs." (40)

In fact, grammarians started to record the poetical works of other ancient tribes in the dialect of Quraysh, an activity parallel to the beginnings of grammar. Abul Aswad

¹ The noble and powerful tribe to which Prophet Muhammad belonged

² A transcription inserted *only* for non-Arabic speakers to indicate how the Arabic words are pronounced.

Al-Du'ali was honored as the first person who wrote a grammatical work on the Arabic language.

In this sociolinguistic study, it is important to explain the two forms of the Arabic language. In her book, *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, the sociolinguist Janet Holmes defines the term diglossia as follows, "Diglossia is a characteristic of speech communities rather than individuals. Individuals may be bilingual; societies or communities are diglossic" (36). Arabic is a language that fits into this category as it has two varieties: the standard language, classical Arabic "H," and the everyday language, colloquial Arabic "L." Both the standard and the colloquial languages of Arabic have existed side by side from the very beginning, and to argue that the standard is better than the colloquial, or vice versa, would be futile since linguists consider both legitimate. The standard language, the "H" variety, the established, codified, written form of the language, is the dialect of Quraysh. The "H" variety of the Arabic language is used for formal communication, education, courts, radio, and TV. The standard Arabic serves as a bridge to help people of different dialects understand each other. It actually binds all Arabic-speaking countries together, as it is the official language to be used in international communication in the Arab world. People use the colloquial language for their daily informal communication; this "L" variety of Arabic varies not only from one country to the other but also from one city to another. Those who live in Egypt, for example, might not understand those living in Syria or in Iraq or even in Libya, their neighboring country. Here lies the importance of a standard language, a language that people from all over the Middle East can use to understand each other easily, a language that unifies all Arabic speakers.

To relate the “H” and the “L” varieties of the Arabic language to the present study of grammatical gender, the following information is crucial. Though the “H” and the “L” varieties of Arabic are different in many areas, when it comes to grammatical gender, it is a different story. In Arabic, all words are either masculine or feminine. In most cases, if a word is considered masculine in one of the varieties, it is masculine in the other. For example, *Tawleh* طاولة “table” is feminine in “H” and “L,” while *qalam* قلم “pen” is masculine in both of them. The diglossic differences between the two varieties of the Arabic language, the “H” and the “L,” can make them incomprehensible. Therefore, a learner of Arabic as a second language needs to know that mastering one of the varieties is not enough because s/he might not understand a person using the other form. For example, if someone wants to say “How are you?” talking to a male using the standard Arabic, s/he would say, *kaifa haluka?* كيف حالك؟ While using the colloquial form someone would say, *keefak?* كيفك؟. The question that might be asked here is how can people be fluent in apparently two different languages? Several factors play important roles, the first of which are schools. When children speak their acquired language, the everyday language, which they learn at home, they make several grammatical mistakes until they go to school and learn how to use the correct standard language, which in turn corrects their usage of the colloquial, everyday language. In addition to schools, other factors as newspapers, TV, and the governmental work place, all depending on the “H” variety of Arabic, have an impact on practicing what schools aim to establish.

The importance of the standard Arabic does not stop at the spoken word but extends to the written form of the language. For example, the colloquial Arabic has no correspondence to the written material. No matter in which Arabic country that person

lives or visits, s/he may read and understand an article, whether in a book or in a newspapers. The Arabic script, which contains twenty-eight letters, 25 consonants and 3 vowels, is written from right to left. Many of these letters are identical except for dots above or below the letter. Each letter has a somewhat different shape depending on whether it occurs at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. The following table presents the four different positions for two letters¹.

<i>Initial</i>	<i>Medial</i>	<i>Terminal</i>	<i>Alone</i>	<i>Translation</i>
ب	ب	ب	ب	B
ت	ت	ت	ت	T

Table 2: Arabic Script

In addition to the twenty-eight letters, the Arabic language has three symbols for short vowels –*damma* (ˆ) (*u*), *fatha* (˘) (*a*), and *kasrah* (˙) (*i*), which are written as pronunciation marks; above the end of the letters for “fatha” and “damma”, and below the end of the letters for the “kasrah.” There are also three long vowels *ū*, *ā*, and *ī*, which are expressed within individual characters and written as integral parts of a word. Finally, the Arabic script contains an emphatic *D*, which is believed to be a unique feature of the Arabic language; i.e. no other language has the same letter. For this reason, Arabs like to refer to themselves as *al natiqeena bil-DaD*, literally “the speakers with the letter *D*.”

¹ For the different positions of *all* the Arabic letters, see Appendix 4.

3.2 The impact of Islam in the Arabic Language

Classical, or Standard, Arabic is encompassed by the Arabic term *al-lugha al-fusHa*, meaning “the most eloquent language.” As defined by Arab grammarians, Classical Arabic is the language of the Koran and pre-Islamic poetry (Daher 47). Muslims believe that the Quran, Islam’s sacred scripture, is “a divinely revealed book from Allah³ to Prophet Muhammad for all mankind” (Saker 159). The Quran was revealed in the Arabic language at the beginning of the seventh century. Thus, Arabic has a dimension of being a sacred language, since it is the only language in which the Quran is believed to be understood. *Inna ja’lnahu Qura’nan arabiyyan la’lakum ta’qiloun* (الزخرف) {إنا جعلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلمكم تعقلون} : “We have made it an Arabic Quran, that you might understand” (Quran 43:3).

No matter what a Muslim’s mother tongue is, s/he needs to learn Arabic to perform the five daily prayers that they are obliged to do. S/he must say these prayers in Arabic because certain verses from the Quran, which was revealed in Arabic, are supposed to be recited. Since Arabic is a very rich language, it is capable of expressing the finest shades of meaning, and no translation, no matter how close it is, is capable of giving the exact equivalent meaning of the Quran, because the translation would lose the superior qualities which Arabic alone is able to convey (Chejne 8). The Quran, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad through the archangel Gabriel, was preserved first by God through the faithful Muslim followers who were entrusted with the sacred duty of

³ *Allah* is the Arabic word for *God*

memorizing these revelations and transmitting them to subsequent generations by means of recitation. Later, these revelations were collected and written down by the followers. The Quran, considered the best and purest form of Classical Arabic, is the earliest extensive document of Arabic still surviving. According to Muslims, the Quran not only contains the actual “words of God” revealed to Prophet Muhammad, but also represents the final authority on grammar, idiomatic questions, and literary style. Throughout history, some old languages have vanished. But the Quran, which was preserved by God, has protected the Arabic language and kept it flourishing and alive. In one of the verses, God emphasizes that the Quran will be divinely protected forever by saying, *Inna nahnu nazalnā dhikra wa inna lahu lahafizoun* (الحجر) {إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون} “It is We Who have sent down the Quran and surely, We will guard it” (Al-Hijr 15:9).

3.3 The Roles of the Arabic Language

The roles of the Arabic language can be divided into two sections, A) as a medium of artistic and correct expression, and B) as a medium of culture.

Arabic as a Medium of Artistic and Correct Expression

In its birthplace in the northwestern region of the Arabian Peninsula, Arabic was one of several dialects spoken by the noble Quraysh tribe to which Prophet Muhammad belonged. Before the rise of Islam, Arabic seems to have been important in the Arabic society as a medium of oral poetry: “Pre-Islamic poetry was the most cherished of artistic manifestations of the Arab, and remained so for many succeeding generations

even up to the present day” (Chejne 7). This poetry, abundant and rich, occupied a special place in the life of several tribes, each with a different dialect. Thus, poetry served as a unifying force among all existing tribes, about seven in number. It was an important factor that gave focus to their artistic, intellectual, and spiritual expression. In the pre-Islamic period, poets enjoyed great position and influence among the members of their tribes. The poet, then, was the spokesman and the leader of his tribe. His highly rhythmical and forceful verse flew across the desert faster than the wind, influencing the life of people. The pre-Islamic tradition of intertribal gatherings, including the poetry competitions, continued into early Islamic times. Every year, poets would meet twice at *souk 9ukaaz* to compete in poetry. A major poetic form of this time was the *qaSida*, meaning “ode” which required the poet to sustain the same rhyme and meter throughout the entire poem, which ran anywhere from 25 to 300 lines. The poet could describe his love, his courage, his loyalty to his tribe, his camel, and his adventures, all in one ode, with a highly formal structure. “Outstanding examples of poetry from this era are referred to as *al-mu’allaqaat literature* “the suspended poems” (Daher 36). It was believed that the greatest seven poems among the recited ones were hung on the walls of the *Ka’ba*, the holiest place in Mecca.

Arabic as a Medium of Culture

Arabic became the national language of the Muslim state that spread between Indonesia in the east, and Spain in the west. Being a sacred religious language has given it more importance. Arabic has influenced several eastern and western languages. For

example, the Persian language is written with an Arabic script and more than thirty percent of the Persian vocabulary is of Arabic origin. Arabic influence on western languages can be clearly seen in the English language where some words are either of Arabic origin, or have been transmitted to the west through the medium of Arabic. Words that fit into this category are: "cipher," "algebra," "lemon," "sugar," and "rice."

Though the Arabic language remains important and influential, it has passed through dark ages when people were punished to speak it. In his historical book, *min Hadir al-lugha al-arabiyya*, by Said Al-Afaghani, a leading Syrian linguist, Al-Afaghani states that during the Ottoman occupation, the Turks wanted to turkify the Arabic language. Therefore, Turkish, the language of the Ottoman Empire people, was the language to be used in the government-sponsored schools in all subjects, including the teaching of Arabic. Scholars and Arab linguists demanded the reuse of Arabic, instead of Turkish, in their schools and they were granted the right to open two elementary schools, one in Beirut, and the other in Damascus. Thus, Arabic gradually began to regain its power until it became the official language to be used everywhere by everybody. Other attempts aimed at destroying the Arabic language, but they were also in vain. France tried to impose the French language in the countries they conquered. Syria and Algeria were targets, but those attempts fizzled out. Other countries too had a share in this language-demolishing attempt. For example, England tried to impose the English language in Egypt and the other countries it occupied. However, Arabic stood firm as if knowing that it has been, and will still be, preserved by a powerful unifying form: the Quran.

In the second part of this chapter, the author will mainly concentrate on the definitions of the term "Gender," in addition to the origin and evolution of the Arabic grammatical gender.

Definitions of "Gender"

In *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, gender is defined as follows,

1 a: a subclass within a grammatical class (as noun, pronoun, adjective, or verb) of a language that is partly arbitrary but also partly based on distinguishable characteristics (as shape, social rank, manner of existence, or sex) and that determines agreement with and section of other words or grammatical forms **b:** membership of a word or a grammatical form in such a subclass **c:** an inflectional form showing membership in such a subclass **2 a:** SEX **b:** the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex.

From the above definition, it can be concluded that gender is pertinent either to sex or to grammar; two terms which should be further differentiated. Sex is a biological given whereas gender is socially learned. People and animals are born either males or females (sex: natural gender); however they are referred to as masculine or feminine (gender: social gender). Even though grammatical gender is not directly related to natural gender, many linguists, past and present, assume that the masculine is the normal, or unmarked, gender and that all nouns are masculine unless specially marked (Baron 97).

In his dissertation, *A Contrastive Study of Gender in English and Arabic: Pedagogical and Sociolinguistic Implications*, Ayatollah Labadi, gives the following definitions for gender. "Gender to the layman may be a synonym of sex, but to the linguist it is an abstract grammatical entity" (24). He also defines gender "linguistically as a characteristic of a word that requires other words to agree with it" (27). In the first definition, the layman connects things physically in order to accept them easily. He prefers to have a clear-cut definition when he connects masculinity to males and femininity to females. Thus, it is easy for her/him to accept that "*Sabiy* صبي boy" is masculine and "*bint* بنت girl" is feminine. Whereas she will have trouble accepting that "*shams* شمس sun" is feminine and "*qamar* قمر moon" is masculine. In the second definition, Labadi assures the need for an agreement in gender among the noun and its modifying words such as verbs, adjectives, pronouns, demonstratives, and prepositions. This issue will be presented in Chapter Four of this study.

The Origin of the Arabic Grammatical Gender

As mentioned earlier, the origin of the Arabic language is traced to the Semitic languages; therefore, its grammatical gender is traced there, too. The Semitic languages distinguish two genders: masculine and feminine. The masculine possesses no special endings (zero morpheme), whereas the feminine is associated with a special morpheme, the ending *-at*, which extends over the whole Semitic area (Moscati 84). Other characteristics of the grammatical gender of this group of languages include the following two major points: (a) the feminine gender is not always marked --in relation to the

corresponding masculine-- by the feminine morpheme, but is sometimes expressed by means of lexical opposition, as in “*jamal* *جمال* he-camel, *naqat* *ناقة* she-camel” (the *he* and *she* are examples of the lexical opposition). (b) Grammatical gender does not necessarily and invariably correspond either to sex or to the formal constitution of the noun, the semantic designation (Moscati 85). Since sex does not play a prominent role in assigning a gender to a word, then inanimate nouns are grouped as follows: Semitic scholars generally assign the masculine gender to whatever is dangerous, courageous, respected, strong, and powerful; and the feminine to whatever is motherly, productive, kind, gentle, and weak.

As Arabic is a member of the Semitic languages, it enjoys the same grammatical gender rules. Thus Arabic, too, distinguishes two genders: masculine and feminine; normally, the feminine form is recognized morphologically.

The Evolution of the Arabic Grammatical Gender

The Arabic grammatical gender passed through different stages during its evolution:

1. In the personal pronouns, there is no sex differentiation in the pronouns of the first person, singular or plural, probably because the sex of the speaker was always obvious to the audience. For example,

<i>ARABIC</i>	<i>MEANING</i>	<i>GENDER</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>
ismee اسمي	My name	Masc. or Fem.	Singular
ismuna اسمنا	Our name	Masc. or Fem.	Plural

Table 3: First Person Pronouns

2. Speiser's inquiry into the origin of the feminine ending *-at*, which is found in all Semitic languages, can be considered the second stage of the development of the Arabic grammatical gender. Speiser believes that *-at* did not originate in "some prominent designation of beings naturally feminine" (36) since different stems were used to designate males and females, as in *abb* أب "father": *umm* أم "mother", and *hiSan* حصان "horse": *mahr* مهر "mare".
3. The feminine morpheme *-at*, did not exist from the beginning as a feminine marker; instead it was used to build singlatives from collectives, as in *baqar* بقر "cows" and *baqarat* بقرة "cow". In this example, the *-at* is not used to indicate the gender of the word, it rather changed the word form from plural to singular. Therefore, it can be said that the *-at* must have become a derivational suffix before it acquired its other function as a feminine ending. "However, it did not take long for *-at* to acquire its new role once its value in modifying word meanings had developed" (Ibrahim 45).
4. After *-at* was established as the feminine marker, agreement in gender was the final step of the Arabic grammatical gender evolution-ladder. The first of this agreement phase took place between pronouns of the second person and their related verbs.

Therefore, the form of the pronoun and that of the related verb differ according to the gender of the addressed person. For example,

PRONOUN	VERB	GENDER	MEANING
anta أنت	akalta أكلت	Masc.	You ate
anti أنت	akaltee أكلت	Fem.	You ate

Table 4: Verb-Pronoun Agreement

It is important to note that though the Arabic second person words in the above table look the same, morphologically, they still differ in pronunciation.

The rise of gender agreement between nouns and their corresponding adjectives occurred about the same time when verb-pronoun agreement was in progress, around the eighth century. Accordingly, if the noun is masculine, then its modifying adjective(s) should be masculine; when feminine, the adjective(s) need to take the feminine forms.

For example,

NOUN	ADJECTIVE(S)	GENDER	MEANING
waladun ولد	jamilun wa zakyyun جميل وذكي	Masc.	A beautiful and smart boy
bintun بنت	jamilatun wa zakyyatun جميلة وذكية	Fem.	A beautiful and smart girl

Table 5: Noun-Adjective Agreement

The final grammatical gender agreement stage took place between verbs and pronouns of the third person, as in the following examples.

<i>PRONOUN</i>	<i>VERB</i>	<i>GENDER</i>	<i>MEANING</i>
huwa هو	fahima فهم	Masc.	He understood
hiya هي	fahimat فهمت	Fem.	She understood

Table 6: Verb-Pronoun Agreement

Summary

The Arab-Muslim people's intimate attachment to Arabic and its influence on their thought and culture has been great throughout the countries and will very likely persist. God has revealed His message to Prophet Muhammad in an Arabic Quran that is believed unique in style, pure in origin, and unexcelled in beauty. It is by virtue of the Quran's divine nature that its language stands unique and is preserved over such a long time. In the following statement, Al-Shaf'i, the pioneer juriscounsel, emphasizes that it is important to learn the Arabic language. He says, "He who learns more of this language, made by God, the language of the seal of the Prophets and the medium through which His last book was revealed, would gain an advantage" (Az Zubaidi 87). The Arabic grammatical gender system has passed through different stages during its

evolution until it became a stable feature of the Arabic language. Like the other Semitic gendered languages, gender agreement among the different component parts of a sentence is essential to construct a grammatically correct sentence. This gender agreement topic will be thoroughly discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: The Rules of the Arabic Grammatical Gender

This chapter aims not only at presenting the syntactic rules of the Arabic grammatical gender, but also to point out the difficulties that cause problems to learners of Arabic as a second language. In addition, the chapter discusses how gender is assigned to Arabic words, both original and borrowed. Not only grammarians discussed masculine and feminine genders of Arabic; poets also shared in writing about this interesting topic. Richardson, discussing Arab poets and poetry, quotes Abul Taiyeb Al-Mutanabbi, أبو الطيب المتنبي, one of the greatest pioneering Arab poets, saying,

ولا التأنيث لاسم الشمس عيب

ولا التذكير فخر للهِلال

Neither is the feminine name a disgrace to the sun,

Nor the masculine an honor to the moon. (23)

“In pre-Islamic times, the Arabs used to be disheartened and annoyed with the birth of girls.... Their traditions allowed the willing father to bury his daughter alive... out of fear of a disgrace...” (Al-Qaradawy 48). In the above two lines, however, Al-Mutanabbi explains that assigning the feminine gender to the *shams* شمس “sun” is not to be considered a shame, a disgrace, or a disrespect. He also points out that it does not add any honor or prestige to the *qamar* قمر “moon” because it is considered masculine.

Almost without exception, every noun in Arabic that refers to a male creature belongs to the class of masculine nouns, and every noun denoting a female being belongs

to the feminine group of nouns. Arab grammarians recognized the masculine form by the absence of the feminine endings. Thus, all words are assumed to be masculine unless they belong to one of the following categories:

(a) **Feminine by Meaning:** female human beings or animals, as in *bint* بنت “girl”, and *dajajat* دجاجاة “hen”.

(b) **Feminine by Form:** where the word ends with a feminine marker. The suffix -at, which looks like (ة) or (ة) depending on whether or not it is attached to the preceding letter, is the major feminine marker that is used to derive feminine words from masculine ones. The other two feminine suffixes are -aa (ى) and -a? (اء); they are less used than the -at, but they have the same function.

<i>Suffix</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
-at	ameer أمير	ameerat أميرة	prince
-aa	akbar أكبر	kubraa كبرى	older
-a?	a'shqar أشقر	shaqra? شقراء	blond

Table 7: The Feminine Suffixes

(c) **Feminine by Convention.** Arab grammarians agreed, for no apparent reason, that the members of the following categories are all feminine:

(i) Geographical names, as in countries, villages, cities. For example, *dimashq*

دمشق “Damascus”, and *kuwait* كويت “Kuwait”.

(ii) Parts of the body, which occur in pairs, are almost all feminine. For example, *ayn* عين “eye”, and *rijl* رجل foot.

(iii) Certain nouns are feminine for no apparent reason. Some of these words are: *nar* نار “fire”, *nafs* نفس “soul”, and *arD* أرض “earth” (Haywood 27-28).

This category will be further discussed later in the study in section 4.4.1.

4.1 Feminine Word Classification

After recognizing the two grammatical genders, Arab grammarians classified the feminine words into three groups:

(a) The True Feminine, المؤنث الحقيقي *al-mu?annath al-haqiqi* This group includes the words that refer to female creatures, whether or not these words have a feminine ending. For example: *ukht* أخت “sister”, *umm* أم “mother”, and *Huda* هدى “a lady’s proper name”.

(b) The Metaphoric Feminine, المؤنث المجازي *al-mu?annath al-majazi* This group includes inanimate nouns that do or do not end with a feminine ending. For example, *darrajat* دراجة “bicycle”, and *yad* يد “hand”.

(c) The Morphological Feminine, المؤنث اللفظي *al-mu?annath al-lafDhi* This group includes the nouns that have a feminine ending, though used exclusively to refer to males. These words, however, are always treated as masculine, such as: *Hamzat* حمزة “a male’s proper name”, *khalifat* خليفة “caliph”, and *allamat* علامة “a male scholar”.

From the above three classifications, the rules of the first category are straightforward, so they can be easily understood, while those of the second and the third are the source of the problems that might face the ASL learners.

4.2 The Masculine-Feminine Relationship

“Arab grammarians specified the masculine form to be the base from which the feminine word can be derived” (Husaini 89) by using one of the following cases:

1. The basic rule is adding the feminine marker, *-at*, to the end of the masculine word, as in the following examples:

Masculine	Feminine	Meaning
talib طالب	talibat طالبة	student
mu'alim معلم	mu'alimat معلمة	teacher
nasheet نشيط	nasheetat نشيطة	energetic

Table 8: Masculine-Feminine Relationship

2. Feminine words can be formed by changing the internal vowel of the masculine word, as in *a'ares* عريس “bridegroom” and *a'rus* عروس “bride”. In this example, changing the inner vowel (e) to (u) resulted in deriving a feminine word from the masculine base.

3. Producing a feminine word might be the result of giving a completely different word than the masculine base, as in *deek* ديك “cock” and *dajajat* دجاجة “hen” and in *abb* أب “father” and *umm* أم “mother”.

ASL learners find the first case, which is considered the main way to form feminine words, as easy to understand and follow. Though the number of the second case examples is very limited, embarrassing moments occur when the inner vowel of the words is mispronounced: talking to, or about, a male might become talking to, or about, the opposite sex. The third case, however, is very problematic for the learners of Arabic as it contains pairs (masculine and feminine words) that are connected together not by form, but by meaning.

4.3 Agreement in Arabic Grammatical Gender

Linguists usually regard gender as a formal category of grammatical concord. Concord is agreement, and syntactic agreement seems to be the essence of the Arabic grammatical gender (Thorne & Henley 426). The Arabic word classes that show gender agreement with nouns are pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and demonstratives. The gender agreement issue among the different component parts of the sentence is considered one of the major sources of difficulties to face the learners of Arabic as a second language.

4.3.1. Pronouns and agreement

In describing all types of Arabic pronouns (personal, relative, genitive and accusative) three categories are relevant: case, number, and gender. Arabic pronouns change their form in either of the following cases: (1) when the position of the pronoun changes in the sentence; i.e. subjective or objective position, (2) when the modified word is masculine or feminine, and (3) when the number is singular, dual, or plural, as shown in *table 7*. The dual form in Arabic is used to refer to two people only, whereas the plural refers to three and more. Dual pronouns might refer to: a masculine and another masculine, a masculine and a feminine, or a feminine and another feminine.

I. Personal Pronouns

Arabic personal pronouns are not attached to any words, as they come separately taking the subjective position in the sentence. The following table classifies all personal pronouns and sorts them by number.

<i>Pronouns</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
ana أنا	I	First	Singular	Masc./Fem.
anta أنت	You	Second	Singular	Masc.
antee أنت	You	Second	Singular	Fem.
huwa هو	He	Third	Singular	Masc.
hiya هي	She	Third	Singular	Fem.
huma هما	They	Third	Dual	Masc./Fem.
antuma أنتما	You	Second	Dual	Masc./Fem.
hum هم	They	Third	Plural	Masc.
hunna هن	They	Third	Plural	Fem.
antum أنتم	You	Second	Plural	Masc.
antunna أنتن	You	Second	Plural	Fem.
nahnu نحن	We	First	Plural	Masc./Fem.

Table 9: Personal Pronouns

In the above table, it is important to note that pronunciation plays a key role in differentiating between the pronouns that are morphologically identical. For example,

anta akalta tufahatan أنت أكلت تفاحة “You ate an apple” (Masc. S.)

antee akaltee tufahatan أنت أكلت تفاحة “You ate an apple” (Fem. S.)

The ASL learners might find some difficulties trying to choose the correct form of the personal pronouns that matches gender, person, and number, particularly when their

mother tongue does not support such a rich grammatical gender system. If one of these factors is missed, they might end up choosing the wrong pronoun.

II. Relative Pronouns

“Who,” the only relative pronoun in Arabic, has six forms that differ morphologically according to number, and gender. These forms, which are used as separate words; i.e. they are not attached to any words as suffixes are, are classified in the following table and sorted by number:

<i>Pronoun</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
alladhi الذي	<i>Who</i>	Singular	Masc.
allatti التي	<i>Who</i>	Singular	Fem.
alladhaani اللذان	<i>Who</i>	Dual	Masc.
allataani اللتان	<i>Who</i>	Dual	Fem.
alladhiina الذين	<i>Who</i>	Plural	Masc.
allawaati اللواتي	<i>Who</i>	Plural	Fem.

Table 10: The different forms of the relative pronoun “who”

Choosing the correct form of the relative pronoun might be considered a tough job for the ASL learners, particularly when it comes to the dual number. In different languages the relative pronoun “who” has the same morphological form to refer to all pronouns, but in

Arabic this form changes according to number and gender. Missing any of these two factors will result in choosing the wrong form of the relative pronoun.

III. Genitive and Accusative Pronouns

Genitive and accusative pronouns are known as the dependent pronouns as they are attached to the end of nouns, verbs, and even prepositions. When they appear with nouns, however, they are called “possessive pronouns” (Labadi 118).

<i>kitabuhu ala tawilati</i>	كتابه على الطاولة	“His book is on the table”
<i>sami'tukum tughannoun</i>	سمعتكم تغنون	“I heard you singing”
<i>qaddamtuhunna hadiyatan</i>	قدمت لهن هدية	“I offered a gift to them”

In the first sentence, the pronoun *-hu* (هـ) “his” is attached to the end of the noun *kitab* كتاب “book”, so it is considered a possessive pronoun. In the second sentence, the pronoun *-kum* كم “you” is attached to the verb *sami'tu* سمعت “I heard”, thus it is classified as an accusative pronoun. In the third sentence, however, the pronoun *hunna* هن “they” is attached to the preposition *la* لـ “to”, therefore it is called a genitive pronoun. The following table classifies the genitive and accusative pronouns and sorts them by number.

<i>Pronouns</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
-ee ي	My	First	Singular	Masc./Fem.
-ka ك	Your	Second	Singular	Masc.
-ki ك	Your	Second	Singular	Fem.
-hu ه	His	Third	Singular	Masc.
-ha ها	Her	Third	Singular	Fem.
-huma هما	Their	Third	Dual	Masc./Fem.
-kuma كما	Your	Second	Dual	Masc./Fem.
-na نا	Our	First	Plural/dual	Masc./Fem.
-hum هم	Their	Third	Plural	Masc.
-hunna هن	Their	Third	Plural	Fem.
-kum كم	Your	Second	Plural	Masc.
-kunna كن	Your	Second	Plural	Fem.

Examples: kitabee كتابي “my book” - *kitabuhu* كتابه “his book”
kitabukuma كتابكما “your book” - *kitabuna* كتابنا “our book”

Table 11: Genitive and Accusative Pronoun

Even though these pronouns appear to be translated as possessive, they depend on which part of speech they are attached to, in order to acquire their classification as either possessive or genitive and accusative. The first person of these pronouns refers to humans; the second, to humans and occasionally to animals; while the third may refer to all categories, including inanimate words, as in the following examples,

<i>ismee Huda</i>	اسمي هدى	“My name is Huda”	(1 st person/Human)
<i>qiSatuka mumti'atun</i>	قصةك ممتعة	“Your story is interesting”	(2 nd person/Human)
<i>taghriduka jambilun</i>	تغريدك جميل	“Your chirping is beautiful”	(3 rd person/Animal)

4.3.2. Verbs and Agreement

“Conjugated Arabic verbs are inflected for grammatical gender” (Palvou and Potter 4). There is always a subject-verb agreement in gender, number, and person. Therefore, Arabic verbs change their morphological form according to the gender of the doer of the action, and this is illustrated in the following table.

<i>Pronoun</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Verb "to eat"</i> (أكل)	<i>Person</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
ana أنا	I	akaltu أكلت	First	Singular	Masc./Fem.
anta أنت	You	akalta أكلت	Second	Singular	Masc.
antee أنت	You	akalti أكلت	Second	Singular	Fem.
huwa هو	He	akala أكل	Third	Singular	Masc.
hiya هي	She	akalat أكلت	Third	Singular	Fem.
huma هما	They	akalā أكلا	Third	Dual	Masc./Fem.
antuma أنتما	You	akaltuma أكلتما	Second	Dual	Masc./Fem.
hum هم	They	akalou أكلوا	Third	Plural	Masc.
hunna هن	They	akalna أكلن	Third	Plural	Fem.
antum أنتم	You	akaltum أكلتم	Second	Plural	Masc.
antunna أنتن	You	akaltunna أكلتن	Second	Plural	Fem.
nahnu نحن	We	akalnā أكلنا	First	Plural	Masc./Fem.

Table 12: Subject-Verb Agreement

When it comes to grammatical gender agreement between the doer of the action and the verb, problems of all kinds face the ASL learners. There are several factors that inform a correct subject-verb grammatical gender agreement. It is not enough to determine the gender of the doer of the action; attention should also be directed to person and number. Again, missing any of these three factors might result in choosing the incorrect form of the verb. The only case where the subject-verb grammatical gender agreement may or may not be fulfilled applies to the sentences in which the verb and its corresponding

subject are not successive. The normal grammatical sentence structure of the Arabic language is: “*verb-subject-object*”, as in

waSalat Sarah el youm وصلت سارة اليوم (literal) “Sarah arrived today”

In this sentence the verb *waSalat* takes the feminine form as it agrees in gender with its corresponding feminine subject “Sarah”. However, if the adverb *today* comes between the verb *waSalat* وصلت “arrived” and the subject *Sarah*, then the verb may or may not agree with its subject in gender, so it can take either the masculine or the feminine form. Therefore, the following two sentences are considered grammatically correct:

waSala el youm Sarah وصل اليوم سارة (literal) “arrived today Sarah”

waSalat el youm Sarah وصلت اليوم سارة (literal) “arrived today Sarah”

ASL learners find this particular case confusing for two reasons: (1) they have to accommodate to use the Arabic sentence structure which reads as *verb-subject-object* whereas the sentence structure for other languages starts with the subject to be followed by the verb and then ends up with the object. (2) Having become accustomed to use the new sentence structure, learners need to pay attention to the irregularities of these rules. Verbs should agree in gender with their subjects; however, if the verb is separated from its subject by an adverb, an adverb of time in the above example, then they might or might not agree.

4.3.3 Adjectives and Gender Agreement

Adjectives agree syntactically with the nouns they modify and show gender distinctions accordingly. In the following examples,

<i>alwaladu aljamil</i>	الولد الجميل	“The beautiful boy”
<i>albintu aljamilat</i>	البنت الجميلة	“The beautiful girl”

the adjective *aljamil* الجميل “beautiful,” in the first sentence, modifies the masculine word *alwalad* الولد “boy” so it takes the masculine form, while in the second sentence, the adjective *aljamilat* الجميلة “beautiful” takes the feminine form as it modifies the feminine noun *albint* البنت “the girl”. The few instances of irregularity might be potential sources of difficulties for the ASL learner. These irregularities include the *iDafat* إضافة “annexation/addition” constructions, which consist of two nouns and one adjective. Which one of the two nouns should the adjective modify? For example, consider:

Lawnol sayyiarat aljadeed لون السيارة الجديد “the color of the new car”

Should the adjective *aljadeed* الجديد “new” take the masculine form and modify the first masculine noun *lawn* لون “color” so the sentence would read as “the new color of the car?” Or should it take the feminine form *aljadeedat* الجديدة “new” and be considered to modify the feminine word *sayyairat* سيارة “car” so the sentence would mean “the color

of the new car”? The best answer to this puzzling question is to connect the meaning of the sentence to the meaning of the whole text, or conversation.

The final adjective and agreement note to consider is that “certain adjectives have no separate form for the feminine” (Haywood & Nahmad 367). Therefore, the adjective does not change its form whether it refers to males or females, as in the following example:

kana rajulan sabouran كان رجلاً صبوراً “He was a patient man”

kanat imra'atan sabouran كانت امرأة صبوراً “She was a patient woman”

In the above two examples, the same adjective *sabouran* صبوراً “patient” was used to modify a masculine noun, in the first sentence, and a feminine one, in the second; a confusing rule to ASL learners.

4.3.4 Demonstratives and agreement

In Arabic, demonstratives, too, change their morphological form according to the gender of the word they modify. The following table classifies demonstratives and sorts them by number.

<i>Demonstrative</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
hadha هذا	This	Singular	Masc.
hadhihi هذه	This	Singular	Fem.
dhalika ذلك	That	Singular	Masc.
tilka تلك	That	Singular	Fem.
hadhani هذان	These	Dual	Masc.
hatani هاتان	These	Dual	Fem.
ha?ula?i هؤلاء	These	Plural	Masc./Fem.
?ula?ika أولئك	Those	Plural	Masc./Fem.

Table 13: Demonstratives

When the demonstrative modifies a masculine word, then its masculine form is chosen. But, when it modifies a feminine noun, the demonstrative needs to take the feminine form, as in the following example, *hadha rajulun taweelun wa tilka imra'atun saminatun* هذا رجل طويل و تلك امرأة سمينة “this is a tall man and that is a fat woman”.

4.4 Gender Assignment

Having gone so far, someone might ask how are words classified by grammatical gender into masculine or feminine? For example, what criterion makes *kitab* كتاب “book” masculine, and *tawlat* طاولة “table” feminine? The answer, in this particular case, is related to the form of the word rather than its content (meaning). The word

tawlat طاولة “table” ends with *-at* (ة), the Arabic feminine marker, so it is treated as feminine, while the word *kitab* كتاب “book” does not have a feminine marker, therefore it is considered as masculine. However, what about all other words? How are words assigned a specific grammatical gender?

Muhammad Hasan Ibrahim explained in his dissertation, *A Study of Gender*, that “there are two powerful criteria which determine the assignment of gender, namely, the form and the content of the noun concerned” (79). Thus, in Arabic, a noun that refers to a female is of a feminine gender whether or not it ends in a feminine marker, as in, *umm* أم “mother,” and that with a male referent is always masculine, as in *abb* أب “father,” even if it has a feminine ending, as in *allamat* علامة “a male scholar.” To discuss gender assignment, it is important to remember the following: (1) Gender is not a universal category, as what is masculine in one language might be feminine in another or even neuter in a third. For example, *window* is neuter in English, masculine in Arabic *shubbak* شباك and feminine in French *une fenêtre*. (2) The gender assigned to a particular noun neither adds to nor subtracts from the meaning of that noun. Therefore, “Semantically, gender is an empty category” (Ibrahim 79). (3) Gender assignment in animate nouns is obvious as it is related to sex: all males acquire the masculine gender, and all females are granted the feminine gender.

Grammarians divided the gender assignment process in inanimate nouns into two categories: (1) gender assignment in native words, and (2) gender assignment in borrowed words.

4.4.1 Gender Assignment in Native Words

The Arab grammarians who tried to account for the assignment of feminine gender to many inanimate nouns came up with an obvious and apparently simple explanation: some inanimate nouns became known as feminines because native speakers treated them as such. Traditionally the informants who were considered native speakers were Bedouins¹ whose Arabic was reliable. (Labadi 104)

What Labadi aims to explain is that a word may be feminine simply because it was heard from the early Arabs, the eloquent native speakers of the desert, as feminine. Since the meaning of an inanimate noun is irrelevant for the purpose of gender assignment, the form of such words is one of the main indicators of the gender group to which the word should belong, i.e. masculine or feminine. If the inanimate noun ends with an *-at*, then the word is considered feminine. For example, *tannourat* تنورة “skirt” is a feminine noun as it ends with an *-at*, and *madrasat* مدرسة “school” is also feminine for the same reason. However, not all words that lack the feminine marker are considered masculine, because some inanimate nouns are classified as feminines though they do not end with a feminine marker, such words include *reeH* ريح “wind”, *nar* نار “fire”, and *arD* أرض “earth”. This discussion shows that the ending of the noun is not the only factor involved in the grammatical gender assignment of inanimate nouns; rather, more factors, such as cultural phenomena: religion, myth, etc, are to be

¹ The eloquent people of the desert

considered. Ibrahim, discussing the issue of grammatical gender assignment for such words explains,

The gender of words, like the rest of language, is transmitted down from generation to generation. The fact, as noted before, that these words are very common and of high frequency in all languages means that they are learned and mastered very early in life. If religious, mythical, or ritual significance is attached to them, in addition to their importance in nature and life, they become more important and learning their correct forms early in life is an urgent task for the individual speaker. (86-87)

Sometimes gender is assigned to a word by *al Haml wal ta'weel* الحمل و التاويل "association," that is, it acquires the gender of another word associated with it by (a) synonym or (b) omission.

(a) association with a synonym: Here a word is made to agree syntactically with its meaning rather than with its formal ending. For example, *kitab* كتاب "book" is masculine, but may be considered feminine if it is used to mean *risalat* رسالة "letter" or "message". For example, in:

istalamtu kitab almalik استلمت كتاب الملك "I received the king's book"

the word *kitab* كتاب "book" means *risalat* رسالة "letter", or "message". Thus, the sentence means "I received the king's message". Since the word *risalat* رسالة is feminine, then the word *kitab* كتاب "book" is considered feminine, too.

(b) **association by omission:** All city names in Arabic are feminine whether or not they have a feminine ending. The reason for this classification is that the word *madinat* مدينة “city,” itself, is feminine and when a city name such as *dimashq* دمشق “Damascus” is mentioned, it means *madinat dimashq* مدينة دمشق “city of Damascus”; thus the word *dimashq* دمشق Damascus acquires the feminine gender of the omitted, but understood, word for city. Similarly, the names of rivers and mountains are all supposed to be masculine in spite of the fact that some of these names might have an explicit feminine ending, as in *dijlat* دجلة “Tigris.” The reason for classifying these words as masculines is that the word *nahr* نهر “river,” itself, is masculine. Whether one says *nahr dijlat* نهر دجلة “Tigris river” or simply *dijlat* دجلة “Tigris,” the name of the river is always masculine by virtue of the gender of the word *nahr* نهر “river.”

4.4.2 Gender Assignment in Loan Words

Although Arabic has influenced and contributed to several eastern and western languages, it, too, has borrowed some words from different foreign languages. The question that might impose itself here is: “How is gender assigned to these borrowed words?” Arab grammarians agreed to apply the same principles used to determine the gender assignment of the native words to the borrowed ones. Thus, two classes can be easily recognized.

1. Animate borrowed words are assigned a gender according to their corresponding natural sex: a noun which refers to a female is of a feminine gender, whether or

not it ends in a feminine marker, and a noun with a male referent is always masculine, even if it has a feminine ending.

2. Assigning gender to inanimate nouns can be achieved through one of the following factors:

i) In some cases, the borrowed word is assigned the same gender of its synonymous words. For example, the word *firdaous* فردوس “Paradise” is originally a Persian word that has been assigned the feminine gender because its synonymous word *jannat* جنة “Heaven” is feminine.

ii) If the loan word happens to have a suffix, which marks a specific gender in the borrowing language, then that gender is assigned to the word. For example, the word *fatourat* فاتورة “bill” is an Arabic word that has been borrowed from French. *Facture* is a French feminine noun that ends with an “e,” the French feminine marker. Therefore when the word was borrowed, it was classified with the feminine group of words.

For all words that are borrowed from different languages, grammarians decide what gender to assign to them, and then lexicographers list them in special dictionaries that stipulate the gender of words.

Summary Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher focused on the syntactic rules that are associated with the Arabic grammatical gender system, and on problematic areas that face the ASL learners. In Arabic, all words are either masculine or feminine. Those that are masculine carry a zero morpheme, while the feminine ones end with one of the feminine suffixes: *-at*, *-aa*, and *-a?*. This study revolved around the grammatical rules of the feminine group of words and did not concentrate as much on the rules of the masculine words for a simple reason: "Grammarians have treated the masculine gender as primary in order of creation and in importance, both in the natural world and in the sentence" (Baron 97). This consideration has made the rules of the masculine words very basic and straightforward, aside from few minor exceptions. The masculine word is always considered the base from which the feminine word can be derived by adding specific suffixes, or by changing certain internal vowels; in some cases, however, different words than the base are provided.

This chapter, too, ends with an emphasis on the greatness of the Arabic language, a language that is considered highly developed as its complex grammatical gender system not only covers all native Arabic words, but also accommodates borrowed ones.

Chapter Five: Error Analysis

Ahmad Amin, a prominent Arab historian of early Islam, describes the treatment of grammatical Arabic gender as “one of the most difficult and most confused topics in the Arabic language” (90). To the ASL learners, this puzzling topic causes several problems in two major areas: (1) when a learner needs to determine the irregular grammatical gender of some words, and (2) when a learner needs to achieve grammatical gender agreement among the component parts of the sentence. The word “error” is considered a deviation from the normal form. In the first part of this chapter, the researcher will present the written and oral practices used as the research material: (1) to assess what the ASL learners know about the Arabic grammatical gender system, (2) to determine the areas of difficulties where students make errors, and finally, (3) to categorize and analyze these errors.

5.1 The Written Practice

The researcher’s choice of the three different typical exercises used in this phase was based on her experience as an ASL teacher. These exercises, which concentrated on filling in the blanks, translating sentences, and writing a short paragraph were helpful diagnostic tools to elicit several ASL learners’ errors.

I. Fill in the blanks of the following sentences with the correct form of the words (pay close attention to grammatical gender agreement):

Ra'itu رأيت “I saw” – *allateef* اللطيف “amiable” – *-hu* هـ “his” – *aljameel* الجميل
“beautiful”.

1. *ra'a Sami alu'sfour* _____ . _____ رأى سامي العصفور
the _____ bird”
2. *i'tana Usamat* _____ *bi akheeji alsagheer*. باخيه الصغير _____ اعتنى أسامة
“The amiable Usamat took care of his baby brother”
3. *kataba altilmidhu wadheefata* _____ *altaweelat*. الطويلة _____ كتبت التلميذ وظيفت
student wrote _____ long homework”
4. _____ *yala'bani eltennis*. يلعبان التنس _____ “I saw them playing
tennis”

To complete the sentences with the correct grammatical form of the left-out words, the learners need to pay attention to several factors: (1) the meaning of the word; (2) the meaning of the sentence; (3) the grammatical gender of the word to where the left-out word is related; (4) the correct grammatical gender form of the left-out word to fit best in the sentence.

Since the missing word in the first sentence, *ra'a Sami alu'sfour aljameel* رأى الجميل “Sami saw the beautiful bird”, is an adjective, the learners should check the grammatical gender of the word modified by this adjective, *alu'sfour* العصفور “bird.” This word is a masculine noun; therefore, its related adjective should take the masculine form, the zero form. In other words, no suffixes should be attached to the word

aljameel “beautiful.” All learners, French and English, easily and correctly filled the sentence out.

The same explanation of the first sentence can be applied to the second sentence, *I'tana Usamat allateef bi akheeji alsagheer اللطيف بأخيه الصغير* “The amiable Usamat took care of his baby brother”. The learners were supposed to use the masculine form of the adjective *allateef اللطيف* “amiable” because it is used to modify the word *Usamat* أسامة “a male proper name.” Learners D, G, & H did not figure out that the word “Usamat” is a masculine proper name because they were confused with the last two letters (-at) thinking that they represent the feminine marker. For this reason, these learners used the feminine adjective *allateefat اللطيفة* instead of the masculine form *allateef اللطيف*.

In the third sentence, *kataba altilmidhu wadheefatahu altaweelat. كتب التلميذ* “The student wrote his long homework,” the learners were assumed to use the correct form of the possessive pronoun “his.” Three intermediate level students, A, F, and H, failed to complete the sentence correctly as they thought that the word *wadheefat* وظيفة “homework,” to which the possessive pronoun should be attached, is feminine; requires a feminine pronoun. However, attention should have been directed to the subject *altilmidhu* التلميذ “the student,” and gender agreement should occur between the possessive pronoun and the noun it refers to, not between the possessive pronoun and the word it is attached to.

In the last sentence, *ra'ituhuma yala'bani eltennis. رأيتهما يلعبان التنس.* “I saw them playing tennis,” the researcher wanted to know if the ASL learners could determine

correct grammatical gender and number agreement among the different component parts of the sentence. She picked the dual number intentionally since it does not exist in both English and French, the mother tongue languages of the learners. Since the Arabic verb *yala'bani* يلعبان “play” indicates a masculine dual third person case, the verb *ra'itu* رأيت “I saw” should agree accordingly and carry the masculine dual grammatical gender form. Learners C, D, and E were able to fill in the sentence correctly, but the others used the plural form of the verb instead of the dual.

II. Translate the following sentences into Arabic:

In the second part of the written survey, the ASL learners were given five sentences to translate from their mother tongue into Arabic, i.e. the English speakers received their sentences in English and the French speakers in French. The aim of this practice was to study the errors that result from translating from L1 to L2.

Translate the following sentences into Arabic:

5. Le garçon va à l'école chaque jour. “The boy goes to school everyday”
6. Ils montrent leur maison. “They are pointing at their home”
7. Je suis allé chez Sarah. “I went to Sarah's”
8. Le professeur parle à ses étudiantes travailleuses. “The professor speaks with his hard working students”
9. Vous sortez de la class à midi. “You leave the classroom at noon”

In the first sentence: *Le garçon va a l'école chaque jour*: "The boy goes to school everyday" *yadhabu alwalad ila almadrasat kulla youm*, يذهب الولد إلى المدرسة كل يوم, forgetting that the Arabic sentence starts with the verb, learners A, D, E, G and H put the subject *alwalad* الولد "the boy" first and then followed it by the verb and the rest of the sentence, keeping in mind the word order of the sentence in their mother tongue language. Learners B, C, and F had no problems in producing an error-free Arabic sentence, because as advanced-level ASL learners, they passed through extensive writing skills practices.

The second sentence: *Ils montrent leur maison*. "They are pointing at their home" *hum yushirouna ila manzilihim* هم يشيرون إلى منزلهم was translated by the French speakers, C and F, easily thinking that the French masculine plural pronoun *ils* "they" is similar to the Arabic masculine pronoun *hum* هم; therefore the masculine plural verb form was correctly chosen. The English speakers, however, diverted into two groups giving two different translations, which were both completely correct. Learners A, D, G, and H translated the pronoun "they" as masculine plural; therefore, the verb would take the same form. So their translation would read as *hum yushirouna ila manzilihim* هم يشيرون إلى منزلهم, which turned out to be the same translation as that of learners C and F. Learners B and E thought that "they" can be translated into Arabic as *hunna* هن, the feminine plural third person pronoun, resulting in the following translation *hunna yushirna ila manzilihinna* هن يشرن إلى منزلهن. The reason for the different translations is that the researcher did not specify a gender to the pronoun "they" to be considered while translating the sentence.

In the third sentence, Je suis allé chez Sarah. "I went to Sarah's" *dhahabtu ila manzili Sarah* ذهبت إلى منزل سارة , all learners translated this sentence easily, since in the first-person sentences, gender is not to be specified because it is always clear to the audience.

In the fourth sentence, Le professeur parle à ses étudiantes travailleuses. "The professor speaks with his hard working students" *yatakallamu alprofessour ma' tilmidhatihi almujiiddat* يتكلم البروفسور مع تلميذاته المجيدات , the following errors in different positions were made: (1) Learners A, D, G, and H placed the subject before the verb. (2) Though the researcher specified the word professor to be treated as masculine, learner F used the wrong possessive pronoun and failed to make suitable grammatical gender agreement. This French speaker mixed the rules of the Arabic grammatical possessive pronouns with those of French, when she analyzed the sentence as follows: *ses*, in *ses étudiantes*, a third person plural possessive pronoun, is followed by a plural feminine noun, *étudiantes*, therefore she concluded that the Arabic possessive pronoun needs to be a third person plural feminine. In Arabic, attention should be directed to the gender and number of the word the pronoun *refers to* and not to the word where the pronoun will be *connected*. Thus in this example, learner F should have checked the masculine word "professeur" and added the Arabic suffix *his*, the suitable possessive pronoun, as illustrated in Table 11 in Chapter 4.

To the last sentence, Vous sortez de la class à midi. "You leave the classroom at noon" *antum takhroujuna minal saffi muntasafa annahar* أنتم تخرجون من الصف منتصف النهار , four different and correct Arabic forms were the result of translating this sentence.

To the French speakers, the pronoun *vous* "you" refers to either plural masculine second

person, or plural feminine second person. Learner F chose the former case, while learner C chose the second. The result of the English speakers' translation, however, was divided into four different Arabic forms:

1. Learners G and H thought that the pronoun *you* refers to a singular masculine second person, which is completely correct; thus they gave the verb same grammatical gender agreement. So, the Arabic sentence they produce would read:
anta takhruju mina assafi muntasafa annahar أنت تخرج من الصف منتصف النهار
2. Learner A thought that the pronoun *you* refers to a singular feminine second person pronoun, which is also correct, and the grammatical gender agreement was assigned accordingly. So she wrote: *antee takhrujeena mina assafi muntasafa annahar* أنت تخرجين من الصف منتصف النهار
3. Learner E thought that the *you* refers to plural masculine second person so she translated the sentence to match this form. *antum takhrujouna mina assafi muntasafa annahar* أنتم تخرجون من الصف منتصف النهار
4. Learners B and D thought that this *you* indicates a plural feminine second person, so the verb took the same form, and they wrote: *antunna takhrujna mina assafi muntasafa annahar* أنتن تخرجن من الصف منتصف النهار

The reasons for the different translations of this sentence are as follows:

1. The French second person pronoun *vous* refers to either plural masculine or plural feminine pronouns.
2. The English second person pronoun *you* refers to any of these four cases: singular masculine, singular feminine, plural masculine, and plural feminine.

3. As mentioned in Chapter Four, *Table 9*, the Arabic language has five different forms to refer to second person pronouns, enabling the learners to choose any of these forms because the researcher did not specify the needed grammatical gender type. However, though the Arabic language has five different gender forms, none of the learners translated the “you” as a dual second person pronoun, because first of all, it does not exist in their language and secondly, they did not want to take chances in making mistakes with this complicated form.

The translation of linguistic gender from a poor morphology source language to a rich morphology target language is likely to cause serious mistakes. The learners of a particular language will try to apply the rules that they have already mastered in their mother tongue; things go smoothly when the rules are the same, but problems occur where discrepancies exist. According to the sociolinguist Robert Lado,

Good translation is more difficult than speaking and writing because in speaking and writing we can avoid problems or circumvent them by saying or writing something in a different way. In translation we must be true to the original and struggle with awkward complexities resulting from differences between languages. (Labadi 5)

III. Writing a Paragraph

“Writing in a foreign language involves spelling, grammar, and word order” (Grittner 271). The aim of this practice was to check how correctly the ASL learners could weave words into meaningful sentences, where each word choice needs to agree

syntactically with grammatical gender. All subjects were asked to write a short paragraph of four to five sentences about the same topic: "Why are you learning Arabic?" "Every writing system ... has its own rules" (Beechhold and Behling 176). The most obvious differences among the English and French writing systems and that of the Arabic are the following: (1) In Arabic, the writing goes from right to left, while in English and French, from left to right. (2) The writing pattern is considered highly confusing for the English and French learners of Arabic because the sentence structure in Arabic follows the pattern of "verb, subject, object" while in the other two languages, it goes by "subject, verb, object" pattern.

The syntactic errors that were elicited from this practice were mostly related to the differences in the grammatical gender systems. The grammatical gender mistakes of the advanced-level learners, B, C, and E; were much less than the errors made by the intermediate-level students A, D, F, G, and H. In addition to the sentence structure errors, grammatical gender agreement errors also applied.

5.2. The Oral Practice

During the fifteen-minute break, the researcher wrote a conversation of ten easy sentences on the board, which is presented in *Table 14*. Sentences 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were written in French while sentences 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were in English. In the first part of the oral practice, the researcher did not seek much grammatical information; rather, she asked some cultural questions to break the tension of the presence of the tape recorder, and to put the interviewees at ease. The fun started when the researcher asked the learners to form two groups, English speakers and French speakers. The members of

each group collaborated in translating the sentences from their mother tongue into Arabic. During the immediate translation, the learners were supposed to say only the Arabic translation without reading the sentence in their mother tongue. *Table 15* presents (1) the Arabic sentences as translated by the learners. i.e. all mistakes are included, and (2) the researcher's Arabic translation, which is error free.

French (plus English translation)	English
<p>1. <i>Salut, comment vas-tu?</i> "Hi, how are you?"</p>	<p>2. Fine, and you?</p>
<p>3. <i>Très bien, as-tu acheté une nouvelle chaise?</i> "Fine, did you buy a new chair?"</p>	<p>4. No, I bought a new table.</p>
<p>5. <i>J'ai entendu que Sami et Leila sont allés à l'Allemagne.</i> "I heard that Sami and Leila left to Germany."</p>	<p>6. No, they left to France.</p>
<p>7. <i>La robe de la mariée était belle.</i> "The bride's gown was beautiful."</p>	<p>8. The party was interesting, too.</p>
<p>9. <i>Au revoir et à bientôt.</i> "good-bye, see you soon."</p>	<p>10. Good-bye.</p>

Table 14: Conversation to be translated into Arabic

#	Learners' F & D Arabic Translation	Researcher's Arabic Translation
1.	مرحبا، كيف حالك؟ marhaban, kaifa haluka?	مرحبا، كيف حالك؟ marhaban, kaifa haluka?
2.	مبسوط وأنت؟ mabsout, wa antee?	مبسوط وأنت؟ mabsout, wa antee?
3.	مبسوطة، هل اشتريت كرسيًا *جديدة؟ mabsoutat, hal ishtaraita kursiyan *jadeedatan?	مبسوطة، هل اشتريت كرسيًا جديدًا؟ mabsoutat, hal ishtaraita kursiyan jadeedan?
4.	كلا، اشتريت *جديدة طاولة kalla, ishtaraitu * jadeedatan tawilatan.	كلا، اشتريت طاولة جديدة kalla, ishtaraitu tawilatan jadeedatan.
5.	سمعت أن سامي وليلى غادروا إلى ألمانيا sami'tu anna Sami wa Leila *ghadarou ila almania.	سمعت أن سامي وليلى غادرا إلى ألمانيا Sami'tu anna Sami wa Leila ghadara ila almania.
6.	كلا، * غادروا إلى فرنسا kalla, *ghadarou ila faransa.	كلا، غادرا إلى فرنسا kalla, ghadara ila faransa.
7.	بدلة *العريس جميلة badlatu'l * a' res jamilatun.	بدلة العروس جميلة badlatu'l a' rus jamilatun.
8.	والحفلة كانت ممتعة wal haflatu kanat mumtia'tan.	والحفلة كانت ممتعة wal haflatu kanat mumtia'tan.
9.	وداعاً، أراك قريباً wada'n, araka qareeban.	وداعاً، أراك قريباً wada'n, araka qareeban.
10.	مع السلامة ma' assalamat.	مع السلامة ma' assalamat.

Table 15: Arabic translation

* indicates an error

Since this practice was an immediate translation, the learners did not have time to rethink the resulting sentences. Interestingly, the type of errors made by the English learners is not the same as those made by the French speakers. In sentence 3, the French learners used a wrong noun-adjective grammatical gender agreement as they picked a feminine adjective *jadeedat* جديدة “new” to modify a masculine word *kursian* كرسيًا “chair.” In French, the word *une chaise* “chair” is feminine, so a French speaker would use a feminine adjective to modify it. In Arabic, *kursi* كرسي “chair” is masculine; therefore the masculine adjective *jadeed* جديد “new” should precede it.

In sentence 4, the English speakers made a noun-adjective word order mistake when they the word order. The reason for this is related to the fact that the English word order for the noun and its modifying adjective is “adjective-noun” as in “new table,” whereas in Arabic the word order between the two words should read as *tawilat jadeedat* طاولة جديدة “table new”.

In sentences 5, the French learners made a subject-verb grammatical gender agreement. Though the verb “left” refers to both Sami and Leila; a dual case, the learners used the plural form of the verb *ghadarou* غادروا “they left” instead of the dual form *ghadara* غادرا “they left”. It has been mentioned earlier in chapter 4, section 4.3.2, that there is a grammatical gender agreement between the verb and its subject in gender, number, and person. If any of these factors is missed, then the resulting agreement will be wrong. When the French learners gave the Arabic translation for sentence 5, they

indirectly caused the English speakers to use the same verb form in sentence 6. Thus, the result was a chain error.

In sentence 7, the French learners used the wrong inner vowel of the word, *a'ris* العريس "groom" which resulted in referring to the opposite sex. It is obvious that the bride and not the groom wears the "gown," so the correct meaning of the sentence is "The wedding gown of the bride was beautiful."

In the third and last part of the oral practice phase, the researcher assigned five minutes to each learner to tell a short story about a topic of his or her choice. In this practice, the role of the researcher was to elicit grammatical gender mistakes made by the ASL learners when they speak Arabic. The types of mistakes made in this section related to pronunciation, word order, grammatical gender agreement, and gender assignment.

5.3 Categorizing the Elicited Errors

After the researcher collected the needed data, she followed a strategy of analyzing the errors that were made during the written and oral practices. In this section, she will classify these errors into the following three categories: (1) Interference Errors, (2) Developmental Errors, and (3) Spelling and Phonology Errors.

5.3.1 Interference Errors

Robinette and Schachter, two prominent researchers in the area of error analysis, define interference errors as "those caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on production of the target language in presumably those areas where the

languages clearly differ” (274). In this study, mother tongue interference was plainly obvious in errors of grammatical gender assignment, word order and sentence construction. It was previously explained that words that are masculine in one language might be feminine in another or neuter in a third. Thus, when an ASL learner makes an error in assigning a gender to a word, this error is most probably caused by the interference from the speaker’s native tongue. In this study, the English speakers made more mistakes than the French speakers in assigning gender to inanimate nouns because their language does not support such an issue: in English all inanimate nouns are referred to as *it*. Another area where interference errors can be largely viewed is represented in word order errors. Such errors might include (1) confusing the basic Arabic sentence structure “verb-subject-object” with that of English and French: “subject-verb-object”. (2) Placing the Arabic adjective before the noun it modifies same as in English and most cases of French. As Labadi stated,

Interference from the mother tongue is clearly a major source of difficulty in second language learning.... Many errors, however, derive from the strategies employed by the learner in language acquisition, and from the mutual interference of items within the target language. (60)

5.3.2 Developmental Errors

Robinett and Schachter define this type of errors as those that “reflect the strategies by which the learner acquires the language. These errors show that the learner is making false hypotheses about the target language based on limited exposure to it” (274).

In this study, such errors were found when learners were not sure which method to follow in order to derive a feminine word from a masculine one. Should they add one of the feminine suffixes, as in *tabeeb* طبيب “he-physician”: *tabeebat* طبيبة “she-physician”? Or should they change the whole word, as in *abb* أب “father”: *umm* أم “mother”? In such situations, the learners tried to solve the problem by checking the rules of a phonologically similar word, and applying the same rules to the puzzling word. Therefore, when the learners were not sure about the correct grammatical gender form of some words, they tried to show their understanding of the language by putting these words in the best form according to how they thought about them. Such developmental errors reflect the learners’ competence and creativity at a particular stage of learning the language and also illustrate that the learners are thinking and applying the acquired rules.

5.3.3. Spelling and Phonology Errors

It has been mentioned earlier in chapter 3, section 3.1, that some letters of the Arabic script are morphologically identical except for dots above or below the letters. When a learner misspells a word by alternating the positions of the dots, the gender of the word changes. For example, examining the spelling for the masculine verb *yadrus* يدرس “he studies” shows that it begins with the letter *ya* ي , where the dots are placed below the letter. While the feminine form of the same verb *tadrus* تدرس “she studies” begins with a *ta* ت , where the dots are put above the letter. This example indicates clearly that the two forms of the verb are identical except for the position of the dots.

Similar explanation can be given when this category is called phonological errors. Mispronouncing the first letter of a word can change its gender from masculine to feminine or vice versa. Similarly, mispronouncing the inner vowel of some words can also change its gender from masculine to feminine or vice versa. The last common phonological errors that need not to be ignored are those related to mispronouncing the accent marks, which are also called the pronunciation marks. In Table 12 of Chapter 4, the verb (to eat) has an identical morphological form (أَكَلَتْ) to accompany the four pronouns: *I*, *you* (Masc. S.), *you* (Fem. S.), and *she*. Therefore any change in pronouncing the accent mark for a particular verb will result in giving the wrong form of the verb.

The ASL errors that can be classified under this category were elicited (1) from section three of the writing practice, where the learners were supposed to write a short paragraph, and (2) from section three of the oral practice, where the learners were to tell a short story of their choice. Therefore, the pronunciation marks play a prominent role in differentiating the functions of the verb. Again, alternating these marks result in changing the gender of the word.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the errors made by the ASL learners when the writing surveys and the oral interviews were conducted. Errors were analyzed and then categorized. Table 16, enables the ASL teacher to immediately figure out not only which issues are most problematic to his/her students, but also where each of these learners need more help.

<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Types of Errors</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>
1.	Adj.-N. grammatical gender agreement (GGA)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2.	Adj.-proper name GGA	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	X
3.	Possessive pronoun GGA	X	√	√	√	√	X	√	X
4.	Grammatical gender verb agreement (dual)	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	X
5.	Word order	X	√	√	X	√	√	X	X
6.	Subject-verb GGA	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
7.	Subject-verb GGA	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
8.	A. Possessive pronoun	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
	B. Word order	X	√	√	X	√	√	X	X
9.	Subject-verb GGA	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">√ = Right</div>		6	9	10	7	10	7	6	5
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">X = Wrong</div>		4	1	0	3	0	3	4	5

Table 16: Results of the Written Practice

Aiming to help the ASL learners to overcome the problems they face when they learn the Arabic grammatical gender issue, the researcher presents in the following chapter helpful strategies that can benefit the ASL teachers during their teaching careers, and the ASL learners during their learning process. The researcher herself has applied the teachers' strategies and found them significant and effective. She also advised her ASL students to follow the presented learners strategies and the results were also remarkable.

Chapter Six: Strategies... Study Conclusion... Future Work

To one degree or another, trained and sophisticated language teachers have undoubtedly applied error analysis for decades. They have studied their students' recurring mistakes, classified them into categories, and used them as the basis for preparing lessons and materials designed to remediate such errors. When errors are collected at all learning levels, beginning, intermediate, and advanced, the teacher can concentrate on the persistent errors and try to follow relevant methods in order to eliminate or even reduce the number of such errors.

Arabic grammatical gender rules are not easy for ASL instructors to teach, nor for the ASL learners to master. Activities and strategies need to be followed to facilitate the teaching and the learning process. As Jack Richard stated in his book, *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, "The use of an appropriate learning strategy can enhance success with the learning task... Learning strategies are specific actions... to make learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable" (63).

6.1 Helpful Strategies to Be Used by ASL Teachers

Clair Guadiani, a researcher who develops foreign language programs, stated, "Games encourage spontaneous and creative conversation" (22), and work well, especially with younger students. The researcher uses several games in her classroom to afford the students maximum opportunity to converse in the new language, Arabic.

Vocabulary-oriented games, highly effective teaching tools, are intended to improve the vocabulary of the students and enable them to master, in an interesting way, the grammatical gender of the acquired words. These games include the password game, the “add-on-sentences” game, “give the opposite gender” game, and grammatical gender agreement games.

6.1.1 The Password Game

This game has three timed parts. In part one, each student chooses a partner. The students place their desks so that partners face each other, one student (a) facing away from the blackboard and the other (b) facing it. The instructor writes a list of five to seven words on the board. The game starts when student (b) explains the first word to student (a) until (a) can successfully guess the word. Student (b) proceeds to the next word, and so on. The clock stops when the specified time ends. Winners are recognized. In the second part of the game, students (a) and (b) change places and another list of words is put on the board to be guessed by student (b). The third part of the game requires the partners to specify the grammatical gender of the words, masculine or feminine, and to write sentences using some of these words.

6.1.2 The “Add-on-Sentences” Game

In addition to the writing assignments, the “add-on-sentences” game, works well to encompass maximum improvement in the writing skills of the ASL learners. Students are asked to sit in a circle. The teacher hands the first student a sheet of paper on which ten nouns, ten verbs, and ten adjectives are written. The first student is asked to write a

sentence using any of the listed words, and passes the paper to the second student to write another sentence that completes the meaning of the first one, and so on. When the paper is returned to the first student, the teacher makes a copy for each student and assigns the following task to be done at home: students need to make necessary corrections by paying close attention to the grammatical gender agreement among the component parts of the sentences, and to rewrite the whole paragraph in a correct form.

6.1.3 “Give the Opposite Gender” Game

On a large poster, the instructor has prepared a list of words. On another poster, a list of opposite words appears in a different order. The instructor points out a word, and the students indicate the gender of that word and give its counter word from the second poster; i.e., if the word is masculine they need to specify its feminine form. When all words are classified, the students are to write a short paragraph using these words.

6.1.4 Grammatical Gender Agreement Games

The students are divided into groups of three. The instructor passes one card to each group. The card contains five sentences with two or three grammatical gender agreement errors in each sentence. The students are to write the correct forms for these sentences and beat the timed clock.

All above games concentrated on developing the writing skills for the ASL learners: “writing is indeed a process, not an event. Therefore well-designed writing assignments move through stages under the teacher’s guidance... good writing focuses

on the word, the sentences, and the paragraph” (Gaudiani 151). At the level of the word, teachers need to check issues like suitability, and clarity. To decide whether a word achieves these conditions, a teacher has to find out if it conveys the intended meaning, and if its selection involves the correct part of speech. At the level of the sentence, the teacher checks if the learners have developed the ability to weave words into meaningful grammatical arrangements. The level of the paragraph, however, involves sorting, ordering, and organizing the information, paying special attention to the rules of the Arabic grammatical gender system.

6.2 Helpful Strategies to Be Used by the ASL Learners

The ASL learners need to follow certain strategies to help them understand and memorize the new Arabic gender system they are learning. The following strategies, followed by the researcher’s ASL learners, have proven helpful to improve the listening comprehension, and the memorization of the type of grammatical gender each word belongs to.

6.2.1 Improving Listening Comprehension

The researcher assures the ASL learners that during the beginning stages of learning the Arabic grammatical gender system, it is essential to hear the language by listening to language learning tapes, radio broadcasts, and television programs, in addition to contacting native Arabic speakers. In radio broadcasts and TV programs, however, there is no opportunity to slow down the flow of speech reaching the ear of the

learner, who has obviously only one chance to hear what is spoken; whereas in face-to-face conversations, a learner can ask the native speakers to slow down or to repeat what they have said. Similarly, when ASL learners listen to teaching tapes, they can rewind their tapes and listen again, controlling the number of times they can listen to the same sentence. The listening method, which develops an ear for the language, allows the learners to focus closely on how the masculine and feminine words can be used correctly¹.

6.2.2 Reading

The researcher also advises the ASL learners to concentrate on reading children's stories and other books, as she considers this method very effective to improve the learners' skills to recognize masculine and feminine words. After reading a story, the ASL learner chooses one page and extracts all masculine words, then chooses another page and finds all feminine ones. Finally, the learner lists these words and gives their counter words.

6.2.3 Aids to Memorizing the Grammatical Gender of Words

A certain amount of memorization is essential in learning the Arabic grammatical gender system. At the beginning levels, all basic grammatical gender materials should somehow be imposed upon the learners' minds by force of repetition before allowing

¹ Appendix 5 includes information on how to access Arabic media.

them to do anything creative. When the ASL teachers start with the regular rules of the grammatical gender system, they need to make sure that their ASL learners have understood and memorized them before they can accept the irregular ones. Otherwise, confusion and mistakes will result. The ASL learners need to create mental links, review well, and practice the memorized parts by using formulas and patterns.

Two helpful strategies to aid the ASL learners to memorize the grammatical gender of words are: (1) using personal sentences, and (2) adapting the visual method. Under the former strategy, the ASL learners need to learn the grammatical gender of words by putting them in personal sentences, which refer to themselves, and to an opposite sex of their family. In other words, if a learner is a male, he needs to use sentences to refer to himself and to a female person of his family, and vice versa. By following this method, the ASL learners will be more willing to learn the material because it refers uniquely to them. The second strategy, the visual method, helps the ASL learners in memorizing the grammatical gender of words, and allows them to associate both meaning and gender directly with a colorful photograph that is projected on a screen or which appears in a book or on a large card or poster. Frank Grittner, in *Teaching Foreign Languages*, emphasizes the importance of this method by saying, "Approximately 80 percent of all human learning is done visually" (173).

6.2.4 The Personal Portfolio Strategy

The personal portfolio strategy functions as a helpful method for the ASL learners to memorize the gender of words. Since this method showed positive results with the researcher's students, she advises other learners of Arabic to adapt it. The ASL learners

need to prepare a portfolio and divide it into two parts, to be labeled: Regular² and Irregular. Each of these parts has two columns: Masculine and Feminine. When learners come across a word, they need to follow certain steps:

1. Decide whether a word belongs to the Regular or Irregular section.
2. If a word is masculine, give its feminine.
3. Write both words under their correct columns.
4. Memorize the outcome.

6.3 Conclusion of the Study

In this sociolinguistic study, the researcher examined the Arabic grammatical gender difficulties that face English and French speakers when they learn Arabic as a second language. The researcher has been teaching Arabic to foreigners for over eleven years, and she assisted several students to overcome persistent grammatical gender errors. She conducted this study to determine if on a larger scale other ASL learners exhibited the same error patterns. After examining the written and the oral results of the learners' practices, the researcher concluded the following:

1. Since Arabic and French share some grammatical gender characteristics, it is easier for the French learners to understand the Arabic grammatical gender system, making fewer errors than the English learners whose mother tongue does not support such a rich grammatical gender system.

² The regular part contains the words that follow the basic pattern: *Masc. word + Fem. Suffix = Fem. Word.*

2. Assigning gender to animate Arabic words did not cause problems for both English and French ASL learners.
3. Morphologically marked gendered words are straightforward; all English and French learners dealt with them correctly.
4. Interference between the learner's mother tongue and the target language is clearly a major source of difficulty.
 - a. Instead of starting the Arabic sentence with the verb, some English and French speakers started it with the subject, as in their mother tongue.
 - b. Some English speakers confused the Arabic noun-adjective word order structure with the English adjective-noun structure. The French speakers, however, used the Arabic structure correctly, as French corresponds to Arabic on this point.
 - c. The most significant Arabic grammatical gender difficulty that faced both English and French learners was coordinating the component parts of a sentence to agree in gender and number, particularly when the number is dual. The reason for such difficulty is that the two languages, English and French, do not support such a dual number as they only have singular and plural.
5. Unmarked gendered words and gender assignment for inanimate categories were problematic for the English and French ASL learners.
6. Most frequently observed grammatical gender errors are found in the area of syntactic agreement between subject and verb, noun and adjective(s), and noun and pronoun.

Not all the resulting errors of the ASL learners, which are summarized in *Table 16* in Chapter Five, were expected; some of them were surprising. Since French is similar to Arabic, the researcher expected the errors made by the French speakers to be fewer in number than those made by the English speakers, and they were indeed so. The surprising result of the study is illustrated by the type of errors made by the ten-year-old boy, learner H, who was born in the United States to a Syrian family of an Arabic mother tongue. The boy, being educated in American schools, has greater facility with English grammar than with Arabic. Though he speaks Arabic with his parents, surprisingly enough, he makes several Arabic grammatical gender mistakes when he formally writes and translates sentences in the Arabic language.

The researcher further concluded that book material, course planning, and evaluations are vital to good teaching, which aims to establish maximum success for the learners. Since a detailed outline helps ensure achievement in class, this outline needs to contain not only a listing of the pages, chapters, and exercises to cover each week, but also a list of initial and revised learning objectives, teaching strategies, evaluation methods, and materials appropriate for each week's work. Certain games, computer programs, interviews, guest presentations, trips, objectives, and good planning are all effective strategies that ASL teachers can apply to eliminate students' grammatical gender errors.

The present sociolinguistic study is considered successful as it supports and proves the researcher's assumptions and predictions, which related to the following major issues:

1. The errors made by French ASL learners are different than those made by the English learners of Arabic.

2. Interference from the mother tongue of the ASL learners is an important source of difficulties that learners face.
3. Since French is a heavily marked language morphologically, its speakers had less problems understanding that inanimate words are either masculine or feminine, whereas the English speakers, whose language is not gendered for inanimate nouns, make more errors trying to understand the new grammatical gender system.

6.4 Future Research

In this sociolinguistic project, the researcher studied her interviewees' errors, analyzed, and categorized them. She further compared these resulting errors by the mother tongue of the learners to check what type of errors were made by which group of speakers. At the beginning of this chapter, the researcher presented essential strategies that can help ASL teachers and learners in their teaching and learning process. These strategies are helpful tools to correct most Arabic grammatical gender errors made by ASL learners in the areas of grammatical gender agreement, grammatical gender assigning, and word order. In order to increase the awareness of Arabic grammatical gender teaching and learning, more research is required to cover other problematic areas related to the dual case and the possessive pronouns. The more ASL errors are identified and studied, the easier it is to develop strategies. The more strategies ASL teachers have, the more effective teaching can be; and the more strategies ASL learners have, the easier and faster learning the Arabic grammatical gender system will be.

Other contemporary works that discussed gender from a grammatical point of view are Labadi's dissertation, *A Contrastive Study of Gender in English and Arabic*, 1990; and Husaini's book *Qawa'dul Nahu Wal Sarf Wal I'mla'*, 1999. In the former, Labadi discussed how gender in English and Arabic can be presented within a comparative perspective. He also explained that the errors made by each group learning the foreign language result from the differences in the grammatical gender systems of the two languages. Labadi's conclusions seem to indicate that "the study of gender in the two languages depends on a network of closely related variables. Such variables include psychology, linguistic science, culture and environment, the course designer, the teacher, and most certainly the language learner" (194-95). The present research shares a few similarities with Labadi's work as they both concentrate on error analysis. Labadi concentrated on English and Arabic, whereas this research included French too.

In the second work, Husaini addresses only the Arabic audience and presents her study in an interesting way that educates the native speakers about the complicated grammatical gender issue, without mentioning any foreign languages. Husaini's work is related to the researcher's findings regarding learner H, who is of an Arabic native mother tongue. Since there has been little research done on the errors made by native Arabic children born in non-Arabic speaking countries, the researcher sees the need for a larger scale of studies. Different sections of the Arabic grammatical gender system, and other topics, can be thoroughly studied; various types of errors can be elicited. The more ASL errors are identified, the easier it is to develop strategies. The more strategies ASL teachers and learners have, the more effective teaching and learning Arabic as a second language can be.

Appendix 1



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
400 Hal Greer Boulevard
Huntington, West Virginia 25755-2648
304/696-6600

May 4, 1999

To Whom It May Concern:

Mrs. Nohad Hemmoudeh is currently working on completing a Master's Thesis program in English at Marshall University. Her interesting sociolinguistic study of gender in the Arabic language will examine a feature of language that has been seldom studied in our program. We are looking forward to the completion of this study; however, Mrs. Hemmoudeh needs to do more research in the area. Interviewing your students would greatly help her gather more of the information that she needs. Your help in permitting her to interview your students would be highly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Dr. Dolores Johnson'.

Dr. Dolores Johnson
Director of Writing Programs
Marshall University

Appendix 2

A Brief Overview of the English Grammatical Gender System

1. In English, nouns are classified into masculine, feminine, and neuter: nouns indicating males are masculine; those indicating females are feminine, and those indicating inanimate things, neuter.
2. In English, there is no grammatical gender agreement between a noun and its qualifying adjective(s).
3. In the English noun system, gender can be distinguished in four different ways:
 - a. By different words, as in *man: woman, boy: girl*
 - b. By different termination, as in *Duke: Duchess*
 - c. By adding an adjective or pronoun to the substantive, as in *a male child: a female child, a he-goat: a she-goat*
 - d. By prefixing another substantive to the word, as in *a cock-sparrow: a hen-sparrow*
4. Many masculine nouns have no corresponding feminine, as in *baker*. Some feminine nouns have no corresponding masculine, as in *seamstress*.
5. In addition to the noun, the adjective may indicate minor gender distinction. A suffix can be attached to the end of a masculine adjective to change it to a feminine one, as in *blond(e)*.

Appendix 3

A Brief Overview of the French Grammatical Gender System

All French nouns are either masculine or feminine.

1. The names of male persons and of distinctively male animals are masculine, as in *un homme* = a man, and *le coq* = the cock (male bird).
2. The names of female persons and of distinctively female animals are feminine, as in *une femme*: a woman, and *ma mère* = my mother.
3. (e) functions as the feminine suffix which can be added to a masculine word to derive a feminine one, as in *l'étudiant (m)*: *l'étudiante (f)* (student), and *vert (m)*: *verte (f)* (green).
4. Not all feminine words end with the feminine suffix (e). For example, *la souris* (mouse), and *la liberté* (freedom).
5. Some words end with the feminine suffix (e), yet they are treated as masculine words, as in *le foie* (liver), and *le musée* (museum).
6. A few nouns denoting human beings may be either masculine or feminine, according to the sex of the person represented. For example, *artiste* (artist), *enfant* (child), and *élève* (student).
7. Some nouns, which are often applied to men, are feminine, as in *partique* (customer), and *personne* (person).

Appendix 4

The Arabic Script

TERMINAL	MEDIAL	INITIAL	ALONE	TRANSLITERATION
ل	ل	ا	ا	'
ب	ب	ب	ب	b
ت	ت	ت	ت	t
ث	ث	ث	ث	th
ج	ج	ج	ج	j
ح	ح	ح	ح	h
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh
د	د	د	د	d
ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh
ر	ر	ر	ر	r
ز	ز	ز	ز	z
س	س	س	س	s
ش	ش	ش	ش	sh
ص	ص	ص	ص	s
ض	ض	ض	ض	z
ط	ط	ط	ط	t
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	z
ع	ع	ع	ع	'
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh
ف	ف	ف	ف	f
ق	ق	ق	ق	q
ك	ك	ك	ك	k
ل	ل	ل	ل	l
م	م	م	م	m
ن	ن	ن	ن	n
هـ	هـ	هـ	هـ	h
و	و	و	و	w
ي	ي	ي	ي	y

VOWELS: short a — u — i — long a — u — i — يـ

DIPHTHONGS: aw — ay — يـ

Appendix 5

Accessing Arabic Media

1. Arabic language teaching tapes and books can be bought in the United States at the following bookstore.

Peace Islamic Knowledge Service
4620 South Irvington
Tulsa, Ok 74145

2. Radio broadcast and TV programs can be heard and watched on the internet at the following sites:

BBC Radio: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/Arabic/latest.ram>

ANA Television and Radio Live: <http://www.anaradio.com/aldd.htm>

Egypt Radio Live: <http://www.sis.gov.eg/realpg/html/adfront9.htm>

3. To read Arabic newspapers, visit the following sites:

Dar El Tahrir: <http://www.tahrir.net>

Al-Ahram: <http://ahram.org.eg>

Arabnet: <http://countrylink.com/arabnet.menu.htm>

Appendix 6

Abbreviations Used in the Study

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Adj.	Adjective
ASL	Arabic as a second language
Dem.	Demonstrative
ESL	English as a Second Language
Fem.	Feminine
Fem. Pl.	Feminine plural
Fem. S.	Feminine singular
Fem. W.	Feminine Word
H	Standard, or Classical, Arabic
L	Colloquial, or Everyday, Arabic
L1	Native language
L2	Target language
Masc.	Masculine
Masc. Pl.	Masculine plural
Masc. S.	Masculine singular
Masc. W.	Masculine Word
N.	Noun

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