The acquisition of nominal gender agreement: praxeology analysis of Arabic second language text book “Silsilah Al-Lisaan”

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Abstract

Purpose – Assessing whether a book is relevant or suitable for use in teaching materials is not an easy and haphazard matter, various methods and theories have been offered by researchers in studying this matter. Taking a study of the context of textbooks, researchers found the urgency that textbooks are a foundation for education, socialization and transmission of knowledge and its construction. Researchers offer another approach, namely by using praxeology as a study tool so that the goals of the textbooks previously intended are fulfilled.

Design/methodology/approach – The researcher uses a qualitative approach through grounded theory. Grounded theory procedures are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of the social phenomena under study. A grounded theory must explain as well as describe. It may also implicitly provide some degree of predictability, but only with respect to certain conditions (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Document analysis in conducting this research study. Document analysis itself examines systematic procedures for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic materials.

Findings – Two issues regarding gender acquisition have been investigated in L2 Arabic acquisition studies; the order in which L2 Arabic learners acquire certain grammatical features of the gender system and the effect of L1 on the acquisition of some grammatical features from L2 grammatical gender. Arabic has a two-gender system that classifies all nouns, animate and inanimate, as masculine or feminine. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns related to nouns in the syntactic structure of sentences show gender agreement.

Research limitations/implications – In practice, as a book intended for non-speakers, the book is presented using a general view of linguistic theory. In relation to the gender agreement, the presentation of the book begins and is inserted with the concepts of nouns and verbs. Returning to the praxeology context, First, The Know How (Praxis) explains practice (i.e. the tasks performed and the techniques used). Second, To Know Why or Knowledge (logos) which explains and justifies practice from a technological and theoretical point of view. Answering the first concept, the exercise presented in the book is a concept with three clusters explained at the beginning of the discussion. And the second concept, explained with a task design approach which includes word categorization by separating masculine and feminine word forms.

Practical implications – Practically, this research obtains perspectives studied from a textbook, namely the Arabic gender agreement is presented with various examples of noun contexts; textbook authors present book concepts in a particular way with regard to curriculum features and this task design affects student performance, and which approach is more effective for developing student understanding. Empirically, the material is in line with the formulation of competency standards for non-Arabic speakers in Indonesia.

Originality/value – With this computational search, the researcher found a novelty that was considered accurate by taking the praxeology context as a review in the analysis of non-speaking Arabic textbooks, especially in the year 2022 (last data collection in September) there has been no study on this context. So then, the researcher finds other interests in that praxeology can examine more broadly parts of the task of the contents of the book with the approach of relevant linguistic theories.

Keywords Arabic, Textbook, Nominal gender, Praxeology

Paper type Research paper
Introduction
Praxeology in Education prioritizes understanding the dimensions of how something can be practiced, as well as problem solving and even metacognitive processes through a process of reflection (Victoria and Yvan, 2007; Biesta, 2015). The praxeology approach practically uses epistemology theory and is considered capable of contributing to solving pedagogic problems, especially in educational or learning theories (Bularga, 2018). The simple conclusion, praxeology refers to the practical dimension of knowledge; something to learn and build on. The other dimensions are the descriptive, grouping and justification sections which contain theories to elaborate on the meaning in the intended description (Bosch et al., 2017).

Arabic has complex syntax and morphology compared to other languages such as English (Al-Kabi et al., 2014). In reflecting on this statement in textbooks, it is assumed that consideration is needed, one of which is the grade or level of the reader. Books are synonymous with how readers are thinkers, in this context, namely teaching books, the reading in question must be relevant to the level of ability or level of the reader (Al-Hasanat, 2016), even besides that books or textbooks can convey messages and provide educational value to their readers (Al-Rub, 2021). In this regard, assessing whether a book is relevant or suitable for use in teaching materials is not an easy and haphazard matter, various methods and theories have been offered by researchers in studying this matter. Taking a study of the context of textbooks, researchers found the urgency that textbooks are a foundation for education, socialization and transmission of knowledge and its construction (Weninger and Kiss, 2015). Researchers offer another approach, namely by using praxeology as a study tool so that the goals of the textbooks previously intended are fulfilled.

In the context of research on the analysis of Arabic language books in the last ten years there have been 987 published research papers. Three of them are Baina Yadaik’s Arabic Book Analysis carried out by (Edayani et al., 2020) through a material development principle approach and revealing the advantages of material design. Analysis of Arabic script texts was also carried out (Allehaiby, 2013) by examining the sociolinguistic analysis of the Romanization of Arabic script phenomena, better known as Arabizi. And other research, namely the analysis of Arabic text books in the context of grammar using a graphic animation technology approach (Hamid et al., 2020).

The author took the latest research data using the Google Scholar Publish or Perish bibliometric indexed computing application in the 2012–2022 timeframe which is listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of publication</th>
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<td>2022</td>
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<td>2022</td>
<td>52</td>
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Table 1.
Development of Arabic book analysis research

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<th>Source(s): Author’s own creation/work</th>
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Table 1.
Development of Arabic book analysis research
Within this range, there has been an increase in research on the analysis of Arabic books in 2012–2017. Then there was a decline in 2016–2018, and fluctuated in 2018–2019, and decreased again until 2022, as recorded in Figure 1.

In the context link on the analysis of Arabic books, the concept of praxeology has not yet been researched, especially in 2022 in 52 publications on research on the analysis of Arabic books. The researcher used computational bibliometric analysis on the analysis of Arabic books using Vosviewer with the results of nine field clusters related to the analysis of Arabic books with 265 items, 7,392 links which are depicted in Figure 2. Then it appears in 2016–2018 the issue of textbook analysis involving high learning was dealt with, as shown in Figure 3.

With this computational search, the researcher found a novelty that was considered accurate by taking the praxeology context as a review in the analysis of non-speaking Arabic textbooks, especially in the year 2022 (last data collection in September) there has been no
study on this context. So then, the researcher finds other interests in that praxeology can more broadly examine parts of the task of the contents of the book with the approach of relevant linguistic theories.

Previous research illustrates the fact that studies on the grammar of Arabic as a foreign language have been carried out by many studies. In the context of this research, the researcher examines the content in the textbook sections that are used for non-Arabic-speaking learners through a praxeology approach. This approach is used as material for didactic studies, namely the acquisition of knowledge construction through experience. The perceptual and memorial processes carried out by learners in the context of forming new knowledge certainly have limitations, both due to perceptive and other factors so that the information obtained cannot represent reality. In the context of this research, the focus is on gender agreement in Arabic knowledge of which can be obtained for Indonesian speakers through the Al-Lisaan Silsilah text book.

**Conceptual framework**

Praxeology is a theory about human action or practice. Aetoeologically from the Greek, Praxis (purposeful action) and Logos (word/thought or principle of knowledge) the origins of praxeology lay in the concern of Greek moral philosophy, especially Aristotle, with knowledge in the service of human improvement, which we now call fulfillment. or welfare (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

The praxeology variable components are questions, techniques, technology and theories to determine didactic transposition in knowledge (Barbé et al., 2005; Wijayanti and Aafa, 2020). Fundamentally, textbook research as a whole is multifaceted and offers different scopes, whether textbooks are content focused or focused on what culture is represented. Researchers adopt a praxeology approach as a tool to conceptualize the different scopes shown by the education system, in this case different non-speaking languages (Takeuchi and Shinno, 2020).

More specifically, the perspectives studied from this textbook are (1) different approaches to dealing with certain topics as contained in the textbook; Arabic gender agreement; (2) what
might influence textbook authors to present book concepts in a certain way with regard to curriculum features and (3) how this approach affects student performance, and which approach is more effective for developing student understanding (Wang et al., 2017). With the performance of praxeology, this perspective can be revealed and can be used as a reference for the concept of a book as a correlation with education.

Related to Arabic, Arabic is a highly inflected language, with rich morphology, relatively free word order and two types of sentences: nominal and verbal. Arabic natural language processing in general is still underdeveloped and Arabic Natural Language Generation (NLG) is even less developed. In particular, the natural Arabic language generation of Interlingua was only investigated using a template-based approach. In addition, tools used for other languages are not easily adaptable to Arabic due to the complexity of Arabic at both morphological and syntactic levels. In the paper, we report our efforts to develop a rule-based Arabic language generator for task-oriented Interlingua-based spoken dialogue. An example of the syntactic generation results from the Arabic Generator will be given and will illustrate how the system works (Shaalan et al., 2009).

Next, the researcher describes the operational definition of gender agreement in Arabic. Among them; standard Arabic (MSA) sentences clearly indicate the number and gender (Colloquial Arabic). Arabic verbs (fi'î) and nouns (ism) will appear to have a dominating agreement quality. Due to the sentence’s employment of the three Arabic word classes—noun, verb and particle—it takes up a significant portion of the language. In terms of case, number and gender, nouns and verbs denote one another in sentences (Ma’nawi et al., 2021). Regarding agreement, the number affects the verb in the sentence; gender affects verbs and noun attributes. In several studies, the discussion can be extended to the definiteness that will appear in the phrase. Especially concerning the attributive phrase (murakkab wasfiyy). A noun affects other nouns at the phrase level; it is found in the phrase of idhafiy. This also shows that the grammatical rule of gender in Arabic is complex, as supported by the opinion of Ma’nawi et al. (2021). It was stated that gender grammar comprises elements other than those that are connected to the agreement, such as verbs, adjectives, pronouns and determiners. It is claimed that the sentence’s syntactic structure is gender agreement in the verbs, nouns, adjectives, personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns connected to the noun. Hence, the topic of this essay is simply a minor component of the sentence’s overall structure.

Grammatical gender is defined by Hockett (1958) as the “classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words”. This system of noun classification is present in many languages throughout the world and absent in many others. Languages with gender systems may have two or more classes or genders; that is, a language may consist of masculine and feminine genders, or masculine, feminine and neutral genders. In some languages, these classes of nouns can be based on semantic criteria, meaning that a noun can be assigned as masculine or feminine because of its meaning or one of its attributes such as biological sex, humanness or animacy. In other languages, gender classification can be specified according to formal properties, so that a noun’s gender is determined by its morphological or phonological features. Finally, in other cases, the two noun-gender assignment is simply arbitrary (Alamry, 2014).

In terms of gender, the two varieties distinguish between two genders: Masculine and Feminine. For human beings and most animals, the distinction is based on sex or biological gender. For the rest of the common nouns, gender is largely determined by convention and sometimes by form. Typically, feminine nouns are marked with -a if they are singular and with -aat if plural. However, some feminine nouns lack the feminine markers and some masculine nouns may have them (Albirini et al., 2013). Saudi Arabic gender (and number) switch is a syntactic effect because feminine singular agreement with non-human plural
nouns triggers a particular semantic/pragmatic interpretation, namely, that of a non-individuated herd/clump (Kramer and Winchester, 2018).

Based on the theory that builds on gender agreement, the concept of gender agreement in Arabic is believed by researchers to be different from other international language concepts. In practical terms, Indonesia uses Oral Genealogy books as teaching materials in teaching Arabic as a foreign language, so it is believed that an understanding of the concept of gender in Arabic grammar is necessary for novice learners to understand.

**Method**
The researcher uses a qualitative approach through grounded theory. Grounded theory procedures are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of the social phenomena under study. A grounded theory must explain as well as describe. It may also implicitly provide some degree of predictability, but only with respect to certain conditions (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

Document analysis in conducting this research study. Document analysis itself examines systematic procedures for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic materials (Bowen, 2009). The source of the document in question is the book Silsilah Al-Lisan which was published by the markaz verbalul um in Dubai, the selection of this book as a source of study, namely ‘silsilatu al lisan’ as Arabic teaching material for non-Arabic speakers of Arabic. This book was written based on long experience in learning Arabic and an in-depth study of Arabic teaching materials. The composition of the book ‘silsilatu al verbal’ consists of four parts, first, the book al tamhiidi and the book al mubtadi for beginner level students, the second book al mutawasith for intermediate-level students and the last book al muatqodim is for the advanced level. In the first two books of oral silsilatul it is hoped that Arabic learners can communicate using Arabic properly. In this research study, researchers took the book at tamhiidi as a source document.

This book is compiled and is specifically for non-speakers, in Table 2 the contents of the task from Tamhidi’s Silsilah Al-Lisan book volume 1 are presented, so this study then uses a language theory approach as a second language or non-speakers’ language using a praxeology approach in the context of gender agreement. Grammatical gender is a system in language that divides all nouns into gender classifications. This system marks several arguments such as determinants, adjectives, demonstratives and relative pronouns in sentences for gender agreement (Aljadani, 2019).

According to Chevallard (1999), a praxeology is organized on two levels:

First, The Know How (Praxis) which describes practice (i.e. the tasks performed and the techniques used).

Second, To Know Why or Knowledge (logos) which explains and justifies practice from a technological and theoretical point of view.

**Result and discussion**
This book presents 11 tasks with three cluster themes, namely: writing, reading, understanding discourse, understanding morphosyntactic structure (See Table 3).

Right on the cluster 2 and cluster 3, the basic explanation is to explain the nominal concept of gender in the order of the Arabic language. In particular, the material presented is aimed at non-speaking Arabic learners. The target structure regarding nominal gender is presented through a comparison of vocabulary which is then contained in a sentence and discourse, either in conversation or in the full text. Its relation to the existence of cluster 1. For novice readers, reading text without diacritics is challenging because it only gives a partial
representation of the phonological form of words. Texts that are not diacritical also have many homographs (Hallberg, 2022a, b).

Procedural context of the contents of the book task design
The context procedure for the contents of the book design task is presented in Table 4 with explanatory demographics through the book function approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of pages</th>
<th>Language use</th>
<th>Availability of pictures and instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Introduction to the author's foreword</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huruf hijaiyah</td>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Letters without vowels (Introductions and Greetings)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس الثاني (Country and language)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس الثالث (traveling)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس الرابع (Transportation)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس الخامس (Profession)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس السادس (Telecommunication)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس السابع (Family)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس الثامن (Daily activities)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس التاسع (Clothes)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الدرس العاشر (Foods)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>النص الثاني عشر (Characteristic)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>النص الثالث عشر (Home)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source(s): Author’s own creation/work

Table 2. Task demographics of Silsilah Al-Lisan book volume 1 Tamhidi

Table 3. Cluster themes
For the purposes of this book, it is important to note here that not all patterns share a productive uniformity and that L2 learners of Arabic are usually not introduced to the notions of roots and patterns early in their exposure to the language.

**Task design presented in the book (for beginner 1)**

Arabic nominal sentences are similar to English copular sentences in one way or another at least both begin with a nominal expression (pronoun). The following Table 5 shows demographics of pronouns. In Arabic, demonstrative pronouns have a wider range than English because of differences in gender.

Beginning with an introduction to writing, this book presents the concept of practicing both writing and reading. In the scientific literature, the Arabic writing system is usually described in binary terms mostly as diacritical or not. These are usually referred to in terms of
Arabic has a wider range of demonstrative pronouns than English because of differences in gender and number. It is very important to ensure agreement between the demonstrative pronoun and the noun it refers to in gender, number and case. Arabic has nearly ten demonstrative pronouns which are classified into two classifications: demonstrative proximity and demonstrative distance. The demonstratives of affinity are haadhaa to refer to a masculine singular noun, haadhiihi to refer to a singular feminine noun, haadhaani to a masculine dual noun (in the nominative case), haataani to refer to a feminine dual noun (in the nominative case), haadhayni referring to a masculine dual noun (in the accusative and genitive case), haatayni refers to a feminine dual noun (in the accusative and genitive case), and haa’ulaa to refer to masculine and feminine plural nouns. haa’ulaa’ has no gender difference and is only used when showing humans (Aljadani, 2019).

The next design regarding phonetics through the introduction of prepositions in Arabic is presented in Table 6.

Still the same as the phonetic and writing exercises, the next design presents question words and adverbs of time in Table 7 and Table 8.

Arabic has a rich and complex morphology. In addition to being a template (root/pattern) and concatenative (stem/affix/click), Arabic optional diacritics add a level of ambiguity to words (Habash, 2010). There are two specific problems of nominal Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) morphology involving only gender and numeric features: the distinction between morphological form and function and the complex system of morpho-syntactic agreements (Alkuhlani and Habash, 2011) see Table 9.
Note(s): Prepositions in the book are presented through writing and pronunciation exercises. It should be noted that while phonemic (internally occurring word/word) diacritics are necessary for lexical access because they map semantically contrasting phonemic information, morpho-syntactic (eventually appearing word/stem) diacritics mark abstract grammatical forms of the same word and are usually not needed for word identification or for reading comprehension. This can be seen from the fact that all Arabic readers are skilled at reading Arabic without vowels, whereas only a small proportion of them master the complex system of syntactic rules captured by morpho-syntactic diacritics (Saiegh-Haddad and Schiff, 2016)
Nominal noun-adjective gender agreement

In terms of gender, the two varieties differentiate between the two sexes: masculine and feminine. For humans and most animals, the difference is based on sex or biological gender. For all other nouns, gender is determined largely by convention and sometimes by form. Usually, feminine nouns are marked with -a in the singular and -aat in the plural. However, some feminine nouns do not have feminine markers and some masculine nouns may have them (Albirini et al., 2012).

Arabic gender and numeral features participate in morpho-syntactic agreements in certain constructions such as nouns and their adjectives and verbs and their subjects. Arabic agreement rules are more complex than the simple matching rules found in languages like French or Spanish (Holes, 2004; Habash, 2010).

Gender is one of the most investigated topics among linguists and anthropologists. However, gender has been neglected by linguists and anthropologists due to a lack of consensus among linguists about the origins and even the definition of gender. Gender according to Ibrahim is “category syntax with gender as the appropriate national category”. As a syntax category; gender categorizes words into two or three classes for the purpose of harmony or agreement. There are words with an attached gender, words with concordial or derived gender and words that do not have an inherited or derived gender (Ibrahim, 2014).

Grammatical gender agreement

Arabic nouns are marked with natural/biological gender or grammatical gender. Masculine plural morphology in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): Plural nouns that sound (regular) Plural nouns of appraisal (irregular). Post-nominal adjective agreement for masculine plural nouns: Sounding plural nouns: full agreement in number and gender (Idrissi et al., 2018).

(1) Plural, masculine: not grammatically otherwise. Broken human plural nouns: full agreement in number and gender

(2) Plural, masculine: not grammatically otherwise. Broken non-human plural nouns: idiosyncratic

(3) Single, feminine

Nouns in Arabic and even inanimate objects are usually classified as masculine or feminine (Alkohlani, 2016). Gender categories can be described semantically with the exception of cases where nouns refer to humans or other creatures when they usually correspond to natural gender (gender based on biological sex) (Sadiqi, 2006). Grammatical Gender is usually distinguished from natural gender (Alkohlani, 2016). In terms of morphology, the masculine form can be considered as the most basic and has the simplest form, while the feminine form is usually marked as a suffix. For the most part, the gender of Arabic is clearly marked however, there are some words whose gender is hidden and only appears in agreed order. Gender appears in verbs, nouns, adjectives, numbers and determinants, and can be used to signify agreement or grammatical harmony between these categories (Ibrahim, 2014).

Table 9.
Feminine sign

| Source(s): Author's own creation/work |
Two issues regarding gender acquisition have been investigated in L2 Arabic acquisition studies; the order in which L2 Arabic learners acquire certain grammatical features of the gender system, and the effect of L1 on the acquisition of some grammatical features from L2 grammatical gender. Arabic has a two-gender system that classifies all nouns, animate and inanimate, as masculine or feminine. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns related to nouns in the syntactic structure of sentences show gender agreement (Alkohlani, 2016).

In practice, as a book intended for non-speakers, the book is presented using a general view of linguistic theory. In relation to the gender agreement, the presentation of the book begins and is inserted with the concepts of nouns and verbs. Returning to the praxeology context, First, The Know How (Praxis) explains practice (i.e. the tasks performed and the techniques used). Second, To Know Why or Knowledge (logos) which explains and justifies practice from a technological and theoretical point of view. Answering the first concept, the exercise presented in the book is a concept with three clusters explained at the beginning of the discussion. And the second concept, explained with a task design approach which includes word categorization by separating masculine and feminine word forms.

**Conclusion**

Arabic nouns are marked with natural/biological gender or grammatical gender. Masculine plural morphology in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): Plural nouns that sound (regular) Plural nouns that are broken (irregular). Practically, this research obtains perspectives studied from a textbook, namely the Arabic gender agreement is presented with various examples of noun contexts; textbook authors present book concepts in a particular way with regard to curriculum features and this task design affects student performance, and which approach is more effective for developing student understanding. Empirically, the material is in line with the formulation of competency standards for non-Arabic speakers in Indonesia.

**References**


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