Introduction

The objectives of this book are to provide data-driven findings as well as systematic analysis of second language acquisition (SLA) of Arabic. Little has been published on Arabic second language acquisition. Studies that have appeared so far either focus on a limited set of structures or suffer from methodological limitations related mostly to elicitation techniques and small data samples. This book aims at exploring a broad range of structures and acquisition issues based on large data samples collected longitudinally (from 9 participants over a school year) and cross-sectionally (over the past ten years from 109 participants with three different lengths of formal exposure to Arabic as a second/foreign language (L2): first year, second year, and third year). The data were collected from Arabic L2 learners with different native languages (L1s), specifically, from adult native English, French, Spanish, and Japanese speakers learning Arabic as an L2 at the university level at their home institutions in the United States, France, Spain, and Japan, respectively. Parts of the data have been published or presented at national and international conferences. However, the book includes significant additional amounts of data that have not previously appeared elsewhere in order to provide a larger picture of the acquisition issues and questions explored.

Focus here is on the analysis of the different processes, hypotheses, stages, and acquisition patterns of the participants. An attempt will be made to relate the findings to a range of observations, some of which have been established as truisms, as well as to hypotheses in the field of SLA, although little has been reported on Arabic SLA. The point of departure for the underlying methodology of the present work assumes avoidance of the limitations of earlier second language acquisition approaches, from contrastive and error analysis to the present. In essence, this means the following aspects are taken into account:
- The overall L2 performance of the participants rather than solely errors
- Rule application in non-contexts and the full scope of Interlanguage rule use
- The (formal) input of the participants in the classroom
- Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data
- Inclusion of both longitudinal and cross-sectional data
- L2 learners with different L1s
- Accurate description and analysis of the target forms
- Large data samples from a large number of participants

Doubtless, accounting for the process of second language acquisition is not without limitations. For example, to date and despite technological breakthroughs, a whole host of variables such as external acquisition variables (age, aptitude, attitude, anxiety, motivation, learning environment, social distance, ethnicity, etc.) are still not possible to quantify and therefore SLA is constrained from being able to fully account for second language acquisition phenomenon (for example, Pienemann and Johnston 1987). Hence, to date the field lacks a comprehensive theory of acquisition (Klein 1991). Notwithstanding the unavoidable limitations of present inquiries into SLA research, the data here are significant not only for shedding light on the production abilities of Arabic L2ers with different L1s from an explanatory perspective but also for contributing to predictive issues of current theories and models of SLA, especially those to do with second language processing and L1 transfer.

Thus, two main research objectives are of particular interest to the present work. The first is to document and explain generally how Arabic second language morphosyntactic knowledge develops over time. This includes identifying forms that are acquired before others, forms that are acquired upon exposure, and forms that resist acquisition even after long exposure. This also includes explaining and identifying intermediate stages during the acquisition process. The second objective is to speculate on second language knowledge representation and internal learning and processing mechanisms. In essence, the book aims at providing answers to the following questions, among others:
INTRODUCTION

• How do Arabic L2 learners come to know about the combinatorial properties of morphemes, words, phrases, and clauses? (see Hawkins 2001)
• Do they develop L2 knowledge representation systematically or randomly?
• Can they acquire the same range of syntactic and morphological knowledge as native speakers and to what extent?
• What are the developmental paths or stages, if any, along which Arabic L2 learners progress?
• What is the role of L1 in learning Arabic as an L2?
• What are other factors that have a bearing on learning Arabic as a second language?

The book is organized as follows:

• Chapter 1: Description of Target Morphosyntactic Structures
• Chapter 2: Existing Arabic SLA Studies
• Chapter 3: The Acquisition of Gender Agreement
• Chapter 4: The Acquisition of Tense/Aspect and Verbal Agreement
• Chapter 5: The Acquisition of Null Subjects
• Chapter 6: The Acquisition of Negation, Mood, and Case
• Chapter 7: Theoretical Implications
• Chapter 8: Pedagogical and Applied Implications

Chapter 1 gives a brief description of the target structures and other relevant aspects of the language related to the data reported on in chapters 3-6. Chapter 2 provides a survey of all Arabic SLA studies conducted to date. Explanation of the findings is kept to a minimum, with summary boxes added to help further capture the main findings and methods of each study. Chapters 3-6 constitute the data and findings sections of the book. In these chapters, the book adopts a descriptive style in reporting about the various methods (including the demographic details of the participants, elicitation techniques, coding, and data analysis, etc.) and the findings yielded. In addition, an attempt is made at providing an account of the formal input which the participants received, in particular those in the longitudinal study. To preserve the usability of the data and to allow the
reader to readily access the nature and extent of the success of the Arabic L2 learners/participants, the data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively and the findings are briefly and descriptively stated, avoiding speculative discussion of factors and issues not immediately evident to the reader. The latter is reserved for Chapter 7, which aims at connecting the reported observations and findings of the Arabic data with recent and current proposals in the SLA literature. Chapter 8 aims at providing suggested implications and practical applications of the findings to the subfields of Arabic applied linguistics. The glossary is intended to help make the text more accessible to the general reader and the non-specialist.

The book will be particularly useful for second language acquisition practitioners seeking cross-linguistic evidence, Arabic textbook writers, Arabic testing experts, teachers-in-training of Arabic as a second/foreign language, and teachers and Arabists seeking to know how Arabic is learned from the learner’s perspective. The book will also be useful in the contexts of foreign language learning of Arabic by English, French, Spanish, and Japanese speakers in classrooms around the world or in the respective countries where these languages are spoken as L1s.
## Transliteration Symbols

Below is a list of transliteration symbols used to represent the Arabic sound system.

### Consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Symbol</th>
<th>Transliteration Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ث</td>
<td>ُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ك</td>
<td>d3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خ</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>د</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ذ</td>
<td>d̪</td>
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<tr>
<td>ر</td>
<td>r</td>
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<tr>
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<td>z</td>
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<td>ش</td>
<td>š</td>
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<tr>
<td>ض</td>
<td>s̪</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ط</td>
<td>d̪</td>
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<td>ة</td>
<td>d̪</td>
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<td>ء</td>
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<td>ث</td>
<td>γ</td>
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<td>f</td>
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<tr>
<td>ق</td>
<td>q</td>
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<td>ك</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TRANSLITERATION SYMBOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Symbol</th>
<th>Transliteration Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ل</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>voiced alveolar lateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>م</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>voiced bilabial nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ن</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>voiced alveolar nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ه</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>voiceless glottal fricative</td>
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<tr>
<td>و</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>voiced bilabial velar glide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ي</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>voiced palatal glide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ء</td>
<td>ؤ</td>
<td>(voiceless) glottal stop</td>
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<tr>
<td>يٍ</td>
<td>yy</td>
<td>geminate of y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وٍ</td>
<td>ww</td>
<td>geminate of w</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vowels:

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<th>Transliteration Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ا</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>short front/back low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اا</td>
<td>ă</td>
<td>long front/back low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>او</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>short high back rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>او</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td>long high back rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>او</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>short high front unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ي</td>
<td>ī</td>
<td>long high front unrounded</td>
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</table>
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Second person</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc</td>
<td>Accusative Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>Grammatical Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-P</td>
<td>Active Participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Complementizer Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Dual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Demonstrative Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det</td>
<td>Determiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dip</td>
<td>Diptote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Determiner Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen</td>
<td>Genitive Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Interlanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impera</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperf</td>
<td>Imperfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indef</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indic</td>
<td>Indicative Mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juss</td>
<td>Jussive Mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First/native language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second/foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2er</td>
<td>Second language learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFG</td>
<td>Lexical Functional Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANOVA</td>
<td>Multivariate Analysis of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-A</td>
<td>Noun-Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom</td>
<td>Nominative Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Noun Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVS</td>
<td>Object-Verb-Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perf</td>
<td>Perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-P</td>
<td>Passive participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjunct</td>
<td>Subjunctive Mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-V</td>
<td>Subject-Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVO</td>
<td>Subject-Verb-Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>Time/session of data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Target Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Verb Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Verb-Subject-Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>Universal Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

Description of Target Morphosyntactic Structures

The description provided here relates primarily to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is essentially the same as Classical Arabic (CA), though the former is somewhat more simplified syntactically and generally more restricted in optional rule use. Significant differences between the two will be pointed out in the course of this chapter to indicate that both versions are acceptable grammatically. Indeed, current Arabic textbooks in use—which constitute the learners’ language input—seem to follow the MSA tendency. The description is not intended to be exhaustive but rather focuses on aspects of the language relevant to the data investigated and on basic features which are characterized by a great degree of regularity and which Arabic learners are exposed to in the first years of their learning.

1.1 Arabic Word Structure
1.1.1 Root and base form

As in other Semitic languages, words in Arabic have a unique underlying form-meaning relationship. Arabic words are derived from combining patterns and core root consonants. The former usually consist of vowels and auxiliary consonants and the latter carries the core semantic meaning. The complete meaning of a given word obtains only from combining both, since the pattern also carry the meaning related to the affixation form. The main point here is that a given word can have a large number of related words sharing the same semantic core meaning. Thus, as Table 1.1 shows, from the root \( d-r-s \) “that to do with studying” a large number of related words can be derived. The derivation is carried out by different types of affixation, including prefixes, suffixes, and infixes or circumfixes. Infixed takes place word internally, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 (following O’Grady et al. 2001), where the perfective infix \( a-a \) is affixed to the root \( d-r-s \) “that to do with studying” to form the past tense.
Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Derived Form</th>
<th>Lexical Category</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d-r-s</td>
<td>darasa</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>“he studied”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yadrus</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>“he studies”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>darrasa</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>“he taught”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tadārāsa</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>“they both (2.p.d) studied”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dirīsa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“studying”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dars</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“a lesson”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>darsān</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“two lessons”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>durūs</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“lessons”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>madrasa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“a school/a study place”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>madāris</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>“schools/study places”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](Image)

Figure 1.1

As pointed out by traditional Arab grammarians, the vast majority of words (nouns and verbs) have three root consonants; some (nouns and verbs) have four; and some (nouns) five. Table 1.2 displays examples of this phenomenon in nouns and verbs. Additionally, such words can be base forms from which other forms can be derived, or what is referred to in traditional Arabic grammar as mudżarrada and mazīda forms, respectively. Thus, from the base form darasa “he studied” another verb, for example, darrasa “he taught” can be derived by duplicating the second consonant to add a causative meaning (see Tables 1.1-1.2).
The tables above illustrate basic Arabic derivational morphology in nouns and verbs. Adjectives are similarly derived, mostly from three root consonants or trilateral (that is, consisting of three root consonants) base forms and, like verbs and nouns, have many different patterns, as illustrated in Table 1.3. The examples include real adjectives and active and passive participles derived from verbs. All listed examples appear in the masculine form.

The foregoing description offers only a brief account of the working of the root system in the Arabic language. Whether or not it may have implications for L2 learning, it is worth mentioning here that many studies have provided evidence in support of the psychological reality of the root system (in Arabic and Semitic languages) based on slips of the tongue data (for example, Abd El-Jawad and Abu-Salim 1987; Berg and Abd El-Jawad
1996), aphasic data (for example, Prunet et al. 2000), hypocoristic data (Davis and Zawaydeh 2001; Frisch and Zawaydeh 2001), and first language development data (Berman 1985, 1999; Badry 2005; see also McCarthy 1981). Others have claimed that the processes of derivation in Arabic rely on the word as a base form rather than on the root (for example, Ratcliffe 1997; Benmamoun 1999). Whatever the case (for first language development), it is more crucial to note here that not all patterns have productive uniformity and that L2ers are not usually introduced to the notion of root and pattern from the beginning. The derived forms illustrated in the tables above are usually introduced as base forms for other forms, such as past versus present and singular versus dual and plural, with the notion of roots and patterns introduced later mainly to develop the skill of looking up words in Arabic dictionaries.

1.1.2 Gender of nouns and adjectives

Arabic nouns are marked by either natural gender or grammatical gender. Natural gender refers to natural or biological assignment of gender (masculine and feminine) to words according to the natural distinction of human and animal referents, as in (1) below; whereas grammatical gender refers to the arbitrary assignment of gender (masculine or feminine) to words whose referents often do not exhibit any apparent reason for the distinction, as in (2). Additionally, Arabic does not exhibit neutral gender.

(1) Natural gender:  
?insān \( \rightarrow \) "a male human being"  
?insān-\( a \) \( \rightarrow \) "a female human being"  
qit\( \overset{\text{f}}{t} \) \( \rightarrow \) "a male cat"  
qit\( \overset{\text{f}}{t} - a \) \( \rightarrow \) "a female cat"

(2) Grammatical gender:  
kursī \( \rightarrow \) "chair.m"  
t\( \overset{\text{f}}{\text{w}} \)\( \overset{\text{f}}{a} \)\( - a \) \( \rightarrow \) "table-f"

The words listed in (1) and (2) illustrate that the masculine form is marked by a zero morpheme \( \{-\theta\} \), the masculine form being usually the default base form. The examples also show that the feminine form is marked by the suffix \( \{-a\} \).\(^1\) However, the natural feminine forms need not be derived from the masculine forms, as in (3)—not unlike grammatical gender, as illustrated in (2).
DESCRIPTION OF TARGET MORPHOSYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

(3)  
radžul  “a man”  
ʔimraʔ-a  “a woman”  
dz̚amal  “a he-camel”  
nāq-a  “a she-camel”

In addition, there are three small subclasses of nouns that violate the above distinction: nouns, such as ḥayy-a “snake,” that end with the feminine ending {-a} but can be used as feminine or masculine depending on the intended (natural) gender of an animal; nouns, such as faras “horse,” that do not end with the gender suffix {-a} but can be used as feminine or masculine depending on the intended gender; and nouns, such as those listed in (4) below, that involve grammatical gender but do not exhibit a feminine gender suffix. This third subclass of words can be used as either feminine or masculine in CA. In MSA, however, they are mostly used as masculine as part of a simplifying trend.

(4)  
tāʾarīq  “road”  
sabīl  “path, road”  
sūq  “market”  
 dalū  “bucket”  
 sikkīn  “knife”  
xamr  “wine”

The feminine suffix {-a} is not the only feminine gender marker in Arabic. There are two other feminine suffixes not quite different in principle from {-a}. These are {-ā} and {-āʔ}, as in the words listed in (5).

(5)  
ʔunthā  “female”  
fasʾā  “a stick-f”  
s̚ahrāʔ  “a desert-f”  
 samāʔ  “a sky-f”

The vast majority of Arabic feminine singular nouns exhibit these three endings (see Şaydāwī 1999:297). However, there are some exceptions that can be termed as crypto feminine (to use Whorf’s terminology), where, for example, a small subclass of words is marked for feminine (grammatical)
gender by a zero morpheme (that is, by having the same ending as the masculine form), as in (6).

\[(6)\]
\[
nafs \quad "self.f" \\
harb \quad "war.f" \\
\?ard\? \quad "earth.f" \\
\?ams \quad "sun.f" \\
\?a\?s \quad "a glass.f" \\
d\?r \quad "a house.f"\]

In addition, there are some proper names that have the masculine (zero) ending and are used as female names and some proper names that end with a feminine suffix and are used as male names, as in (7) below.

\[(7)\]
\[
zaynab = a \ female \ name \\
\?u\?ad = a \ female \ name \\
hamza = a \ male \ name \\
yahy\?a = a \ male \ name\]

Proper names, however, should not present the same degree of difficulty as crypto feminine terms, since proper names are usually learned as unanalyzed chunks. Notwithstanding the few irregular cases of gender markings on nouns (especially the feminine nouns that do not end with a feminine suffix), nouns are characterized by a great deal of regularity in MSA.\(^4\)

Adjectives are characterized by even more regularity in MSA, exhibiting the same gender suffixes as nouns: \{-a\}, \{-\?\}, and \{-\?a\?\}. Table 1.4 (cf. Table 1.3 above) lists adjectives inflected for both masculine and feminine gender distinctions. The table illustrates the three feminine endings, the most prevalent of which is the \{-a\} suffix. The table also illustrates that the choice of the ending depends on the particular pattern of adjectives, setting aside their semantic triggers as observed by traditional Arab grammarians (for example, see Al-Hulwānī 1972:270-271). Given that it is permissible in MSA to supply the suffix \{-a\} where CA would require the suffix \{-\?\}, as in \?at\?\?\?n and \?at\?\?'\?\?\?/\?at\?\?\?n-\?a "thirsty" for masculine and feminine respectively, this means that the feminine affix can in fact be restricted to two rather than three suffixes (see Majma‘ Al-lugha Al-‘Arabiyya 1984:126, 131-132). Hence this makes it an easier task for the
DESCRIPTION OF TARGET MORPHOSYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

L2er to supply the feminine ending on adjectives. In other words, except when the masculine form (ending with a zero morpheme) has the pattern of \( f\bar{a}l \) with the corresponding feminine pattern being \( f\bar{a}l\hat{a} \), which is specific to color adjectives and body deformities, the only other option is the feminine ending \(-a\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Reasons for Type of Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d(\bar{a})ris</td>
<td>d(\bar{a})ris-(a)</td>
<td>“studying/student”</td>
<td>due to pattern/derived A-P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>madr(\bar{u})s</td>
<td>madr(\bar{u})s-(a)</td>
<td>“studied”</td>
<td>due to pattern/derived P-P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qaliq</td>
<td>qaliq-(a)</td>
<td>“worried”</td>
<td>due to pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kab(\bar{\imath})r</td>
<td>kab(\bar{\imath})r-(a)</td>
<td>“big”</td>
<td>due to pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f\bar{a}l^\prime)(\bar{s\hat{a}}n)</td>
<td>(f\bar{a}l^\prime)(\bar{s\hat{a}}/f\bar{a}l^\prime)(\bar{s\hat{a}}n)-(a)*</td>
<td>“thirsty”</td>
<td>due to pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\bar{a}h\bar{m}r)ar</td>
<td>ham(\bar{\imath})r(\hat{a})</td>
<td>“red”</td>
<td>color adjective/due to pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\bar{a}f\bar{r}ad\hat{\imath})</td>
<td>(\bar{f}\bar{r}ad\hat{\imath})(\hat{a})</td>
<td>“limping”</td>
<td>due to pattern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = The \(-a\) suffix is allowed in MSA instead of CA’s feminine pattern \( f\bar{a}l\hat{a} \).

In addition, there is a class of adjectives of certain patterns, such as \( m\bar{f}\bar{\imath}l, m\bar{f}\bar{\imath}l, m\bar{f}\bar{\imath}l, \) or \( f\bar{a}l\) (when they carry the meaning of an active participle) and \( f\bar{a}l, f\bar{\imath}l, \) or \( f\bar{a}l \) (when they carry the meaning of the passive participle), that do not require a feminine suffix in CA (that is, the masculine and feminine form are identical, ending with a zero morpheme), as in (8) below (see Al-Ghalayyini 2000:100-101).

(8) \( rad\hat{\imath}ul d\bar{z}ar\hat{a} \)  \( ?imra\hat{a} d\bar{z}ar\hat{a} \)

man     wounded.m
“a wounded man”  woman     wounded.m
“a wounded woman”

However, the simplification tendency in MSA has been to mark the adjective with the feminine referent by means of the \(-a\) suffix as acknowledged by the Egyptian Arabic Language Academy to be grammatically correct (see Majma‘ Al-Lugha Al-‘Arabiyya 1984). The CA examples in (8) are rewritten in (9) as sanctioned MSA use.
Similarly, there are words in CA that do not exhibit a feminine ending, as they refer to an exclusively female quality, such as ḥāmil “pregnant,” ḥāʔidī “menstruating,” and ḥayyib “a female who is not virgin.” Such words follow the regular rule in MSA, exhibiting the feminine suffix {-a}. Thus, it is grammatically correct in MSA to have ḥāmil-ā “pregnant,” ḥāʔidī-ā “menstruating,” and ḥayyib-ā “a female who is not virgin” (Majma‘ Al-Lughah Al-‘Arabiyya 1984:126, 131-133). Thus, gender markings (feminine or masculine) for adjectives, as for nouns, are quite regular in MSA.

It is worthwhile to note here that current Arabic L2 textbooks follow the simplification tendencies and rules of MSA. Furthermore, the highly regular feminine gender suffix {-a} in nouns and adjectives is the most prevalent of the three suffixes and almost exclusively used during the first year of Arabic L2 instruction.

1.2 Nominal Inflectional Agreement Features

1.2.1 Agreement within NPs

In Arabic, NPs consisting of a head noun and an attributive adjective involve agreement between these two elements in gender (masculine or feminine), number (singular, dual, or plural), definiteness, and case (nominative, accusative, or genitive). Examples (10)-(13) illustrate the Arabic agreement phenomenon between the head noun and the attributive adjective with respect to number (singular), gender (singular masculine and singular feminine), and case (nominative, accusative, and genitive).

10(a) ʾālib-u-n
student.s.m-nom-indef
“a short (male) student”

10(b) ʾālib-a-n
student.s.m-acc-indef
“a short (male) student”

10(c) ʾālib-i-n
student.s.m-gen-indef
“a short (male) student”

qasʾ ār-u-n
short.s.m-nom-indef

qasʾ ār-a-n
short.s.m-acc-indef

qasʾ ār-i-n
short.s.m-gen-indef
Examples (10)-(11) show that the indefinite (in the singular) is signaled by *numination* "an ending marker," or {-n}. As explained above, when case is produced on words inflected for a feminine ending {-a}, then the feminine ending that is realized is {-at}, with [t] surfacing in formal MSA, as in (11) and (13). However, it is quite possible to not produce case endings without affecting the meaning, so long as a straightforward SVO word order (see Section 1.3 below) is maintained, corresponding to pause forms in CA and MSA, as is often observed in casual MSA, semiformal speech, and spoken Arabic. Thus, the corresponding pause, but regularly attested, forms in MSA of (10)-(13) are given below as (14)-(17).
1.3 Equational (Verbless) Sentence Structure

Equational or verbless sentences consist of two main constituent phrase structures without a copular lexical verb surfacing and are marked in the imperfective/present tense. The first phrase is usually referred to as muqtadaʔ “starter” (or topic/subject) and the second as xabar “news” (or comment/predicate). Both constituent structures agree in number, gender, and case but not in definiteness. The first constituent occurs usually in the definite while the second occurs in the indefinite. Sentences (18)-(26) illustrate the structure of equational sentences.

(18) ?al-iʕālib-u dʒədید-u-n
the-student.s.m-nom new.s.m-nom-indef
“The (male) student is new.”

(19) ?al-iʕālib-at-u dʒədید-at-u-n
the-student-s.f-nom new-s.f-nom-indef
“The (female) student is new.”

(20) huwa dʒədید-u-n
he new.s.m-nom-indef
“He is new.”

(21) hiya dʒədید-at-u-n
she new-s.f-nom-indef
“She is new.”

(22) wālid-at-i sūriyy-at-u-n
mother-s.f-my Syrian-s.f-nom-indef
“My mother is Syrian.”
(23) ḥādā ṭālib-u-n
this.s.m student.s.m-nom-indef
“This is a (male) student.”

(24) ḥādihi ṭālib-at-u-n
this.s.f student-s.f-nom-indef
“This is a (female) student.”

(25) ḥādā ṭālib-u-n dżadid-u-n
this.s.m student.s.m-nom-indef new.s.m-nom-indef
“This is a new (male) student.”

(26) ḥādā ẓal-tālib-u dżadid-u-n
this.s.m the-student.s.m-nom new.s.m-nom-indef
“This (male) student is new.”

Sentences (18)-(26) above indicate that the first constituent phrase must be definite whether by means of the definite article as in (18)-(19), personal pronoun as in (20)-(21), possessive pronoun as in (22), or demonstrative pronoun as in (23)-(24). Sentences (25)-(26) show that either constituent phrase may consist of more than one word. As discussed above, it is quite possible to produce such sentences without case endings, as is generally attested in casual and semiformal speech, without disrupting the meaning, since case does not carry crucial meaning as long as an SVO or VSO word order is strictly observed. However, both constituent phrases must be inflected for the feature agreement of number and gender. Accordingly, the pause form without case markings of (18)-(19), for example, can be reproduced as (27)-(28) below.

(27) ẓal-tālib dżadid
the-student.s.m new.s.m
“The (male) student is new.”

(28) ẓal-tālib-a dżadid-a
the-student-s.f new-s.f
“The (female) student is new.”

Sentences (25)-(26) show the distinction between sentences containing a demonstrative pronoun as subject of a verbless sentence and NPs containing a demonstrative modifying a head noun, respectively. In the latter, the noun modified by the demonstrative pronoun is always definite. Demonstrative pronouns are inflected for gender, number, animacy, and case and match the
head nouns with respect to these features. In such a phrase, a head noun, together with the demonstrative, serves as any argument type, including subject, object, and object of a preposition, etc., as in sentences (29)-(31), respectively.

(29) ḥādihi  ṭal-sayyār-a(t-u)  kabīr-a(t-u-n)
     this.s.f    the-car.s.f-nom    big.s.f-nom-indef
     “This car is big.”

(30) ṭu-hibb(-u)  ḥādihi  ṭal-sayyār-a(t-a)
     1.s-like-indic    this.s.f    the-car-s.f-acc
     “I like this car.”

(31) ṭa-nūr(-u)  ṭilā  ḥādihi  ṭal-sayyār-a(t-i)
     1.s-look-indic    at    this.s.f    the-car-s.f-gen
     “I (am) look(ing) at this car.”

However, if the head noun or (predicative) adjective occurs in the indefinite following a demonstrative pronoun, then both elements would constitute two (phrasal) constituents of an equational (verbless copular) sentence with the noun or adjective functioning as a predicate argument and the demonstrative pronoun as the subject, as in (23)-(25).

1.3.1 Past tense of equational (verbless) sentences

For equational sentences to be expressed in the past (or the future) tense, the copular verb kāna “was” surfaces. In this case, of course, the structure is no longer equational in nature (that is, verbless), equational sentences occurring restrictively in the imperfective/present tense. The verb kāna is inflected for person, gender, and number to agree with the subject as any other verb in Arabic. In addition, the predicate exhibits agreement with the subject (in gender and number) and is in the accusative case, as in (32)-(37).

(32) kāna  ṭal-tūlib(-u)  muḥakkir(-a-n)
     be.perf.3.s.m    the-student.s.m-nom    early.s.m-acc-indef
     “The (male) student was early.”

(33) kāna  ṭal-tūlib(-u)  muḥakkir-iña
     be.perf.3.s.m    the-student.p.m-nom    early-p.m.acc
     “The (male) students were early.”
DESCRIPTION OF TARGET MORPHOSYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

(34)  \( \text{?al-t}'ullāb(-u) \quad kān-ū \quad mubakkir-īna \)
the-student.p.m-nom  be.perf-3.p.m  early-p.m.acc
“The (male) students were early.”

(35)  \( kān-at \quad \text{?al-t}'ālib-a(t-u) \quad mubakkir-a(t-a-n) \)
be.perf-3.s.f  the-student-s.f-nom  early-s.f-acc-indef
“The (female) student was early.”

(36)  \( kān-at \quad \text{?al-t}'ālib-āt(-u) \quad mubakkir-āt(-i-n) \)
be.perf-3.s.f  the-student-p.f-nom  early-p.f-acc-indef
“The (female) students were early.”

(37)  \( \text{?al-t}'ālib-āt(-u) \quad kun-na \quad mubakkir-āt(-i-n) \)
“The (female) students were early.”

Additionally, sentences (33)-(34) and (36)-(37) show that the copular verb kāna may precede the subject or follow it with the consequence that kāna in the former is only inflected for person and gender and in the latter fully inflected for person, gender, and number (see Section 1.4 below for more on agreement within SV or VSO order). In addition to the above agreement pattern between kāna and the subject, the predicate exhibits agreement with the subject (in gender and number) and is in the accusative case.

1.3.2 Negation of equational (verbless) sentences

Negation of equational sentences can be expressed, though not exclusively,\(^{12}\) by use of laysa “is not,” which is inflected for person, gender, and number, as in sentences (38)-(42).\(^{13}\)

(38)  \( \text{laysa} \quad \text{?al-t}'ālib(-u) \quad mubakkir(-a-n)\(^{14}\) \)
not.3.s.m  the-student.s.m-nom  early.s.m-acc
“The (male) student is not early.”

(39)  \( \text{laysa} \quad \text{?al-t}'ullāb(-u) \quad mubakkir-īna \)
not.3.s.m  the-student.p.m-nom  early-p.m.acc
“The (male) students are not early.”

(40)  \( \text{?al-t}'ullāb(-u) \quad \text{lays-ū} \quad mubakkir-īna \)
the-student.p.m-nom  not-3.p.m  early-p.m.acc
“The (male) students are not early.”

(41)  \( \text{lays-at} \quad \text{?al-t}'ālib-a(t-u) \quad mubakkir-a(t-a-n) \)
not.3.s.f  the-student-s.f-nom  early-s.f-acc-indef
“The (female) student is not early.”
Like the copular kāna verb, laysa may precede the subject of the negated construction as in (38)-(39) and (41)-(42) or follow it as in (40) and (43) with the consequence that the negator laysa, in the former, is only inflected for person and gender and is fully inflected for person, gender, and number in the latter (see Section 1.4 below for more details on agreement within SV or VSO order).

1.4 Verbal Inflectional Agreement Features

1.4.1 Verbal agreement, tense, and null subjects

A single lexical verb in Arabic is usually inflected for the features tense (past/perfective or present/imperfective), person, number, and gender. In addition, imperfective verbs are inflected for mood (indicative, subjunctive, and jussive). As Arabic is a pro-drop/null-subject language, a verb with a pronoun suffix attached to it can be the only word in a sentence, as in (44)-(46).

(44) daras-ū
    study.perf-3.p.m
    “They studied.”

(45) ya-drus-ū-na
    3-study.imperf-p.m-indic
    “They study.”

(46) ṭu-drus-ū-0
    2-study.impera-p.m-jussive
    “Study!”

The distinction between the past/perfective and present/imperfective is readily established by the presence (imperfective) or absence (perfective) of the prefix; that is, past tense is marked with a suffix only and present tense is marked with a prefix or a prefix and a suffix. Agreement features contained in the prefix include person and gender information, whereas
agreement features contained in the suffix include number and gender information.

When an explicit subject is involved, two types of agreement hold between the subject and the verb, depending on whether the subject is pre-verbal or post-verbal. In a pre-verbal subject construction (in both the perfective and imperfective), the subject and the verb share full agreement features of person, gender, and number, as in (47)-(50) below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject Form</th>
<th>Verb Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47(a)</td>
<td>?al-lālib(-u)</td>
<td>darasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.s.m-nom</td>
<td>study.perf.3.s.m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (male) student studied.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47(b)</td>
<td>?al-lālib(-u)</td>
<td>ya-drus(-u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.s.m-nom</td>
<td>3.s.m-study.imperf-indic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (male) student studies.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48(a)</td>
<td>?al-lālib-a(t-u)</td>
<td>daras-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.s.f-nom</td>
<td>study.perf-3.s.f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (female) student studied.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48(b)</td>
<td>?al-lālib-a(t-u)</td>
<td>ta-drus(-u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.s.f-nom</td>
<td>3.s.f-study.imperf-indic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (female) student studies.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49(a)</td>
<td>?al-lullāb(-u)</td>
<td>daras-ū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.p.m-nom</td>
<td>study.perf-3.p.m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (male) students studied.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49(b)</td>
<td>?al-lullāb(-u)</td>
<td>ya-drus-ū-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.p.m-nom</td>
<td>3-study.imperf-p.m-indic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (male) students study.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50(a)</td>
<td>?al-lālib-āt(-u)</td>
<td>daras-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.p.f-nom</td>
<td>study.perf-3.p.f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (female) students studied.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50(b)</td>
<td>?al-lālib-āt(-u)</td>
<td>ya-drus-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the-student.p.f-nom</td>
<td>3-study.imperf-p.f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The (female) students study.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in a post-verbal subject construction, the subject and the verb agree only in person and gender, as in (51)-(54).
51(a) **darasa**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib(-u)} \)  
study.perf.3.s.m the-student.s.m-nom  
"The (male) student studied."

51(b) **ya-drus(-u)**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib(-u)} \)  
3.s.m-study.imperf-indic the-student.s.m-nom  
"The (male) student studies."

52(a) **d aras-at**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib-a(t-u)} \)  
study.perf.3.s.f the-student-s.f-nom  
"The (female) student studied."

52(b) **ta-drus(-u)**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib-a(t-u)} \)  
3.s.f-study.imperf-indic the-student-s.f-nom  
"The (female) student studies."

53(a) **darasa**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ullāb(-u)} \)  
study.perf.3.s.m the-student.p.m-nom  
"The (male) students studied."

53(b) **ya-drus(-u)**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ullāb(-u)} \)  
3.s.m-study.imperf-indic the-student.p.m-nom  
"The (male) students study."

54(a) **d aras-at**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib-āt(-u)} \)  
study.perf.3.s.f the-student-p.f-nom  
"The (female) students studied."

54(b) **ta-drus(-u)**  
\( \text{?al-}^{\text{f}}\text{ālib-āt(-u)} \)  
3.s.f-study.imperf-indic the-student-p.f-nom  
"The (female) students study."

1.4.2 *Verbal negation*

Arabic negation markers seem to interact more with Arabic morphology than they do with syntax. As will be evident below, Arabic negation markers follow a straightforward usage. They occur in a sentence-initial position before the verb (in a VSO order) or after the subject (in an SVO order) and do not involve complicated word order rules as do English negation markers, for example. The focus here is mainly on mā, lā, lam, and lan and their basic contexts (for a more detailed typological description of Arabic negation markers, see Fassi Fehri 1993:163-174).

The negation marker lā negates the imperfective/present tense, while mā negates the perfective/past tense, as in sentences (55)-(58) below.
As sentences (55)-(58) show, neither negative particle exhibits any further exchange of grammatical information with the verb irrespective of word order. The verbs in sentences (56) and (58) would be identical to those in (55) and (57), respectively, since the verb in a VSO order agrees with the subject only in person and gender.

In addition to negating the past tense, mā negates equational sentences, usually more often when expressing possessive meaning, as in (59)-(60) below.17

(59) mā ḫind-i sayyār-a(t-un)
not at-me car-s.f-nom
“I do not have a car.”

(60) mā ḫanā bi-dʒāṭif(-in)
not I with-hungry.s.m-gen
“I am not really hungry.”

The negation marker lam is specialized in negating the perfective/past tense (and as an optional variant rule of mā in MSA). However, lam shares some feature specification with the verb following it. The verb receives a “default tense specification,” occurring in the imperfective with a jussive mood feature due to the occurrence of the negation marker (see Fassi Fehri 1993:163). Thus, sentences (57)-(58), listed above, are negated with lam in (61)-(62) below.
In a VSO word order the verb in (62) would be identical to that in (61), since the verb in a VSO order agrees with the subject only in person and gender.

The negation marker lan is specialized in negating the future tense. However, it assigns the subjunctive case to the verb (in the imperfective) following it, as illustrated in sentences (63)-(64).

Negating the future tense usually requires dropping the independent future (morpheme) particle sawfa or the bound future marker {-sa} that is attached to the verb as a prefix to signal the future. Thus, sentences (63)-(64) above are negative counterparts of sentences (65)-(66) below.

However, it is possible to retain the particle sawfa for emphasis, as in (67)-(68) below.
DESCRIPTION OF TARGET MORPHOSYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

(67) sawfa lan ya-drus(-a)  ṭal-tālib(-u)
will not 3.s.m-study.imperf-subjunct the-student.s.m-nom
“The (male) student will NOT study.”

(68) ṭal-tullāb(-u) sawfa lan ya-drus-ū-0
the-student.p.m-nom will not 3-study.imperf-p.m-subjunct
“The (male) students will NOT study.”

1.5 Summary
The foregoing account is not intended to be an exhaustive description
but rather to elucidate the most relevant aspects of the target
morphosyntactic structures. In particular, the focus here is on some of the
most basic and regular features that Arabic L2 learners are exposed to in
their first years of learning. The morphosyntactic features focused on here
involve:

(1) word structure
(2) gender
(3) phrasal structure and agreement
(4) equational (verbless) sentence structure
(5) negation of equational (verbless) sentence structure
(6) verbal structure and agreement
(7) negation of verbal structure

The findings and conclusions take into account the degree of form-
function complexity and the learning task involved, which is one of the
most important L2 learning factors. Attempts will also be made whenever
possible to analyze the distribution of these forms in the formal input which
the participants received.