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ARABIC VERBAL GENDER AGREEMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF KRASHEN'S THEORY OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

Arabic verbal gender agreement poses challenges for second-language learners due to its complexity. This study highlights the necessity for Arabic language programs to implement input at the appropriate level (*i+1*) and to foster a low-anxiety environment to enhance learner acquisition in line with Krashen's framework. The participants in this study were new students (level 1) with a background in public schools who were still categorized as beginner learners, totaling 29 students. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with 29 participants regarding their experiences in learning and understanding gender agreement, as well as observations to see how the language acquisition process occurs. Then, the data was analyzed using phenomenological thematic analysis. The findings reveal that learners who received comprehensible input at an appropriate level (*i+1*) demonstrated more accurate responses, suggesting effective language acquisition. In contrast, learners exposed to overly complex input (*i+2* or higher) struggled to process the material effectively. Affective factors, such as motivation and anxiety, were also found to influence learning outcomes. High anxiety negatively impacted fluency, while a supportive learning environment enhanced language acquisition. This study highlights the importance of aligning teaching strategies with Krashen's theory, particularly the principle of comprehensible input. It is recommended that Arabic language curricula incorporate materials that gradually increase in difficulty (*i+1*), ensuring input is both challenging and accessible to learners. This approach can facilitate more effective language acquisition and improve overall student outcomes in Arabic language instruction.



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INTRODUCTION

Arabic has a complex morphological system (Shoukry & Rafea, 2012; Alsayat & Elmitwally, 2020), which includes verbal gender agreement (Syihabuddin et al., 2024; Tucker et al., 2021). In this system, verbs must align with the gender of their subject (Alshammari, 2023; AlSabbagh, 2023), a feature that often presents challenges for Arabic language learners (Anderson, 2025). These challenges are particularly pronounced for learners whose first language lacks a comparable gender agreement structure (Zuhin et al., 2024). Research indicates that errors in verbal gender agreement are common (Shehata, 2024), occurring in both spoken and written forms (Sovinaz & Rusady, 2023), which in turn can impact learners' fluency and accuracy in communication (Guo & Ellis, 2021).

Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Stephen Krashen's theory provides a theoretical lens to understand these learning difficulties. The Comprehensible Input Hypothesis posits that language acquisition occurs when learners receive input that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level ($i+1$) (Majoul et al., 2023; Luo, 2024) and offers a perspective on how language is acquired naturally and effectively (D'Souza, 2023). Applying this perspective, verbal gender agreement can be seen as a component that may not be naturally acquired unless it is made comprehensible and contextual for learners.

Additionally, the *Affective Filter Hypothesis* suggests that emotional factors, such as anxiety (Yousefabad et al., 2022), motivation (Ghafar, 2023), and Self-confidence (Alam et al., 2021), affect the success of language acquisition (Guo & Ellis, 2021). In the case of Arabic, the pressure of mastering intricate agreement rules may trigger cognitive overload or anxiety, especially when instructional support is limited or inconsistent.

Despite the central role of morphological complexity in Arabic language acquisition, particularly in gender agreement, research on how learners internalize this structure remains limited. A preliminary bibliometric scan using Publish or Perish and visualized through VOSviewer identified a research trend involving Arabic morphology and gender but also highlighted a significant gap in studies specifically focused on verbal gender agreement within the framework of SLA theories (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. Publications in the last ten years

No	Year	Number
1	2015	27
2	2016	36
3	2017	45
4	2018	49
5	2019	29
6	2020	51
7	2021	32
8	2022	52
9	2023	50
10	2024	50
Σ		421

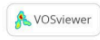


Figure 1. Overlay visualization (source: author's work)

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how Arabic learners acquire verbal gender agreement by applying Krashen's language acquisition theory. Specifically, the research focuses on the types of errors made by learners in using gender agreement and the affective and cognitive factors that influence their acquisition process.

This study formulates the question: How does Stephen Krashen's language acquisition theory, especially Comprehensible Input and Affective Filter, explain the process of acquiring verbal gender structures by Arabic language learners?

This study aims to explore how Arabic learners acquire verbal gender agreement by referring to Krashen's theory. Using a qualitative approach, this research will analyze learner interactions, common errors, and the role of affective factors in acquiring this structure. The findings are expected to contribute to more effective Arabic language teaching strategies, particularly in supporting the acquisition of complex morphological aspects.

METHOD

The interpretive paradigm (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023) in this study is used to understand how individuals acquire verbal gender agreement in Arabic through their experiences and interactions with linguistic input and affective factors. A qualitative approach is applied using a phenomenological study (Williams, 2021) to explore the subjective experiences of learners in acquiring verbal gender agreement in Arabic. Phenomenological studies aim to uncover the Meaning of individual experiences in a particular phenomenon (Emiliussen et al., 2021), in this case, the process of Arabic language acquisition through Stephen Krashen's theory.

The phenomenological approach in qualitative research focuses on extracting Meaning from individual subjective experiences, intending to understand how a phenomenon is experienced directly and personally by those who experience it. In the context of education, phenomenology opens up space to explore the inner world of students, including their perceptions, confusion, emotional obstacles, and how they interpret the learning process they are undergoing.

With this method, the study can provide a holistic overview of the dynamics of acquiring verbal gender agreement in Arabic, connecting subjective experiences, responses in learning situations, and reflections on their learning journey.

Participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique with the fulfillment of criteria, namely school background, in this case, students who come from public schools, not Islamic boarding schools. The total population is 82 (first-semester students in the Arabic Language Education program); through purposive sampling, 29 participants were obtained (see Table 2). This number is considered sufficient to carry out a study on the basis that the participants are categorized as beginner Arabic language learners so that it will be more relevant in studies on the acquisition of gender agreement in Arabic.

Table 2. Participant Demographics

No.	Characteristic	N
1	Background	
	non-Madrasah	29
	Madrasah	53
2	Basic Arabic Test Score	
	below 70	29
	above 70	53

In addition to the participants, there is supporting data (material), and the material is taken from the book *Silsilah Al-Lisaan* (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Participant experiences were taken throughout 4 learning meetings and 1 test. *Silsilah al-Lisān* explicitly presents basic grammar lessons, including *muwāfaqah al-fi'l wa al-fā'il* (gender agreement in verbs and subjects), in a structured and hierarchical form. This makes the book a representative source for observing how learners are introduced to the concept of verbal gender in learning practices. The selection of material from the *Silsilah al-Lisān* was based not only on availability but also on linguistic and pedagogical relevance, especially in understanding how the concept of verbal gender is introduced, practiced, and processed by learners.

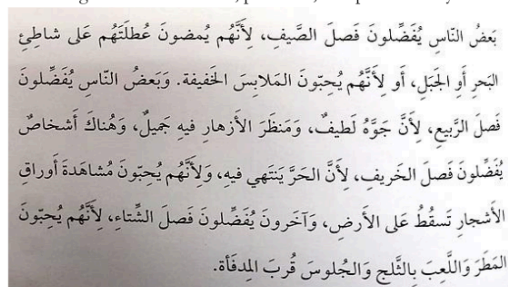


Figure 2. Text Containing Verbs (source: *Silsilah al-Lisan*)

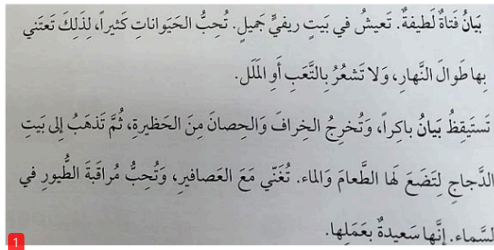


Figure 3. Text Containing Verbs (source: Silsilah al-Lisan)

In-depth interviews: Exploring learners' experiences, perceptions, and strategies in understanding verbal gender agreement. Participant Observation (Seim, 2024): Observing how learners respond to linguistic input in learning situations. Reflective analysis (Mashuri et al., 2022): Examining narratives and individual experiences regarding challenges and successes in language acquisition.

Data is analyzed using phenomenological thematic analysis (Finlay, 2021), which includes Describing Lived Experiences and collecting firsthand narratives from participants about their learning process. Identifying Key Themes analyzing factors affecting language acquisition success or barriers, such as difficulties in understanding verbal gender rules or the impact of anxiety on speaking Arabic. Interpreting Meaning and understanding how learners' experiences relate to Krashen's theory, particularly in the aspects of comprehensible input and affective barriers.

In this study, data from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and reflective analysis were combined using a qualitative triangulation approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the acquisition of verbal gender agreement in Arabic. For example, if in observations it is found that students appear to be able to use verbs with the correct gender in oral interactions, but in interviews, they admit to still being confused or not understanding grammatical gender rules, then the researcher does not immediately conclude that their abilities are stable.

The following outlines the integration and analysis process (see Table 3):

Table 3. Combined Analysis

Data Classification Based on Sources and Analysis Focus	First, In-depth Interviews: Exploring participants' subjective experiences, their perceptions of verbal gender agreement, and the strategies they use to understand and apply these rules. Second, Participant Observation: Analyzing how participants respond to language input in a learning environment, including common errors and affective factors influencing the acquisition process.
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	Third, Reflective Analysis: Constructing individual narratives on challenges and successes in mastering verbal gender agreement, providing insights into thought patterns and strategies that are effective or ineffective.
Identifying Patterns from Multiple Data Sources	Data from interviews, observations, and reflective analysis were thematically coded to identify key patterns. Suppose interview participants stated that they struggled to differentiate verb forms based on gender, and observations showed that these errors frequently occurred in oral exercises. In that case, it can be concluded that language production is more problematic than passive comprehension. If reflective analysis indicates that highly motivated participants are better at overcoming gender agreement challenges, and observations support this finding by showing that they engage more actively in practice, this reinforces the role of the Affective Filter in language acquisition.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Referring to Stephen Krashen's Theory in the philosophy of language, "*Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding.*" There are two key concepts: Acquisition: A natural and subconscious process, similar to how children learn their first language. It occurs through meaningful interaction rather than memorizing grammatical rules. Learning: A conscious process that takes place in formal settings (e.g., in a classroom). It involves studying grammar rules explicitly but does not directly contribute to language fluency.

Verbal Agreement in the Past Tense (*Fi'il Madhi*)

Fi'il Madhi (فعل ماضٍ) is a verb that indicates an action that has occurred in the past (Salsabila et al, 2024). *Fi'il Madhi* follows a fixed pattern and does not change based on time, but it does change based on the subject (masculine *mudzakkar* or feminine *mu'annats*) (see Table 4,5).

Table 4. *Fi'il Madhi* Sentence Patterns

Subject	<i>Fi'il Madhi</i> (Example: كتب - To Write)
Singular Masculine (<i>Mufrad Mudzakkar</i>)	كَتَبَ (He wrote)
Singular Feminine (<i>Mufrad Mu'annats</i>)	كَتَبَتْ (She wrote)
Dual Masculine (<i>Mutsanna Mudzakkar</i>)	كَتَبَا (They both [m.] wrote)
Dual Feminine (<i>Mutsanna Mu'annats</i>)	كَتَبْتَا (They both [f.] wrote)
Plural Masculine (<i>Jamak Mudzakkar</i>)	كَتَبُوا (They [m.] wrote)
Plural Feminine (<i>Jamak Mu'annats</i>)	كَتَبْنَ (They [f.] wrote)

Table 5. Verbs in the Past Tense / *Fi'il Madhi* in the Text

L2 Arabic	Verbal Agreement Mudzakkar (Male)	Verbal Agreement Muannats (Female)	<i>Mufrad</i>	<i>Mutsana</i>	<i>Jama'</i>	Definition
عاش	عاش	عاشت	عاش	عاشا	عاشوا	Live
أحب	أحب	أحبت	أحب	أحبا	أحبوا	Love
شعر	شعر	شعرت	شعر	شعرا	شعروا	Feel
استيقظ	استيقظ	استيقظت	استيقظ	استيقظا	استيقظوا	Wake up
خرج	خرج	خرجت	خرج	خرجا	خرجوا	Go out
وضع	وضع	وضعت	وضع	وضعاً	وضعوا	Put
انتهى	انتهى	انتهت	انتهى	انتهيا	انتهوا	End
سقط	سقط	سقطت	سقط	سقطا	سقطوا	Fall

Verbal agreement in the present tense (*Fi'il Mudhari'*)

Unlike *Fi'il Madhi*, *Fi'il Mudhari'* is more flexible and includes prefixes that change according to the subject (Muhamad et al., 2024) (see Table 6, 7).

Table 6. *Fi'il Mudhari* Sentence Patterns

Subject	<i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i> (Example: يكتب - Writing)
Singular Masculine (<i>Mufrad Mudzakkar</i>)	يَكْتُبُ (He is writing)
Singular Feminine (<i>Mufrad Mu'annats</i>)	تَكْتُبُ (She is writing)
Dual Masculine (<i>Mutsanna Mudzakkar</i>)	يَكْتُبَانِ (They both (masculine) are writing)
Dual Feminine (<i>Mutsanna Mu'annats</i>)	تَكْتُبَانِ (They both (feminine) are writing)

Subject	<i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i> (Example: يكتب - Writing)
Plural Masculine (<i>Jamak Mudzakkar</i>)	يَكْتُبُونَ (They (masculine) are writing)
Plural Feminine (<i>Jamak Mu'annats</i>)	يَكْتُبْنَ (They (feminine) are writing)

Table 7. Verbal in the Present Tense / *Fi'il Mudhari'* in the Text

L2 Arabic	Verbal agreement <i>mudzakkar</i> (male)	Verbal agreement <i>muannats</i> (female)	<i>Mufrad</i>	<i>Mutsana</i>	<i>Jama'</i>	Definition
يعيش	يعيش	تعيش	يعيش	يعيشان	يعيشون	Live
تحب	يحب	تحب	يحب	يحبان	يحبون	Love
تشعر	يشعر	تشعر	تشعر	تشعران	تشعرون	Feel
يستيقظ	يستيقظ	تستيقظ	يستيقظ	يستيقظان	يستيقظون	Wake up
تخرج	يخرج	تخرج	يخرج	يخرجان	يخرجون	Go out
تضع	يضع	تضع	يضع	يضعان	يضعون	Put
يفضلون	يفضلون	تفضل	يفضل	يفضلان	يفضلون	End
يمضون	يمضون	تمض	يمض	يمضان	يمضون	Fall

The main difference between *fi'il madhi* and *fi'il mudhari'* lies in tense Meaning, word structure, and the pattern of changes according to the subject (Hakim & Maulani, 2024). In general, *fi'il madhi* has a simpler form and changes only at the end of the word, whereas *fi'il mudhari'* exhibits greater variation due to the presence of *huruf mudhara'ah* (prefixes) and changes at the end based on the number and gender of the subject.

The Relevance of *Fi'il Madhi* and *Fi'il Mudhari'* in Measuring Arabic Language Proficiency

Verbal gender cannot be considered trivial because, for non-speakers from non-Arab regions, serious learning is needed to understand this. The mastery of a culturally inherited language exhibits various asymmetries, such as differences in proficiency levels across regions and disparities in the acquisition of different linguistic categories within a specific region (Albirini et al., 2013). In mastering the Arabic language, *fi'il madhi* (past tense verbs) and *fi'il mudhari'* (present/future tense verbs) play a crucial role, particularly in understanding grammatical structures and gender agreement rules. The use of these verb forms is not merely a grammatical aspect but also reflects the extent to which a learner comprehends and applies linguistic rules comprehensively.

Within the framework of Stephen Krashen's language acquisition theory, the distinction between input at levels i+1 and i+2 is crucial in explaining the extent to which learners can understand and internalize verbal gender structures in Arabic. Input i+1 refers to material that is slightly above the learner's current competence—challenging enough but

still comprehensible with the help of context, scaffolding, or explicit examples. For example, when learners learn *fi'il madhi* (past tense verbs) that are relatively stable in form and only change at the end of the word, such as كَتَبَ and كَتَبَتْ, these forms can still be considered i+1. Learners' understanding can be built gradually through repetition, guided practice, and communicative interaction.

In contrast, when learners are directly exposed to more complex structures such as *fi'il mudhari'* (present/future verbs) that involve changes in prefixes and suffixes according to gender, number, and person, the cognitive load increases sharply. Forms such as يكتبون (the men write) or تكتبين (the women write) are often input i+2 for participants who have not mastered the basics of form change. In this condition, the input is no longer comprehensible but confusing and causes systematic errors. Therefore, errors in the use of verbal gender do not only come from the mother tongue background but also because the level of input complexity is not in line with the readiness of the participants. Learning strategies that adjust input gradually and create an effectively safe learning environment are key to supporting the successful acquisition of complex language structures like this.

Learning Outcomes

Recognizing the importance of *fi'il madhi* and *fi'il mudhari'* in Arabic language proficiency tests, learning strategies should focus more on providing input that aligns with learners' comprehension levels. Methods such as intensive exposure to sentences with clear gender structures, contextual exercises, and interaction-based approaches can enhance participants' understanding of the gender agreement system in Arabic. Thus, a more structured and acquisition-based learning approach will support the achievement of better linguistic competence. Here are the students' test results (see Table 8)

Table 8. Respondents' Test Results

Participant	Duration	Incorrect Answers	Correct Answers	Unanswered	Result
1	39 minutes 16 seconds	20	30	11	50
2	38 minutes 28 seconds	35	26	0	43
3	35 minutes 21 seconds	25	35	1	57
4	39 minutes 29 seconds	29	32	0	52
5	12 minutes 35 seconds	21	40	0	67
6	16 minutes 13 seconds	34	27	0	43
7	8 minutes 28 seconds	23	37	1	60
8	18 minutes 28 seconds	15	45	1	73
9	38 minutes 15 seconds	26	32	3	53
10	33 minutes 44 seconds	28	33	0	53
11	20 minutes 54 seconds	22	39	0	63
12	7 minutes 34 seconds	29	32	0	52
13	18 minutes 5 seconds	44	17	0	28
14	11 minutes 17 seconds	22	38	1	63
15	23 minutes 23 seconds	21	40	0	67
16	35 minutes 28 seconds	18	43	0	70

Participant	Duration	Incorrect Answers	Correct Answers	Unanswered	Result
17	12 minutes 36 seconds	30	31	0	52
18	17 minutes 14 seconds	32	29	0	47
19	16 minutes 29 seconds	30	31	0	50
20	44 minutes 39 seconds	20	40	1	65
21	36 minutes 42 seconds	42	19	0	30
22	43 minutes 23 seconds	16	44	1	72
23	10 minutes 29 seconds	22	39	0	63
24	30 minutes 36 seconds	28	33	0	53
25	20 minutes 1 seconds	22	39	0	63
26	10 minutes 45 seconds	42	19	0	30
27	14 minutes 46 seconds	40	21	0	33
28	13 minutes 50 seconds	18	43	0	70
29	10 minutes 39 seconds	18	43	0	70

Based on the test results data involving 29 participants, it appears that the level of errors in the use of verbal gender (verbal agreement) shows significant variation between individuals. The number of incorrect answers ranges from 15 to 44 items, with the lowest total result (final score) of 28 and the highest of 73. If viewed more deeply, this error pattern correlates not only with the duration of the work but also with affective indications such as anxiety and learning motivation. Participants with a high number of errors, such as Participant 13 (44 errors; final score 28) and Participant 21 (42 errors; score 30), generally show two main characteristics: first, The duration of the work is not too short, but still produces a low score. Second, The tendency to answer all questions, even though many are wrong, indicates the possibility of cognitive pressure that is not accompanied by an understanding of the structure.

Discuss

Comprehensible input (i+1)

To analyze the comprehensible input from the available data (see Table 7) based on Stephen Krashen's theory, we will examine the extent to which participants understand the given material, as reflected in their correct answers, incorrect answers, and completion time (Baso et al., 2023).

The error rate reflects the level of Comprehensible Input received by participants by indicating how well the given material aligns with their level of understanding (i+1). The following is an analysis based on the data:

First, Participants with High Errors and Low Scores. Examples: Participant 13 (44 errors, score 28), Participant 21 (42 errors, score 30), Participant 26 (42 errors, score 30). A high number of errors and low scores suggest that they likely received input that was too difficult (i+2), making it challenging to understand and process effectively.

Second, Participants with Low Errors and High Scores. Examples: Participant 8 (15 errors, score 73), Participant 22 (16 errors, score 72), Participant 28 (18 errors, score 70), Participant 29 (18 errors, score 70). These participants had fewer errors and higher scores, indicating that they received optimal Comprehensible Input (i+1), allowing them to understand and apply the concepts more effectively.

Third, Participants with Fast Completion Time and High Errors. Examples: Participant 12 (7 minutes 34 seconds, 29 errors, score 52), Participant 26 (10 minutes 45 seconds, 42 errors, score 30). They completed the test quickly but had a high number of errors, which may suggest that they did not fully understand the material ($i+2$) or experienced high anxiety, causing them to rush through the answers.

Fourth, Participants with Longer Completion Time and Better Scores. Examples: Participant 16 (35 minutes 28 seconds, 18 errors, score 70), Participant 22 (43 minutes 23 seconds, 16 errors, score 72). These participants spent more time on the test but had fewer errors and better results, indicating that they were likely more motivated and able to process input more effectively.

The results of this study provide empirical support for Stephen Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis, demonstrating how the level of linguistic input and emotional factors affect Arabic verbal gender agreement acquisition. Krashen (1982) argues that language acquisition is most effective when learners receive Comprehensible Input that is slightly above their current proficiency level ($i+1$) but still understandable. This principle is evident in the performance of participants who had low errors and high scores (e.g., Participants 8, 22, 28, and 29). Their exposure to appropriately challenging input allowed them to internalize grammatical patterns, making them more accurate in applying verbal gender agreement.

Although participants' errors in the use of verbal gender in Arabic can be explained by linguistic aspects and teaching approaches, external factors outside the classroom also play a significant role in influencing learning outcomes. The variability of scores and error patterns is determined not only by the teaching method but also by the social background, learning habits, and cultural influences inherent in each participant.

More specifically, in the analysis of the acquisition of verbal gender agreement in Arabic based on Stephen Krashen's Comprehensible Input theory, the collected data indicate variations in participants' comprehension levels. This is evident from the differing numbers of correct and incorrect answers, as well as completion times. Some participants demonstrated a high level of understanding, as shown by a greater number of correct answers compared to incorrect ones and high final scores. For example, Participants 8 and 22 had over 40 correct answers with few errors, indicating that they received input appropriate for their comprehension level ($i+1$). In other words, the material provided was sufficiently challenging but still understandable, allowing them to process and apply the concepts effectively.

Conversely, some participants struggled, such as Participants 13 and 26, who had more incorrect answers than correct ones. This suggests that they may have encountered input that was too difficult ($i+2$ or more), making it hard for them to understand and apply it in the correct context. The high number of errors may indicate that the input provided was not sufficiently comprehensible or that other factors hindered their comprehension.

Additionally, completion time provides further insight into the language acquisition process (Maulani et al., 2024). Some participants who spent more time on the task tended to have a higher number of correct answers, such as Participants 5 and 8. This suggests that they were able to understand the material well, even though they needed more time to process it. However, some participants completed the task quickly but made many mistakes, which could indicate a lack of understanding or the presence of affective barriers such as

anxiety or academic pressure. Besides that, difficulties in learning Arabic arise due to fundamental differences between Arabic and the native language commonly used by students (Sutisna & Atha, 2023). Challenges inevitably accompany the process of learning Arabic. A challenge, in this context, refers to an ongoing issue, meaning that difficulties in learning Arabic are inherent problems within the learning process (Huda & Irawan, 2024).

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the level of comprehensible input provided greatly influences the acquisition of verbal gender agreement in Arabic. To enhance the learning process, several steps can be taken, such as providing more real-life contextual examples (Harrathi et al., 2024), reducing learning pressure (Firna et al., 2024), and encouraging communication-based interaction. By ensuring that the input provided is at the "i+1" level where the material is sufficiently challenging but still comprehensible, language acquisition can occur more optimally.

By integrating these findings, Arabic language educators can enhance learner outcomes, ensuring better mastery of verbal gender agreement and overall fluency in Arabic.

Affective Factors

According to Stephen Krashen's theory, affective factors such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety play a crucial role in second language acquisition. These factors influence how learners process linguistic input and produce language output. From the data presented (see Table 2), we can analyze the Affective Filter by examining the relationship between completion time, number of incorrect answers, number of correct answers, and final results. The relationship between time spent on the test and performance suggests that optimal language learning occurs when learners take enough time to process input but do not feel overwhelmed. Krashen's theory supports this by emphasizing meaningful engagement with comprehensible input rather than passive exposure.

First, Indications of Anxiety in Learning. Participants with a high number of incorrect answers and low scores, such as Participant 13 (44 incorrect, 17 correct, score of 28), Participant 21 (42 incorrect, 19 correct, score of 30), and Participant 26 (42 incorrect, 19 correct, score of 30), are likely experiencing high levels of anxiety. The high number of errors and low results suggest that they may have emotional barriers that hinder their comprehension and ability to complete the task effectively, leading to difficulties in language acquisition.

Second, The Relationship Between Completion Time and Affective Factors. Participants who spent more time but had a higher number of correct answers, such as Participant 8 (18 minutes, 45 correct, score of 73) and Participant 22 (43 minutes, 44 correct, score of 72), may have high motivation and confidence in completing the task. On the other hand, participants who finished quickly but had low scores, such as Participant 12 (7 minutes, 32 correct, score of 52) and Participant 26 (10 minutes, 19 correct, score of 30), might be experiencing anxiety, causing them to rush through the task without fully understanding the material.

Third, Indications of Motivation and Confidence. Participants with a high number of correct answers and high scores, such as Participant 8 (score of 73), Participant 22 (score of 72), Participant 28 (score of 70), and Participant 29 (score of 70), demonstrate strong confidence and high motivation in language learning. They can manage their emotions and anxiety, allowing them to optimize the processing of language input effectively.

Anxiety impacts the number of errors and the speed of task completion (Firna et al., 2024). Anxious learners tend to make more mistakes and achieve lower scores, while motivation and confidence improve learning effectiveness. Learners with high motivation generally achieve better results. Teaching approaches should consider affective support (Maulani & Faqih, 2021), such as creating a comfortable learning environment, using more communicative methods, and providing constructive feedback to help reduce anxiety in language learning.

These findings emphasize the importance of teaching strategies that focus on providing appropriate input and fostering an emotionally supportive learning environment. Therefore, Arabic language instructors are encouraged first to Adjust the difficulty level of materials to remain within the $i+1$ range, ensuring that learners can grasp concepts more effectively. Second, Reduce affective barriers such as anxiety and pressure by fostering a more communicative and interactive learning environment. Third, Implement communication-based approaches to enhance contextual and natural understanding.

Thus, Arabic language teachers are expected to be able to: first, adjust the level of difficulty of the material to remain within the range of $i+1$ so that learners can understand the concept better. Second, reduce affective barriers, such as anxiety and stress, by creating a more communicative and interactive learning environment. Finally, use a communication-based approach to improve understanding contextually and naturally.

The findings align with Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis, highlighting the importance of structured and emotionally supportive learning environments in acquiring Arabic verbal gender agreement. A critical analysis of the results reveals key insights for effective Arabic language learning strategies:

The Role of Adjusted Input for Optimal Learning. Participants with low errors and high scores (e.g., Participants 8, 22, 28, and 29) likely received input that matched their proficiency level ($i+1$), facilitating better comprehension and retention. This underscores the importance of gradual scaffolding in Arabic instruction—ensuring that learners encounter slightly challenging but understandable material rather than being overwhelmed with $i+2$ input. Implication: Arabic language curricula should incorporate structured sequencing of lessons that align with learners' developmental stages, using graded materials and progressive difficulty levels.

The Impact of Overly Difficult Input on Learning Struggles. Participants with high errors and low scores (e.g., Participants 13, 21, and 26) likely encountered input that was too advanced ($i+2$), making it incomprehensible and leading to frequent mistakes. Krashen (1982) asserts that when input is too complex, learners struggle to process linguistic structures effectively. Implication: Adaptive learning technologies or differentiated instruction strategies should be employed to ensure personalized learning experiences where content is tailored to individual needs.

The Effect of Anxiety and Test-Taking Speed on Performance. Participants with fast completion times and high errors (e.g., Participants 12 and 26) may have rushed due to test anxiety, reflecting Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. High anxiety levels can act as a mental barrier, preventing learners from fully processing and internalizing linguistic input. Implication: Language educators should foster a low-anxiety environment through communicative teaching approaches, collaborative learning, and reducing pressure in assessments.

The Relationship Between Processing Time and Learning Outcome. Participants with longer completion times and better scores (e.g., Participants 16 and 22) demonstrate that time investment correlates with comprehension and accuracy. This supports Krashen's notion that effective language acquisition requires meaningful engagement with input rather than passive exposure. Implication: Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and interactive learning activities (such as discussions, role-playing, and guided writing exercises) should be incorporated to encourage deeper engagement with the Arabic verbal system.

External Factors Influencing Test Results

While the findings align with Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis, it is crucial to consider external factors that may have influenced participants' test performance. One significant factor is the method of instruction they experienced before this study.

To ensure that the difficulty level of the material truly exceeds the participants' abilities ($i+2$), a more objective measurement tool is required. One possible approach is to refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to determine the Arabic proficiency level of the participants before the test is conducted. By mapping their abilities based on CEFR (e.g., A1, A2, B1, B2) (Maulani et al., 2024), it can be identified whether the given material matches their comprehension level or is too difficult.

Implementing these methods will provide a stronger foundation for linking material difficulty with Krashen's Comprehensible Input theory. If the analysis results show that most participants are at the A2 level, but the test uses B2-level material, it can be confirmed that the input provided is indeed at the $i+2$ level, making it harder to understand. Conversely, if the material is still appropriate for the participants' level but they still struggle, other factors, such as previous learning methods or test anxiety, should also be considered.

Participants who performed well with low errors and high scores (e.g., Participants 8, 22, 28, 29) may have previously been exposed to input-rich learning environments, such as communicative Arabic instruction, immersion programs, or interactive digital platforms. These methods emphasize meaningful engagement with the language, allowing learners to internalize verbal gender agreement naturally.

Conversely, participants with high errors and low scores (e.g., Participants 13, 21, 26) might have come from rote-learning or grammar-translation backgrounds, where the focus is on memorization rather than contextualized input. Such methods, while useful for theoretical understanding, may not provide sufficient comprehensible input, making it harder for learners to apply gender agreement rules accurately.

Additionally, exposure to Arabic outside formal instruction, such as interactions with native speakers, media consumption, or personal motivation, could have played a role. Learners with frequent exposure to naturally spoken Arabic may have developed stronger intuition for gender agreement, while those with minimal exposure may have relied solely on formal instruction, affecting their performance.

Based on the findings of this study, educators and test developers need to adjust materials to match learners' comprehension levels ($i+1$). Teaching can be enhanced through authentic input, contextual exercises, and structured feedback to clarify gender agreement patterns. A supportive learning environment and adaptive technology can also reduce anxiety and boost learners' confidence. With these strategies, Arabic language learning and

assessment become more effective in alignment with Krashen's Comprehensible Input principle.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the acquisition of Arabic verbal gender agreement through the framework of Stephen Krashen's language acquisition theory, focusing on the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The findings confirm that learners' success in mastering verbal gender agreement is influenced by both the quality of input they receive and their affective factors. The results highlight that learners who receive comprehensible input tailored to their proficiency level ($i+1$) perform better in applying gender agreement rules. Conversely, those exposed to overly complex input ($i+2$) exhibit higher error rates, reinforcing the importance of adjusting instructional materials to learners' current abilities. Additionally, affective variables such as motivation and anxiety play a crucial role. Students with higher motivation and lower anxiety demonstrate greater accuracy, supporting Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis.

Based on the findings of this study, there are several practical recommendations that Arabic language teachers or lecturers can implement to improve the acquisition of verbal gender structures in the classroom. Since the changes in the form of verbs are often confusing in the abstract, teachers are advised to use gender-subject-verb diagrams, color conjugation cards, or conversation simulations that relate verb forms to real-life situations. This will help participants connect the structure with Meaning rather than just memorizing it mechanically. These findings underscore the need for language instructors to integrate more structured and contextualized input, ensuring that learning materials are neither too easy nor too difficult. Adaptive learning technologies, personalized feedback, and anxiety-reducing strategies should be incorporated to create an optimal learning environment. Furthermore, assessment methods should be refined to include more interactive and meaning-based tasks that reinforce verbal gender agreement in communicative contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations, including a relatively small sample size and the potential influence of prior learning experiences that were not fully controlled. Future research should explore a broader range of learners across different proficiency levels and educational settings, employing longitudinal studies to assess long-term acquisition patterns. Additionally, integrating frameworks such as the CEFR to classify learners' proficiency levels before testing could provide more precise insights into the relationship between input complexity and acquisition outcomes.

By addressing these considerations, future studies can further refine our understanding of how Arabic verbal gender agreement is acquired and inform more effective teaching strategies aligned with Krashen's principles.

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HM, R, and M contributed to data collection data analysis, and AA served as reviewers (expert team) for the data.

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