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Application of Resolution Rules on phi-Features in L2 Compositions:

Native Arabic Writers in an L2 English

by

Jon Cotner

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in English

October, 2016

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Ettien Koffi, Chairperson

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ABSTRACT

Resolution rules are syntactic parameters that regulate the proper agreement of phi-features (person, number, and gender) between a noun/noun phrase and a verb phrase within a grammatical language system. This study examines L2 English compositions written by native Arabic speakers and investigates whether or not students transfer agreement patterns from their L1 to their L2. Although the compositions were examined primarily for salient resolution rule agreement errors, the scope was widened to also include other agreement issues that were prevalent. The findings revealed that although agreement errors were found in conjunction with person and number resolution rules, these were not the most wide-spread agreement errors with this group of Arabic writers. Constructions that included isolated subject referents and indefinite pronouns proved more difficult to resolve, and negative transfer led to copious zero copula errors and pro-drop errors. In terms of subject/verb agreement for these writers, data from this study determined that auxiliary verb constructions were the most difficult.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to my advisor Dr. Ettien Koffi for his guidance, insight, opportunity, and humor (all qualities that he delivers with aplomb). His many classes that I had the pleasure of attending were all among my favorites, although thoughts of the Pedagogical Grammar exam still leave me in a cold sweat occasionally. I never had the good fortune of taking classes with either Dr. Edward Sadrai or Dr. Emily Schultz, also members of my committee, and that is a loss for me. I appreciate greatly the copious notes, comments, and suggestions that Dr. Sadrai provided on the initial version of this study—the work benefited in large part from his time and attention. Dr. Schultz provided a clear, objective perspective which any writing that I undertake requires, and she supplied it with a smile. I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Schwartz for the student compositions that were used in this study. I am much obliged to all of you for your attention and guidance.

I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge the incredible patience of my wife and her willingness to allow house projects to go unfinished for three long years while I attempted to build a way for us to retire in Amalfi...or Dubrovnik...or perhaps even Rabat. My daughter also endured many trips to and from St. Cloud during these years, ably entertaining herself as I taught, was taught, or merely met on campus. She was only too willing to make the trip as long as it included a visit to the White Horse.

The work in front of you was also helped by the assistance of two wonderful friends that I had the good fortune to meet in Dr. Serrano's Education class during our first semester at St. Cloud: Bree and Mohammad. Mohammad and I have had the pleasure of sharing stimulating conversation, scintillating recipes, Turkish coffee, and tasty sweets. He was also kind enough to verify and correct my Arabic examples, and even make a digital recording of each of them. Bree was kind enough to help me massage those same examples into phonetically succinct IPA for inclusion beneath each example. Not only has Bree been a discerning and well-informed colleague and friend for me, but she has also become a confidant and perfect Chinese tutor for my daughter. Our family friendship with Bree carried us into the welcoming arms of her family in Tianjin this past summer, and provided our family with an experience in China that was unforgettable. Thank you friends and thank you SCSU!

Note on English conventions used in this paper to minimize confusion: Numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) are used when referencing compositions, examples, and errors, even if the number is less than ten; in reference to students or the compositions as a group, numbers will be spelled out. Since I have no information on the gender of the writers of these compositions, I have used the gender-neutral 'their' where possible in the commentary.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Faced with the challenge of teaching native Arabic writers to write well in English over the past two semesters, and faced with the likelihood of this challenge only rising nationwide with the increased influx of Arabic speakers, I chose to focus my study on a linguistic facet that will benefit the TESL writing classroom. To that end, my thesis will target native Arabic writers and their efforts writing in an L2 English. Specifically, my work will address phi-feature¹ (person, number, and gender) agreement between a noun (including noun phrases and conjoined noun phrases) and a verb phrase, and how the differing systems of agreement in the English and Arabic languages impact native Arabic writers writing in an L2 English. The agreement issue is one of the foremost stumbling blocks to proficiency in any language, and the linguistic remoteness of Arabic from English amplifies those differences.

Encouragement to pursue this vein of inquiry is due to the insight of my committee chair, Dr. Ettien Koffi, who spelled out this need in print: “ESL/EFL teachers can expect negative transfer in the person and number agreement system from their students, especially where agreement is not controlled by the same hierarchy patterns” (Koffi, 2010, p. 419). In addition, the “[m]ismatch between the gender system of ESL/EFL students’ L1 and English is the subject of concern for many teachers” (Koffi, 2010, p. 420). I will investigate these agreement issues in both Arabic and English, analyze the rules that are employed to resolve these agreement issues, and examine from a performance perspective the application of these resolution rules in L2 English compositions written by native Arabic speakers. I will also consider other agreement issues that may present themselves as challenging for this group of writers. The number of native

¹ The term ‘phi-feature’ for person, number, and gender agreement features is found in Government and Binding (GB) and Minimalism, among other systems (Corbett, 2009, p. 125). I use this term as well for these three agreement features (person, number, and gender).

Arabic speakers acquiring the English language is surging, and it is my hope that this work will identify common misapplications of agreement rules and areas of agreement confusion, as well as help transition those second language acquisition students to better English usage.

CHAPTER 2: PROBLEM STATEMENT

Within the grammar of each language, when a noun and/or noun phrase is combined with a verb phrase, syntactic factors require agreement in the phi-features (person, number, and/or gender) between the noun and the verb components. Sometimes this agreement is handled by proximity (nearest subject to the verb), but usually person, number, and/or gender mixes must be resolved. In some instances, there are no agreement changes needed. Resolution rules are stated principles that determine the proper agreement of phi-features within a grammatical language system. When resolution agreement is required, each language utilizes rules that determine correct agreement between noun elements and verb elements. To illustrate, general resolution rules for person agreement that apply to most languages can be summarized as follows:

Person Resolution Rules

- I. If the elements include a first person, first person agreement forms will be used;
- II. If the elements include a second person, second person agreement forms will be used;
- III. The default condition is that third person agreement forms are used.

(Corbett, 1983, p. 176)

Consider these examples:

- (1) My wife and I are learning Zulu
my wife 3SG.FEM. and I 1SG.MASC. are learning PRES.1PL. Zulu SG.
- (2) Ahmed always wears green
Ahmed 3SG.MASC. always wears PRES.3SG. green SG.

The sentence in example (1) contains a first person element ('I') so the first person resolution rule applies for verb agreement in this case and since two persons, 'my wife' and 'I,' are joined in the subject noun phrase, resolution of number will also be necessary; in this case the plural will be used. The noun phrase 'my wife and I' is a conjunct coordination structure, defined

“as two or more nouns or pronouns conjoined by a coordinating conjunction, or two or more nouns or pronouns separated by a pause or comma” (E. Koffi, personal communication, 2016).

The sentence in example (2) contains a third person element (assuming that Ahmed is not present at the conversation) so the default third person resolution rule applies for verb agreement in this case, in the singular since the element refers to only one person. By applying these rules when creating noun/verb constructions, the person component of the construction will be correct for most languages. These two examples demonstrate person agreement only; number and gender resolution rules also need to be considered when creating grammatically correct noun/verb constructions.

Resolution rules for all three features (person, number, and gender) must be considered when implementing proper linguistic agreement between a noun or conjoined noun phrase and a verb. However, not all languages require feature agreement between all syntactic items, and gender agreement is required in fewer languages than person and number agreement. This study employs a multiphase literature review, which provides the basics of noun/noun phrase to verb phrase agreement, demonstrates how those basics are implemented in the English and Arabic languages, illuminates the foundations which inform the resolution rules that are applicable in all languages, and implements those foundational components into concrete resolution rules for the English and Arabic languages. Once resolution rules are isolated and delineated for English and Arabic, I analyze the application of these English agreement resolution rules by native Arabic writers in compositions and examine correlations with, and deviations from, Arabic parameters of agreement in the written implementation of these phi-feature resolution rules.

The first portion of the literature review surveys the most relevant studies in the field of resolution rules and phi-feature agreement, and discusses the pertinent findings from these

studies. From these findings, a survey will be made of the most common agreement issues for each agreement feature (person, number, and gender), and then issues will be broken down by the particular agreement value within that feature. In the process of doing the literature review, I found that the data referenced in the primary studies was taken from four possible sources or combinations of sources: data from other studies in the same vein (e.g., Corbett, 1983, 2003a; Zwicky, 1977), data from language grammars and dictionaries (e.g., Corbett & Mithun, 1996), data from ancient and modern literary texts (e.g., Hayward & Corbett, 1988), and/or data from the author's own linguistic knowledge (e.g., Corbett, 1983, 2003a, 2010; Mithun, 1988, 2003). The dearth of discussions on resolution rule applications in the Arabic language within the available literature reveals a distinct gap in the linguistics corpus.

Among the more salient characteristics of Arabic phi-feature agreement, occasional references are found regarding the effect that precedence has on agreement in Arabic (Corbett, 2003b; Corbett, 2009), but the critical interplay of humanness/non-humanness on Arabic plural forms is outside of the main body of resolution rule research. Although the data from this portion of the literature review deals generally with resolution rules and the application of agreement parameters, the detail is largely representative of conclusions concerning languages other than Arabic. However, this information will prove helpful in understanding the general nature of syntactic agreement, and more specifically the nature of resolution rules and their development and application. From information found in this portion of the literature review, I will adapt existing resolution rules that are pertinent for application on English and Arabic phi-features, or create new resolution rules where no pertinent ones exist.

The second portion of my literature review is specific to agreement characteristics of the English and Arabic languages, but also references and discusses characteristics of other

languages that are *a propos* to the study of noun/noun phrase and verb phrase agreement in Arabic. Although I focus on characteristics of English and Arabic agreement in this portion of the literature review, I have also included brief coverage of other languages that share characteristics with Arabic or have characteristics that illuminate by distinction those found in Arabic grammar. The grammatical data referenced in this portion of the literature study will be from grammars, dictionaries, and from individuals with native linguistic knowledge of the appropriate language. In this study, each of the agreement phi-features (person, number, or gender) will be discussed as they are each applicable specifically to the English and Arabic languages. The findings from both of these portions of the literature review will allow me to develop binding resolution rules that apply for the English and Arabic languages.

This thesis includes a discussion of noun phrase/verb phrase agreement issues and resolution rules, an examination of detail agreement issues in the English and Arabic languages illustrated with pertinent points from other languages, a development of resolution rules for each linguistic feature of the Arabic and the English languages, and concludes with an analysis of agreement parameters and their application through resolution rules. Once the agreement issues are identified and seen in relation to the appropriate resolution rules (both in Arabic and in English), then my analysis of their application centers on English L2 compositions written by native writers of Arabic. This analysis will provide a developmental perspective on how English resolution rules are applied in practice by writers that share an Arabic resolution rule background.

CHAPTER 3: LINGUISTIC AGREEMENT

Within the field of linguistics, agreement is a grammatical process in which the rules of morphology and syntax, and to a lesser extent semantics, are matched to fit the needs of a particular language construction. Although the terms *agreement* and *concord* are used interchangeably in some academic circles (Ibrahim, 1973, p. 26; Corbett, 2003a, p. 159; Corbett, 2009, pp. 5-7; Ryding, 2011, p. 57), for this study I will employ the strict use of the term *agreement*. Ryding provides a clear summation of the two terms, “the term **concord** is used to refer to matching between nouns and their dependents (typically adjectives, other nouns, or pronouns), whereas **agreement** refers to matching between the verb and its subject” (2011, p. 57). Matching between the verb and its subject is “a complex phenomenon” (Corbett, 1983, p. 205). The noun phrase that makes up the subject can have attributes that lead to the confusion of agreement with the verb, such as mixed gender, differing categorical imperatives (humanness/non-humanness, animate/inanimate), and number discord. These agreement issues can be prominent between languages, but such is the domain of this study.

The agreement instances that will be discussed in this study are also those that were used by Corbett in developing the Surrey Database of Agreement, namely instances of “agreement within the NP [noun phrase], agreement of the verb, and agreement of pronouns (relative and personal)” (2003, p. 156). See the discussion of examples (1) and (2) in Chapter 2: Problem Statement above for representative instances of person agreement. Although the Surrey Database of Agreement is comprised primarily of languages outside the scope of this study (Arabic is not included), its criteria is valuable for examining resolution rules for languages beyond their study set and is prime for inclusion in this study. This study will not include coverage of government issues, which usually involve case (Corbett, 2009, pp. 7-8). Written Arabic utilizes three cases (nominative, genitive, and accusative) and marks nouns, participles, adjectives, and some

adverbs for case. Even for native Arabic writers, case is difficult to master, redundant, and only “learned through formal instruction” (Ryding, 2011, p. 166). As case agreement is enormous in scope and a vestigial syntactic structure for many native Arabic writers, it will not be discussed in this thesis.

In this study, the term ‘feature’ will be used to distinguish grammatical attributes of nouns and subcategories of verbs when confusion is likely within the example commentaries (phi-features are included within this set: person, number, and gender). Features beyond phi-features will be written in the notation form used extensively in linguistic research, e.g., [\pm human] for nominal semantic information and [\pm modal] for verbal subcategories (Koffi, 2010, pp. 9, 81; Carnie, 2013, pp. 54, 61, 251). This practice will entail explicitly specifying characteristics that are implicit for both nouns and verbs. Use of the linguistic feature notation, where necessary for clarity, will minimize confusion in parsing particular noun and verb usages that are illustrated by examples from the compositions (E. Sadrai, personal communication, 2014). Besides feature notation for examples, other linguistic terms will also need to be defined before proceeding.

In this discussion of agreement, clear definitions of the common terms are necessary to remain synchronous with other writers in the field. Corbett (2010) provides a concise coverage of the terms: “We shall call the element which determines the agreement (say the subject noun phrase) the **controller**. The element whose form is determined by agreement is the **target**. The syntactic environment in which agreement occurs is the **domain** of agreement. And when we indicate in what respect there is agreement, we are referring to agreement **features** (or **categories**). Thus number is an agreement **feature**, it has the **values** singular, dual, plural and so on” (emphasis Corbett and mine, p, 2). Although Corbett prefers the term ‘feature’ for all of

these elements, in this study I use ‘feature’ for noun and verb characteristics and will use the term ‘phi-feature’ for resolution rule agreement elements (i.e., person, number, and gender). A discussion of these terms with English and Arabic examples will provide greater clarity.

The controller/subject determines what (if any) agreement is necessary within the phrase.

Consider these example sentences:

(3) The man speaks English
the man SG.MASC. speaks PRES.3SG. English SG.

(4) The woman speaks English
the woman SG.FEM. speaks PRES.3SG. English SG.

العربية	اللغة	يتكلم	الرجل
ʔlad.lbijə	gəluʔ	jəʔtəʔkeləm	əlrazəl
the Arabic SG.MASC.	the language SG.MASC.	speaks IMPF.3SG.MASC.	the man SG.MASC.

‘The man speaks Arabic.’

العربية	اللغة	تتكلم	المرأة
ʔlad.lbijə	gəluʔ	təʔtəʔkeləm	ələməərə:tu
the Arabic SG.MASC.	the language SG.MASC.	speaks IMPF.3SG.FEM.	the woman SG.FEM.

‘The woman speaks Arabic.’

NOTE: All Arabic sentence examples are read from right to left; the IPA glosses provided below each are read left to right at the word level, but the IPA word glosses are directly below each word and thus follow the right to left word order of the Arabic sentences to which they correlate².

In the English examples (3) and (4), the controllers are of different gender (*man* and *woman*) but the target (verb *speaks*) requires only agreement in the features of person and number and number agreement is realized through the inflectional suffix <-s>. In the Arabic examples (5) and (6), the controllers are also of different genders (‘man’ and ‘woman’³) but agreement is necessary with the target (verb *yatakalam* [jeʔteʔkeləm]/*tatakalam* [teʔteʔkeləm]) in the features

²The IPA glosses are provided as an approximation of the pronunciation of the Arabic examples. The grammaticality of each of these Arabic examples was verified by a native Arabic speaker (Hejazi dialect) from Jeddah, in the western region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

³Single quotes are used in the commentary concerning examples to indicate that the words are translations, and not the actual word in the example.

of person, number, and gender and the gender agreement is realized through prefixations <ya-> and <ta->. For these features, the values are third person singular with either masculine or feminine gender. It should be noted that the Arabic prefixation method of gender agreement plays a prominent role in subject/verb agreement and may lead to transfer issues when the English inflectional suffix method is needed for number agreement. The domain of these examples is the close and isolated noun phrase/verb phrase construction, but domain plays a greater role in more complex sentence structures where agreement might bridge multiple clauses. These terms will be encountered throughout the study and this illustration will allow the discussion on the intricacies of agreement for both English and Arabic to proceed with a minimum of confusion in terminology.

For the purpose of agreement within systematic grammatical structures, there are three primary methods that determine how agreement is resolved: the semantic/referential method, the syntactic method, and the mixed semantic/syntactic method (Corbett, 2003b, pp. 269-290). In the semantic/referential method, all features of agreement are semantic, with the controller/subject being equated with a referent and the agreement features being dependent on matching that referent exclusively by meaning (Corbett, 2003a, p. 160). Consider these example sentences:

- (7) Borg is a big dog.
 Borg SG.MASC. is PRES.3SG. big SG. dog SG.
- (8) كَبِيرٌ كَلْبٌ بَوْرَقٌ
 kabīrā kalb borq
 big SG.MASC. dog SG.MASC. Borg SG.MASC.
 'Borg is a big dog.'

In the English example (7) above, the semantic referent (Borg the dog) is handled within the rather loose constraints of the English agreement system, where the semantic/referential method of agreement usually functions. The syntactic simplicity of the English agreement system makes

it almost an anomaly. In reference to English, Corbett asserts that “[i]ts agreement system is at the typological extreme, particularly in the role of semantics...it will prove very useful as a familiar language which exhibits an exotic agreement system” (2006, p. 32). While viewing the English agreement system as ‘exotic’ seems hyperbolic, it does provide a valuable counterpoint to that of the Arabic language system.

In the Arabic example (8) above, the semantic referent ‘Borg,’ a male dog, is handled by a masculine form of the noun. This is possible by virtue of Arabic using natural gender nouns for living things, which have two gender forms (Ryding, 2011, pp. 124-125). In this example, the [+masc] form of the noun ‘dog’ is used with the [+masc] form of the adjective ‘big’ (the copulative verb is not used in the present tense in Arabic). However, the semantic/referential method of agreement, which functions well for the English language, can be confounded by the necessities of matching grammatical gender in the Arabic language and renders this method unpredictable and inaccurate in Arabic. The arbitrary interplay of grammatical gender and semantic/referential agreement is seen more clearly in the following example:

خضراء.	ظهر	الصغيرة	السيارة
	ت		
χʔdərəʔ	dəharθ	əʔsəyira	əʔsejara
green SG.FEM.	appeared PERF.3SG.FEM.	the small SG.FEM.	the car SG.FEM.
‘The small car appeared green.’			

In example (9) above, the feminine gender of ‘car’ is purely a grammatical construct and carries no semantic information but must be matched to each of the other elements in the sentence including the adjectives ‘small’ and ‘green’ and the verb ‘appeared.’ The semantic/referential method of agreement is often unusable for languages that contain gender agreement features (Corbett, 2003a, p. 160), and contributes little meaning in English where the gender of the controller noun does not need to agree with either verbs or adjectives. However, in English there are instances “such as ‘handsome’ and ‘pretty’ where semantic agreement is invoked” (E. Koffi,

personal communication, 2016). Later in this study, it will be shown how the semantic/referential method of agreement finds limited application in the Arabic language.

The second method of agreement is based on syntax where all agreement is based on features that are grammatical (Corbett, 2003a, p. 161). The examples (7) through (9) above are all grammatically correct because they conform to the feature agreement matching parameters that are common to each respective language. Syntactic agreement is not consistent for all Englishes and American English often differs from British English, especially with the use of collective nouns (Koffi, 2010, pp. 142-143; Adger & Harbour, 2008, p. 18). An example of differing agreement by proximity is provided by the linguist Zwicky on his language blog. The example he uses is from the UK newspaper *The Economist* that demonstrates agreement parameters acceptable in terms of grammaticality for British English but parameters which are incorrect to an American English ear (Zwicky blog, 2014):

(10) “Then, when snow or rain wash them onto an ice floe...”

In this example (10), the conjunctive phrase ‘snow or rain’ is treated as a plural noun phrase in British English despite the fact that it is joined as a positive disjunction (Koffi, 2010, p. 342) which functions as a singular noun phrase in American English. This single instance cannot be taken as indicative of a widespread discrepancy between the syntactic methods of agreement within English dialects, but serves as a warning that neither the syntactic method nor the semantic/referential method should be given absolute authority in matters of grammatical agreement.

The mixed semantic/syntactic method of agreement is applicable to both the Arabic and English languages. Although agreement in the Arabic language is determined largely by syntactic features, semantic features do come into play in certain plural constructions, such as

example (8) above; agreement in the English language is primarily semantic, but as was seen above in example (10) syntactic features can also apply. Despite the predominant agreement principles that drive resolution in the Arabic and English languages, they both exhibit exceptions which place them in the mixed resolution category.

An approach to agreement that allows the parameters to encompass both semantic and syntactic agreement is often necessary and, in the words of Steele (1978), “[t]he term **agreement** commonly refers to some systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another” (my emphasis, cited in Corbett, 2003a, p. 159; Corbett, 2003b, p. 105). Conflicting issues between semantic and formal properties can hamper agreement between a noun or conjoined noun phrase and a verb phrase, but language-specific resolution rules are applied in an ordered sequence to bridge the gap that can occur between the semantic/referential and the syntactical/formal methods of agreement. Before discussing particular agreement features and the intricacies of the resolution rules approach and how it is fulfilled in American English and in Modern Standard Arabic, I will broadly examine agreement features in the simpler and more familiar English followed by a discussion of the more complex and less familiar Arabic.

Agreement in American English

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, the English language is “the most widely spoken language in the world (as a first or second language) (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2014, p. 284). Although it is currently the national language of only a few countries (the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand), it has formidable roots in the former UK colonies in Africa and India and is a valuable medium of communication in many academic and scientific circles (Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 302). With a language that is spoken around the world, the presence of many dialects with varying degrees of divergence is

unavoidable. However, despite the wide-ranging dialectical variation, “[a]ll speakers of English can talk to each other and pretty much understand each other” (Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 279).

Although there are many recognized dialects of the English language, the primary dialects are British English and American English.

The mutually intelligible dialects of the English language, especially the British English and American English varieties, are differentiated primarily by accent, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 285). The accent and pronunciation variances in English are largely traceable to region and locale, but the American proclivity for vocabulary idiosyncrasies, that continues today unabated, was noted in Mencken’s copious study of the American tongue, *The American Language*: “The early Americans showed that spacious disregard for linguistic nicety which has characterized their descendants ever since. They reduced verb-phrases to simple verbs, turned verbs into nouns, nouns into verbs, and adjectives into either or both” (1937, p. 117). This propensity for stretching linguistic boundaries continues to this day and further contributes to the lugubrious grammar of a language in many ways poorly suited, or at least onerously Medusal, to fill the role of global tongue. More recently, Pullum also characterized English in this vein: “English has horrendous orthography, an extremely complicated inventory of vowels, a few hundred irregular verbs, a huge vocabulary, and other features that make it ill-equipped to be a global language used by millions of people who must learn it in adulthood” (cited in Lightfoot, 2016, p. 474). In light of minor vocabulary differences, and despite the reality of syntactic differences between British English and American English (that pose no intelligibility issues), it should be noted that this study is restricted to agreement parameters and the resolution rules that are in play for American English. Henceforth, references to ‘English’ in this study refer exclusively to the American English dialect.

The morphosyntactic details of agreement in the ubiquitous English language are simple relative to many world languages, and according to Corbett “[t]he readiness with which conjoining is employed varies dramatically across languages: English is at one end of the typological extreme in allowing coordination easily” (2009, p. 239). Despite this easy coordination, the word order that must be followed in the English language is very strict. In English, the agreement features, which must be matched, are primarily person and number, but gender differentiation is present in the third person singular (Koffi, 2010, pp. 418-420). In addition, English has a very limited number of inflectional morphemes (only four for verb forms) and, in turn, conformity to the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) word order in normal constructions is vital for confusion-free understanding (Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 346). This lack of richness in inflection and the dependence on word order in English can prove vexing for students from L1s, such as Arabic, where sentence word order is determined by emphasis. The few case endings that remain in use for English are restricted to the genitive and pronoun forms (Koffi, 2010, p. 418; Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 345), but the use of a subject (either in the form of noun, noun phrase, or pronoun) is mandatory. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams sum up the situation succinctly: “Modern English, with its rudimentary case system, defines grammatical relations structurally” (2014, p. 348). In English, agreement can be handled largely with the semantic/referential method, but deviations in word order are generally not acceptable.

Agreement in Modern Standard Arabic

As a language, Arabic is elegant both in the regularity of its verb constructions (despite their many forms) and the complexity of its morphological possibilities (possibilities that are used in all but function words). The Arabic language is spoken primarily in the Arab world, through the Middle East, and across North Africa, but the language is now heard regularly worldwide. Although the variations in dialect are great between regions, the “morphology and

syntax of written Arabic are essentially the same in all Arab countries...[and t]hus the written language continues...to ensure the linguistic unity of the Arab world” (Wehr and Cowan, 1994, p. vii). This common written form of Arabic is referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is used in all Arab print media and written communication and is known by all educated Arabs, while the local spoken dialect that Arabs use in informal communication is particular to their locale (Ryding, 2011, pp. 5, 7).

The importance of Modern Standard Arabic within the Arab world cannot be understated: “it is noted that for communication to take place between Arabic-speakers from different dialect regions, usage of a considerable amount of MSA vocabulary is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, the dominance of MSA in formal written media and literature is undisputed, and it is certain that MSA will continue to occupy the center of most Arabic language curricula” (Buckwalter and Parkinson, 2011, p. 2). Although Modern Standard Arabic provides a cohesive voice for the media and the entertainment worlds, spoken Arabic in differing dialects reverberates through markets and cafés from the beaches of Morocco to the antiquities of Iraq. These dialects of Arabic are anything but cohesive, but they all share the rich linguistic legacy of MSA. While this diglossia⁴ hints at the complexity of the Arabic language experience, this study will be limited exclusively to the documented grammar of Modern Standard Arabic; references to ‘Arabic’ in this study refer exclusively to Modern Standard Arabic.

In the widely-inflected Arabic language, resolution rule implementation is more complex than in American English and exhibits exceptions which could prove a hindrance to native Arabic writers writing in English. In Arabic, word order is flexible and reflects the intended emphasis of the speaker, and subject/verb agreement adjusts in response to those changes in

⁴ In fact, Google (2016) defines ‘diglossia’ as “a situation in which two languages (or two varieties of the same language) are used under different conditions within a community, often by the same speakers. The term is usually applied to languages with distinct “high” and “low” (colloquial) varieties, such as Arabic.”

word order. Only nine percent of the world's languages employ a VSO (verb-subject-object) word order and Arabic is one of those languages (Carnie, 2013, pp. 116, 300). In fact, two word orders are employed by the native Arabic writer: the more standard VSO (verb-subject-object) order and the less common SVO (subject-verb-object) order (Ryding, 2011, p. 65)⁵. Although the resolution rules that determine subject/verb agreement are consistently applied when the less common SVO order is employed, the resolution rules are not always applied consistently when the canonical Arabic VSO word order is employed. If the common Arabic VSO word order is utilized, number agreement is suspended and singular forms are employed (Ryding, 2011, p. 65; Alhawary, 2009, p. 15). Word order in Arabic plays a key role in proper subject/verb agreement.

Another exception to standard resolution rule agreement occurs with constructions containing non-human plural subjects. In Arabic constructions with non-human plural subjects, the verb always follows the form of third person singular feminine, regardless of subject/verb order (Ryding, 2011, pp. 125-126; Alhawary, 2011, p.79). These points of departure from standard agreement parameters highlight the negative transfer that is possible (or likely) when native Arabic speakers are attempting to master number and gender agreement in English.

One other aspect that differentiates Arabic from English is that Arabic, like many of the Romance languages, is a "null-subject" (Fassi Fehri, 2012, p. 257; Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 349; Carnie, 2013, p. 449) or "pro-drop" (Alhawary, 2009, p. 14; Ryding, 2011, p. 63) language. Languages that are pro-drop do not require the use of a subject for grammatically correct sentences. However, when a pro-drop construction is used in Arabic, the subject "must only be associated with a referential or definite pronoun, and cannot be non-referential or generic" (Fassi Fehri, 2012, p. 259). When a non-referential or generic usage is employed, the subject pronoun is

⁵ Headlines in Arabic newspapers are often SVO, while the lead sentence will usually be VSO (Ryding, 2011, p. 67).

mandatory in Arabic. This referential/definite pro-drop characteristic makes agreement easier in terms of pronoun usage within an Arabic L1 (they can be excluded). Consider this example:

- (11) ياكلون
 jəkuluna
 eat IMPF.3PL.MASC.
 ‘They eat.’

But this feature makes the transition to a language that requires subjects, and requires them in a strict word order (both characteristics of English), more difficult.

Yet another defining characteristic of Arabic is that it is a zero copula language, in which a copular verb is not used in present nominal sentence constructions (Fassi Fehri, 2012, pp. 66-67). Consider a repost of example (8):

- (8) كبیر .
kəbirə
big SG.MASC. كلب
kalb
dog SG.MASC. بورغ
bɔrɔq
Borg SG.MASC.
 ‘Borg is a big dog.’

In any usage that does not use the present tense, the copular verb is always required. According to Fassi Fehri, with the copular auxiliary verb “temporal/aspectual specifications... appear to be marked (compared to the unmarked simple present), and thus force the auxiliary to become overt, to support these temporal features” (2012, p. 69). In the literature on Arabic grammar, sentences with an overt verb (in any position) are known as verbal sentences and sentences without an overt verb are known as equational sentences (Alhawary, 2011, p. 91; Ryding, 2011, p. 58-59). Equational sentences are common in Arabic, but a verbless sentence construction is not allowed in English, and this characteristic will also hinder a transition from writing in Arabic to writing in English.

CHAPTER 4: RESOLUTION RULES APPROACH TO LINGUISTIC AGREEMENT

Having discussed grammatical agreement in general and the general agreement issues pertinent to the English and Arabic languages, attention now turns to the resolution rules approach specifically. The term ‘resolution rules’ was first used by Givón to refer to the ‘rule-schema’ which resolve conflict in person, number, and gender agreement (1970, p. 250). Braidì suggests that the works of Givón ‘exemplify “[f]unctional approaches to language...that link grammatical form to grammatical function” (1999, p. 2). This approach of Givón, which differs fundamentally from the competence/performance model forwarded by Chomsky, focuses on the pragmatic nature of language and its role in lucid communication and this practical approach is also the approach of this study. Braidì goes on to mention that Givón “compares a grammar to a biological mechanism, whose anatomical structures adapt with evolution to the particular functions that they perform” (1999, p. 146). Heine calls the work of Givón “monumental” and credits him with being “the founder of modern grammaticalization studies...[which] marked the beginning of work on the rise and development of grammatical (or functional) categories as a distinct field of research”; he also shared Givón’s mantra: “today’s syntax is tomorrow’s morphology” (2016, p. 728). In this study, I will see how the interlanguages of native Arabic writers are influenced by the grammars of their native language and if application of the resolution rules that determine agreement between noun/noun phrase and verb phrase constructions in the target language are affected by the resolution rules of their L1.

The term ‘resolution rules,’ coined by Givón, has been further championed in the field of linguistic agreement by Greville Corbett, who has been working primarily in Slavic languages, although his works cover a dizzying array of at least 200 languages. Resolution rules have also been referred to as ‘feature computation rules’ (Corbett, 1983, p. 175), but this study will use Givón’s term ‘resolution rules’ exclusively. The preminent discussion of resolution rules for

phi-feature (person, number, and gender) agreement is Corbett's "Resolution rules: agreement in person, number, and gender" (1983). In this chapter written by Corbett, he discusses circumstances under which resolution rules can be applied to best solve for agreement between person, number, and gender features. He opens the chapter with a description of the dilemma that resolution rules are employed to address: "[w]hen noun phrases are conjoined, they may carry feature combinations which create a problem for agreement rules as, for example, when a verb agrees with coordinated noun phrases which differ in gender" (1983, p. 175). Problems in applying agreement rules and deviations in their implementation are of particular interest for this study.

Resolution rules can also be utilized to solve person, number, and gender agreement issues with nouns and adjectives (Corbett, 2003b, p. 261), but this study will be limited exclusively to instances of agreement between a noun/noun phrase and a verb phrase. It should also be noted that imposition of resolution rules is not always necessary, which is to say, there are many circumstances where agreement is with only one element and therefore agreement can be handled without the explicit use of rule resolution (Corbett, 2003b, p. 261). Although examples will be included that do not require formal resolution, they are included as they best illustrate particular points of agreement. The primary focus of this study, to reiterate, is the use of resolution rules that are used to solve agreement issues between a noun/noun phrase and a verb phrase and how these resolution rules are applied by native Arabic speakers in English L2 compositions.

In discussions on resolution rule application, Corbett often calls on the Agreement Hierarchy to support claims of conditions under which particular rules are implemented.

- (12) The Agreement Hierarchy (Corbett, 1979 cited in 2009, p. 207)
 attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun

The usefulness of the Agreement Hierarchy is limited to number and gender agreement issues (Corbett, 2003b, p. 237) and illustrates some of the “factors which have an influence” on subject/verb agreement. These factors can be used to show that “there are constraints on agreement options, which limit the distribution of syntactic and semantic agreement” (Corbett, 2009, p. 206). In the words of Corbett, the Agreement Hierarchy shows the “four positions [which] represent successively less canonical agreement” within a sentence (2009, p. 207).

In illustration (12) above, moving to the right in the hierarchy progression increases the probability that the agreement will have a greater degree of accuracy from a semantic perspective. For any given agreement condition, agreement in the attributive position is less a guarantee of correct agreement than the form of a relative pronoun, and a personal pronoun exhibits the highest probability of agreement veracity, semantically, in a given condition. The Agreement Hierarchy showcases the special case of the personal pronoun in semantic agreement (which is illustrated by the third person pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it*, the final bastion in the retreat of gender from the English language). This hierarchy utilizes an accepted progressive methodology which will inform my work in addressing agreement issues between American English and Modern Standard Arabic.

Although gender considerations pose the most divergent agreement issues between languages, person and number issues also play a role in proper language usage. Native Arabic speakers/writers “tend to pay closer attention to gender agreement issues, where English pays closer attention to number agreement issues that have a direct effect on personal pronouns” (E. Koffi, personal communication, 2014). These differences in morphological agreement resolution could lead to negative transfer for native Arabic writers writing in English. To provide complete coverage of the resolution rules that govern all pertinent agreement issues, each of the agreement

phi-features will be discussed below in a separate section. These discussions will summarize the thought in the field of resolution rules and will provide the canvas upon which I will fashion the resolution rules that apply in the American English and Modern Standard Arabic languages.

Resolution Rules of Person Agreement

From a linguistic perspective, person is a morphosyntactic feature that represents the semantic notion of subject in all languages, and there are associated “universal correspondence principles” that determine proper agreement within that category (Zwicky, 1977, p. 715). In terms of language as a communication tool, Carnie posits that person “refers to the perspective of the speaker with respect to the other participants in the speech act” (2013, p. 11). Agreement in person in a language system entails the combination of an appropriate referent pronoun or lexical nominal with inflectional markers to create a cogent and grammatically correct verb phrase. Lyons (1968) spells out the idea of ‘person’ with “[t]he category of person is clearly definable with reference to the notion of participant-roles” (cited in Zwicky, 1977, p. 715), and these participant-roles are determined by reference made in the discourse. Thus participant-roles are determined by the pragmatic referent which is reflected by a semantic identifier and corresponds to an element in the linguistic person category. It should be noted that in the literature on resolution rules, discussions on person include the pragmatic notions of first, second, and third persons in singular, dual (where applicable), and plural number; the number phi-feature will be discussed in the next section.

There are three universal participant-roles, which are ‘first’ person, the speaker of the discourse; ‘second’ person, the person or persons that are addressed and present with the speaker; and ‘third’ person, the person or persons that are not the speaker or present addressee. The third person category is also used commonly in reference to [-human] things and animals. The singular person elements can be summarized as follows:

Table 1: Singular Person Elements

Person	Singular Designations
1SG	speaker
2SG	addressee
3SG	person, not speaker or addressee

These participant-roles also have plural forms and the plural sets are created by combining differing proportions of the person categories. For instance in English, a speaker plus a person from any other category makes a first person plural, a present addressee plus another second person(s) or third person(s) makes a second person plural, and a non-present third person plus any number of additional third person(s) makes a third person plural. In Arabic, dual verb forms are used in the second and third persons when two similar entities are joint referents; plural verb forms are employed in instances with three or more referents (Vaglieri, 1959, p. 67; Ryding, 2011, pp. 298-299). A more detailed discussion of the dual and plural number constructions follows in the next section, Resolution Rules of Number Agreement. The applicable person elements for English and Arabic can be summarized as follows:

Table 2: Plural Person Elements

Person	Singular Designations
1PL	speaker + addressee and/or + third person(s)
2DL	addressee + addressee or third person (Arabic only)
2PL	addressee + addressee and/or + third person(s) (Arabic: three or more)
3DL	person, not speaker or addressee + third person (Arabic only)
3PL	person, not speaker or addressee + third person(s) (Arabic: three or more)

The resolution rules that determine person resolution for both English and Arabic can be stated as⁶:

Person Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the elements include a first person, first person agreement forms will be used;
- II. If the elements include a second person, second person agreement forms will be used;
- III. The default condition is that third person agreement forms are used.

(Corbett, 1983, p. 176)

All three person resolution rules are applicable to both the Arabic and English languages.

Resolution Rules of Number Agreement

Number is a morphosyntactic category that is used to differentiate quantity of noun elements and how they are matched to the verb phrase. All languages have number features, with the most common being “singular (Sg) for reference sets containing exactly one element, dual (Du) for those with two, trial (Tr) for those with three, plural (Pl) for those with two or more, three or more, or four or more, depending on how many other numbers are distinguished” (Zwicky, 1977, p. 719). Corbett mentions the use of the ‘paucal’ in some Oceanic languages, signifying a value similar to ‘a few’ in English (2000, p. 22), with the value variable in number between the Oceanic languages that use the form. Number, from the standpoint of resolution rules, is a separate phi-feature addressing agreement of noun elements by count value.

For the languages under consideration in this study, English recognizes singular and plural and Arabic recognizes singular, dual, and plural. Although English distinguishes between singular and plural in all three person constructions, pronominally the plural number is only

⁶ Many contend that these person resolution rules are universal for all languages (see Corbett, 1983 and Zwicky, 1977); I do not make that assertion, but these rules are applicable for the languages discussed in this study, English and Arabic.

recognized in first and third person constructions⁷. For English, the plural number designation is used for all non-singular constructions. The number designations for Arabic are more complex than those in English. In Arabic, the singular constructions function for all three persons as they do in English, as does the first person plural, however the non-singular second and third person constructions exhibit more granularity. For Arabic second and third person constructions, the plural number designation is used for only three or more persons or things. When two persons or things are referenced in second or third person constructions in Arabic, the dual number designation is employed (Alhawary, 2011, pp 46-50).⁸ Arabic recognizes pronominally all of these person/number designations.

It should be noted that the use of the dual in Arabic is undergoing diminishment, especially in local spoken dialects. The dual forms are still used for some common body parts (eyes, legs, arms, etc.), but the form is not in common usage in oral communication and is facultative, no longer obligatory (Corbett, 2000, pp. 42-44, 207). The facultative dual is also referred to as the ‘pseudo-dual’ in some contexts (Corbett, 2000, p. 269). This pseudo-dual form “is historically a dual but which now functions as a plural” (Corbett, 2000, p. 95). Although this study is restricted to the prescriptive written Modern Standard Arabic of grammar texts where the dual forms are still obligatory, dual forms are considered by many Arabic speakers to be archaic. The number elements for English and Arabic can be summarized as follows:

⁷ The second person plural form is not distinguished from the singular (*you* for both) in standard English syntax. However, I would be negligent and incur the wrath of my friends and relatives in Alabama if I did not mention that a second person plural form is recognized and in wide use in the southeastern United States: *you all* which is usually contracted to *y'all*.

⁸ Alhawary asserts “Naturally, there is no dual marking for the first person” (2011, p. 46), however both the Lakota and Dakota languages of the Siouan language family of North America employ the dual for only first person constructions, designating *we two* (Riggs, 1893/2004, p. 11). Buechel stipulates that the first person dual “can and must be used only when one person addresses another and includes him or her in the action, being, or condition” (1939, p. 274).

Table 3: Number Elements

Person	Number		
1st	Singular	-----	Plural
2nd	Singular	Dual (Arabic only)	Plural
3rd	Singular	Dual (Arabic only)	Plural

The resolution of the number agreement feature is based on the controller elements in the phrase. In English, two or more conjoined nouns (or the equivalent) signal the need for a plural construction. Consider these examples:

- (13) The boy goes.
the boy SG.MASC. goes PRES.3SG
- (14) The boy and the man go.
the boy SG.MASC. and the man SG.MASC. go PRES.3PL

By comparison, in Modern Standard Arabic, two conjoined singular nouns (or the equivalent) signal the need for a dual construction, and three or more conjoined nouns (or the equivalent) signal the need for a plural construction (Vaglieri, 1959, p. 67; Ryding, 2011, p. 129). Consider these examples:

- (15) يذهب الولد
jɔdɣə:bu əlɔweləd
goes IMPF.3SG.MASC. the boy SG.MASC.
'The boy goes.'
- يذهبان الرجل والولد
jɔdɣə:bəni əlraʒəl wa əlɔweləd
go IMPF.3DL.MASC. the man SG.MASC. and the boy SG.MASC.
'The boy and the man go.'
- (17) يذهبون نادر و الرجل الولد
jɔdɣə:buna nə:der wa əlraʒəl wa əlɔweləd
go IMPF.3PL.MASC. Nadir SG.MASC. and the man SG.MASC. and the boy SG.MASC.
'The boy and the man and Nadir go.'

Example (15) above resolves ‘the boy’ with a verb in the 3rd person singular (henceforth [-plural]) masculine (henceforth [+masc]) form. Example (16) resolves ‘the boy and the man’ with a verb in the 3rd person dual (henceforth [+dual]) [+masc] form. In the imperfect active, the Arabic [+dual] is marked with نـ (-əni) in the 2nd person, in the 3rd person [+masc], and in the 3rd person [-masc]; in the perfect active, the 2nd person [+dual] is marked with مـ تـ (-tumə), the 3rd person [+dual] [+masc] is marked with نـ (-ə), and the 3rd person [+dual] [-masc] is marked with نـ (-ətə). Example (17) resolves ‘the boy and the man and Nadir’ with a verb in the 3rd person plural (henceforth [+plural]) [+masc] form. The resolution rules that determine number agreement in Arabic function according to standard semantic/pragmatic patterns, as is seen in (15) through (17) above, but there are two conditions which can affect number resolution: subject/verb word order and human/non-human attributes.

In the Arabic language, word order is flexible and reflects the intended emphasis of the speaker or writer, and number agreement adjusts in response to those changes in word order. When both the subject and the object of the verb are overtly differentiated, the normal word order in Arabic is VSO (Verb-Subject-Object), the “standard word order of verbal sentences in Arabic” (Ryding, 2011, p. 64). But the word order can be SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) or VOS (Verb-Object-Subject) in circumstances where the writer or speaker is seeking to change emphasis (Ryding, 2011, p. 65). When the word order is SVO, usually to satisfy stylistic or emphatic purposes, or for “the attention-getting function of the SVO word order” (Ryding, 2011, p. 67), the verb agrees with the subject in person, number, and gender.

Alhawary concurs but points out the differences that occur in the more common VSO construction, speaking of the subject in a “pre-verbal construction...the subject and the verb share full agreement features of person, gender, and number...in a post-verbal subject construction, the

subject and the verb agree only in person and gender” (2009, p. 15). When the standard Arabic VSO word order is followed, the subject agrees “in gender but not always in number. If the verb precedes the subject and the subject is dual or plural, the verb remains singular” (Ryding, 2011, p. 65). Alhawary makes the point also, but provides gender agreement detail: “[i]n a verbal sentence, with the verb occurring in sentence initial position, the verb agrees with the subject (or doer of the action) in gender but not in number. That is, in VSO constructions the verb occurs always in the singular but can be either feminine or masculine, depending on the gender of the subject” (2011, p. 78). Vaglieri provides an affirmation of the position forwarded by Ryding and Alhawary, “[i]l verbo posto prima del soggetto resta sempre al singolare⁹” (1959, p. 113). Unlike the unflinching word order of standard English language constructions, the flexible word order in the highly inflected Arabic leads to instances where agreement parameters may determine alternate number conditions that must be reflected in more complex number resolution rules.

Consider these examples:

البيتز		الطالب	يُدرس
əlbətaz	fi:	əltəlib	jədrusu
home	at	the student SG.MASC.	studies IMPF.3SG.MASC.

‘The student studies at home.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 78)

البيتز		الطالبان	يُدرس
əlbətaz	في	əltəlibani	jədrusu
home	at	the [two] students DL.MASC.	study IMPF.3SG.MASC.

‘The students study at home.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 78)

البيتز		الطلاب	يُدرس
əlbətaz	fi:	əltəlibu	jədrusu
home	at	the students PL.MASC.	study IMPF.3SG.MASC.

‘The students study at home.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 79)

⁹“the verb in position before the subject always remains in the singular” (my translation)

البيتز	فِي	يُدرسون	الطالبان
əlbetaz	fi:	jɔdrusəni	əltəlibani
home	at	study IMPF.3DL.MASC.	the [two] students DL.MASC.

‘The students study at home.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 79)

البيتز	فِي	يُدرسون	الطالب
əlbetaz	fi:	jɔdrusuna	altəlibu
home	at	study IMPF.3PL.MASC.	the students PL.MASC.

‘The students study at home.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 79)

Examples (18) to (20) are Arabic sentences in a VSO format (Arabic is read from right to left).

In example (18) above, the [-plural] subject ‘the student’ resolves as would be expected, with a 3rd person [-plural] verb. However in example (19) above, the subject ‘[two] students’ [+dual] also resolves with a 3rd person [-plural] verb and in example (20) above, the [+plural] subject ‘students’ resolves with a 3rd person [-plural] verb too. In each of these examples with subjects of singular, dual, and plural number in a VSO format, the verb ‘study’ remains in imperfect active third person [-plural] [+masc] form. With feminine subjects, the number agreement follows this same pattern. Examples (21) and (22) are sentences with the non-standard Arabic SVO word order, but which follow the resolution rules for person, number, and gender without exception. Word order in Arabic is more flexible than in English and may affect number agreement, which may lead to negative agreement issues for native Arabic speakers creating English language constructions.

In addition, Arabic has a humanness category which affects agreement and plural forms: if the [+plural] referents are non-human (henceforth [-human]) (either animal or thing), agreement is always in the feminine (henceforth [-masc]) [-plural] form. If the [+plural] referents are human (henceforth [+human]), agreement follows the standard pattern (Ryding, 2011, pp. 125-126; Alhawary, 2011, p. 79). This agreement pattern is also known as ‘deflected’ agreement and it “applies to agreement with verbs, adjectives, and also pronouns” (Ryding, 2011, p. 125).

This humanness category in Arabic is completely semantic: if the referent is a human being the [+ human] feature applies; if the referent is not a human being the [- human] feature applies.

Consider this example:

(23) صبا:حاح صفر يبدأ
 saba:ħan fi: safu jɛbdə
 the morning in my classes PL.N-H. start IMPF.3SG.FEM
 ‘My classes start in the morning.’ (Alhawary, 2011, p. 79)

In example (23) above, the [+plural] [-human] noun ‘classes’ resolves with the verb in the third person [-plural] [-masc] form. This same pattern is followed for all [+plural] [-human] subjects regardless of the subject/verb word order.

This particular feature of Arabic agreement with non-human plural subjects is also shared by Attic Greek, and is thought to be a Proto-Indo-European feature where “plural neuters had a singular collective meaning” (Ibrahim, 1973, p. 31). Ibrahim goes on to note the “[t]he indentity [sic] of certain features of Indo-European and Arabic genders is striking...in Arabic, too, the plurals of inanimate nouns (i.e., ‘neuters’) are treated as feminine singulars in every respect” (1973, p. 31). Corbett makes reference to an earlier study by Wright on Classical Arabic that this distinction between human and non-human was initially morphological, or at least the morphology was representative of noun type: “broken plurals denote ‘individuals viewed *collectively*’ where as sound plurals refer to ‘*distinct* individuals’” (italics by author, 2000, p. 209). This is a position that the Semitist Brockelmann also made mention of in his work (Ibrahim, 1973, p. 42). While the roots and origin of this human/non-human distinction are not necessary for this study, they do provide a possible explanation for this exception in Arabic.

In some languages that share the human/non-human category, mixing [+human] and [-human] subjects in a conjoined construction is discouraged. The restriction is never referred to as absolute, but it “produces unnatural forms” (Corbett, 2003b, pp. 264-265; Corbett, 2009, pp.

249-250). In these languages, a comitative construction is employed: "The man fell down with his dog" (Corbett, 2009, p. 250). In Arabic, mixed human/non-human constructions are acceptable. For agreement in the dual, "observe the gender of the human subject (whether feminine or masculine) and treat both as human masculine or feminine, accordingly" (M. Alhawary, personal communication, 2014). If dealing with more than two mixed human/non-human subjects, "use the singular feminine (if the verb follows the subject) or singular masculine when the verb preceded the subject (and the human subject is the first subject listed)" (M. Alhawary, personal communication, 2014). In Arabic, the human/non-human category is entirely semantic but can cause syntactic complications in certain constructions.

The elements that may influence syntactic agreement for Arabic and English can be summarized as follows:

Table 4: Syntactic Agreement Elements

Element	Arabic	English
Person	1st, 2nd, 3rd	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Number	Singular, Dual, Plural	Singular, Plural
Gender	Masculine, Feminine Human, Non-Human	Masculine, Feminine, Neuter (3rd Person only)

The number resolution rules for the English and Arabic languages can be stated as:

Number Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the sentence is a VSO construction, then the verb is always in the singular [Arabic only];
- II. If all elements are non-human plural subjects, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form [Arabic only];
- III. If there are two singular elements only, both of which are in the singular, then dual agreement forms are used (although use of this form is currently diminishing) [Arabic only] or the plural agreement forms are used [English only];
- IV. In all other cases, providing there are at least three elements, the plural agreement form will be used.
- V. If there is only one singular element, the singular agreement form will be used.

(adapted from Corbett, 1983, p. 177)

The first two rules accommodate the number agreement exceptions that are in play for Arabic and do not apply for English. Also, since English does not have a [+dual] element, the third rule concerning two conjoined elements has different implementations depending on language. The fourth and fifth rules are relevant for both English and Arabic. Corbett found in his study that when number resolution rules are not applied, agreement is usually made with one of the elements, and often with that element closest to the verb (1983, pp. 179-183). Although the number resolution rules may be applied easily in creating constructions in English, they cannot be applied in Arabic without the adherence to exceptions that are required in constructions using the standard Arabic VSO word order and the use of [-human] [+plural] subjects. Since the Arabic VSO word order is the standard construction, I find reference to this number resolution condition as an 'exception' to be suspect.

Resolution Rules of Gender Agreement

It has been seen that resolution rule agreement for person and number categories are based on semantic information, but that is seldom the case for gender resolution (Corbett, 2003b, p. 264). Grammatical gender is not always semantically based, and in many cases defies physical

gender specifications. And although it has been suggested that the person resolution rules are universal (Corbett, 1983, p. 176; Zwicky, 1977, pp. 718, 725), and that the number resolution rules apply to most languages, “gender resolution rules are language-specific” (Corbett, 1983, p. 205) and are applied according to “the morphological possibilities of the given language” (Corbett, 2003b, p. 261). When a noun or noun conjunct is matched with a verb phrase in grammatical gender-utilizing languages, resolution rules determine the morphological means that will be employed; however, in some instances the resolution rules are unnecessary, e.g., if predicate agreement is with only one element (Corbett, 2003b, p. 264). Arabic and English differ in their need for resolution rule application for gender.

In Arabic pronouns, the second person and third person singular categories include masculine and feminine elements (Vaglieri, 1959, p. 67; Ryding, 2011, pp. 298-299); there is no distinction in the first person (Corbett, 2003b, p. 131). In English pronouns, the third person singular category includes [+masc], [-masc], and neuter (henceforth [+neuter]); there is no distinction in the first and second persons. In the plural, Arabic has second and third person non-singular categories that are more specific than those in English and include [+masc] and [-masc] elements. The [+dual] is used for two persons and does not designate gender or definiteness (Ryding, 2011, pp. 129-130), and the [+plural] is employed only in instances with three or more (Vaglieri, 1959, p. 67; Ryding, 2011, pp. 298-299). For mixed gender groups in Arabic, as with many Romance languages, the masculine controls agreement and the [+masc] [+plural] form is used. The gender distinctions by person can be summarized as follows:

Table 5: Gender Distinctions

Person	Gender		
1SG	No gender distinction		
1PL	No gender distinction		
2SG	Masculine (Arabic only)	Feminine (Arabic only)	
2DL	No gender distinction		
2PL	Masculine (Arabic only)	Feminine (Arabic only)	
3SG	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter (English only)
3DL	No gender distinction		
3PL	Masculine (Arabic only)	Feminine (Arabic only)	

The gender resolution rules that come into play in English are minimal, being restricted in American English to third person pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it* (and their associated forms *him/his/himself*, *her/hers/herself*, and *its/itself*). Their presence is a remnant of the linguistic past that has been used to support the argument that the gender category has its “roots” in pronouns (Ibrahim, 1973, p. 32) and they are an important component in Corbett’s Agreement Hierarchy (see illustration (12) above in Chapter 4: Resolution Rules Approach to Linguistic Agreement). In English, the pronouns of the third person [-plural] alone retain gender markers, “where a three-way distinction is made between the masculine, the feminine, and neuter” (Koffi, 2010, p. 420). The [+masc] and [-masc] pronouns reflect primarily semantic gender, whereas the [+neuter] form is “used for lexical NPs that have the semantic feature [-animate], or for [+animate] beings whose sex is unknown or unimportant” (Koffi, 2010, p. 420) and so is not strictly semantic. Beyond the usages of the third person singular pronouns, the English language does not recognize grammatical gender except in special noun cases (e.g., actor/actress, waiter/waitress, host/hostess, etc.). This simple pattern of English gender agreement stands in stark contrast to the more elaborate Arabic grammatical gender system.

Gender Resolution Rules (English)

Resolution rules are not necessary in English for gender agreement with verbs. Gender agreement is only implemented in singular third person pronoun usage (*she, he, and it*), and does not impact verb form in either singular or plural; plural noun phrase elements will always require a plural construction and plural pronouns are unmarked in English.

The concept of grammatical or linguistic gender is common to many world languages, and in Arabic two gender designations are used: masculine and feminine (Vaglieri, 1959, p. 64; Ryding, 2011, p. 119). The agreement of these genders ripples throughout all Arabic syntax constructions, including verbs, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives (Alhawary, 2011, p. 36; Ryding, 2011, p. 53). These gender elements are “semantically arbitrary, except where a noun refers to a human being or other creature, when it normally conforms to natural gender” (Ryding, 2011, p. 119). That being said, Ryding continues, “[masculine] is the base category, consisting of a vast range of nouns including male human beings and other living creatures, abstract and concrete nouns, and proper names” (Ryding, 2011, p. 120). The majority of female nouns have a common suffix marker *ة* (*taa' marbuuTa*, [-ə]) and [-masc] nouns include the following: “female human beings, female creatures, abstract concepts, individual units of naturally occurring classes (e.g., banana, tree), names of cities, names of most countries, and parts of the body that come in pairs (e.g., legs, hands, eyes)” (Ryding, 2011, p. 121). Gender plays an important role in all Arabic syntactical constructions.

Resolution rules come into play with gender when a conjoined noun phrase with mixed genders is mated to a verb phrase. When the conjoined nouns are of the same gender, either [+masc] or [-masc], that shared gender is used for agreement without the need for resolution rules. However, if the human elements are of mixed gender then the gender of the verb used is [+masc]. This syntactic agreement pattern is common and is used by many languages including

French, Spanish, Latvian, Hindi, Panjabi, and modern Hebrew (Corbett, 2003b, pp. 279-280).

Consider these examples:

تذهبانز	المرأة	و البنت
təɖɣəbani	ələməɾə:tu	wa əlbɪnt
go IMPF.3DL.FEM. the woman SG.FEM. and the girl SG.FEM.		
'The girl and the woman go.'		

يذهبانز	البنت	و الولد
jəɖɣəbani	əlbɪnt	wa əlɔwɛləd
go IMPF.3DL.MASC. the girl SG.FEM. and the boy SG.MASC.		
'The boy and the girl go.'		

In example (24) above, the singular 'girl' and singular 'woman' share the same [-masc] gender and the [+dual] verb also shares that gender; in example (25) above, the singular 'boy' and singular 'girl' are of differing genders and therefore the [+dual] verb form uses the [+masc] gender¹⁰. Although this basic gender resolution rule pattern is common to many languages, Arabic deviates from this gender pattern by manifesting a supplementary differentiating category: humanness.

As was mentioned above in Chapter 4: Resolution Rules of Number Agreement, [-human] [+plural] subjects institute an exception to the standard Arabic gender resolution rule of agreement. The semantic distinction between a referent that is [+human] and a referent that is [-human] is a vital distinction for Arabic nouns. In the words of Ryding, "[t]his is a crucial grammatical point for predicting certain kinds of plural formation and for purposes of agreement with other components of a phrase or clause...[and]...applies only to nouns in the plural" (2011, p. 125). If a subject is [-human] [+plural], the number and gender resolution rules are overridden by an exception which places the verb in the third person [-plural] [-masc] form (Ryding, 2011, pp. 125-126; Alhawary, 2011, p. 79). Consider this example:

¹⁰ For a masculine-only gender sample, see example (16) above.

- (26) سقطت الأشجار في ع
 sɒqədət əlʃɑːrə fiː əlʃɪdʒərə ʃɒqədət
 the street on the trees PL.N-H. fell PERF.3SG.FEM
 ‘The trees fell on the street.’

In example (26) above, the [+plural] [-human] noun ‘trees’ resolves with the verb in the third person [-plural] [-masc] form. As was noted in Resolution Rules of Number Agreement above, this same pattern is followed regardless of the subject/verb word order. This humanness category in Arabic should be distinguished from the animate/inanimate distinction which is found in several languages, including Blackfoot (Frantz, 2009, pp. 9-10), Ojibwe (Valentine, 2001, p. 114), and Russian (Corbett, 2009, p. 120)¹¹; humanness in Arabic only denotes human beings (Ryding, 2011, p. 125). There are also two caveats to consider when implementing the humanness category with Arabic gender agreement.

The first caveat concerns humans, both thought of as a group collectively and when a collective noun is used to refer to ‘people.’ The [-human] [+plural] agreement pattern is employed when an assemblage of humans are treated as an abstraction. According to Ryding, “although the noun referents are human, they are being referred to as abstractions, and thus the plural is treated as a nonhuman plural” (2011, p. 126). Consider these examples:

- انخرطت الغالبية في عذابينز
 ənkherətəð əlyəlibijət fiː hənifez
 plunged PERF.3SG.FEM the majority PL.MASC. violent debate into
 ‘The majority plunged into violent debate.’ (Ryding, 2011, p. 127)
- (28) ناركها الشعب كله
 nərkha ʃəb kele
 blessed PERF.3SG.FEM it the peoples PL.MASC. all
 ‘All the people blessed it.’ (Ryding, 2011, p. 127)

¹¹ The Blackfoot and Ojibwe languages use [+/- animate] as a syntactic gender that governs phi-feature agreement whereas the Russian language uses [+/- animate] as a case differentiator only for nouns.

In example (27) above, the plural ‘majority’ is resolved to the verb with the [-masc] [-plural] form. In addition, in example (28) above, the plural of the word *sha’b* [ʃab] (people), which is *shu’uub* (peoples), “is treated as a nonhuman plural with feminine singular agreement” (Ryding, 2011, p. 127). Another complication with the [-human] [+plural] subject exception is the word *naas* (people), which exhibits “inconsistent agreement patterns,” occasionally adhering to the humanness category and other times dealt with as an abstraction with [-masc] [-plural] agreement (Ryding, 2011, p. 127). There are often agreement issues that surround the collective noun for ‘people’ in most languages, and Arabic is no exception.

The second caveat to the [-human] [+plural] subject agreement issue is discussed by Alhawary, and involves “genus collective nouns (referring to the names of plants, insects, and animals) whose singular (feminine) form is derived by adding the *taa’ marbuuTa* feminine suffix {-a}[-ə] and whose regular (feminine) plural is formed by adding the {-aat}[-əətʔ] suffix...The irregular plural of these collective nouns is usually treated in MSA as masculine, whereas the regular feminine plural is treated as feminine” (2011, p. 65). Consider these examples:

جميلة dzəmila a pretty SG.FEM.	شجرة ʃədʒərə tree SG.FEM.
جملتان dzəmilatanı two pretty DL.FEM.	شجران ʃədʒəratan trees DL.FEM.
جميلة dzəmila pretty SG.FEM.	شجرات ʃədʒələət trees PL(REG).FEM.
جميل dzəmil pretty SG.MASC.	شجر ʃədʒər trees PL(IRRG).FEM. (Alhawary, 2011, p. 65)

In examples (29) above, this caveat is seen in the final ‘pretty trees’ irregular [+plural] form which would not fall under the [-human] [+plural] subject resolution rule but is considered a grammatical [+masc] [-plural]. While neither the exception to the standard Arabic gender resolution rule nor the caveats to the exception present obstacles to comprehension, knowledge of their existence may aid in successful language transfer.

There is no gender agreement rule in English and number agreement is the feature most noticed in English, which is always realized through inflectional suffixes. This differs fundamentally from the prefixation morphological process that Arabic uses for gender agreement, which is the most noticed feature of Arabic verb agreement (E. Koffi, personal communication, 2014). The gender resolution rules for the Arabic language can be stated as:

Gender Resolution Rules (Arabic)

- I. If one of the following conditions is met, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form:
 - humans are referenced as an abstract group
 - the word *shu'uub* / ‘peoples’ is used
 - all elements are non-human plural subjects, unless:
 - the subjects are genus collective nouns
- II. If at least one element is masculine, then the masculine form is used;
- III. The default condition uses the feminine form.

Summary of phi-Feature Resolution Rules

By way of drawing the discussion on the resolution rule approach to linguistic agreement to a close, I thought it prudent to provide a summary of the information that has been covered in this section. To that end, pronouns that are employed by a language provide a small window, a porthole if you will, into the syntax of that language. Pronouns are a primary part of speech, one of the closed classes that seldom change in a language, and are a fundamental building block of a language. In addition, the pronoun forms illustrate the framework of the phi-feature elements that

affect the agreement/resolution rules of that language. The English and Arabic pronouns are listed in Table 6 below:

Table 6: English and Arabic Pronouns

Person	SG MASC	SG FEM	SG NEU	DUAL	PL MASC	PL FEM	PL NEU
First English Arabic	I أنا [anaa]	I أنا [anaa]			we نحن [naħnu]	we نحن [naħnu]	
Second English Arabic	you أنت [anta]	you أنت [anti:]		-- أنتما [antumaa]	you أنتم [antum]	you أنتن [antunna]	
Third English Arabic	he هو [ħu:wa]	she هي [hi:ya]	it --	-- هما [ħu:maa]	they هم [ħu:m]	they هن [ħu:nna]	they --

As can be understood from the discussion and the table of pronouns above, the categories of person potentially include only three (first, second, and third), although they can have number values of singular ([−plural]), dual ([+dual]), or plural ([+plural]) and gender values of masculine ([+masc]), feminine ([−masc]), or neuter ([+neuter]). These syntactic categories for the English and Arabic languages populate and determine the resolution rules that drive noun phrase/verb phrase agreement in both languages.

Before launching into discussion of the method and particulars of the data portion of this study, below is a summary restatement of all of the resolution rules that are in play for the person, number, and gender phi-features for both the English and Arabic languages.

Person Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the elements include a first person, first person agreement forms will be used;
- II. If the elements include a second person, second person agreement forms will be used;
- III. The default condition is that third person agreement forms are used.

(Corbett, 1983, p. 176)

Number Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the sentence is a VSO construction, then the verb is always in the singular [Arabic only];
- II. If all elements are non-human plural subjects, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form [Arabic only];
- III. If there are two singular elements only, both of which are in the singular, then dual agreement forms are used (although use of this form is currently diminishing) [Arabic only] or the plural agreement forms are used [English only];
- IV. In all other cases, providing there are at least three elements, the plural agreement form will be used.
- V. If there is only one singular element, the singular agreement form will be used.

(adapted from Corbett, 1983, p. 177)

Gender Resolution Rules (English)

Resolution rules are not necessary in English for gender agreement with verbs. Gender agreement is only implemented in singular third person pronoun usage (*she*, *he*, and *it*), and does not impact verb form in either singular or plural; plural noun phrase elements will always require a plural construction and plural pronouns are unmarked in English.

Gender Resolution Rules (Arabic)

- I. If one of the following conditions is met, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form:
 - humans are referenced as an abstract group
 - the word *shu'uub*/'peoples' is used
 - all elements are non-human plural subjects, unless:
 - the subjects are genus collective nouns
- II. If at least one element is masculine, then the masculine form is used;
- III. The default condition uses the feminine form.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY METHODOLOGY

While the thirty compositions examined in this study were written to assess English fluency for college placement, this study will use the compositions to assess whether or not the student writers transfer agreement patterns from their native L1 Arabic into their L2 written English. The compositions were written in a timed, topic-writing classroom setting to satisfy the following topic: “Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?” The thirty compositions that are included in this study were written to address this topic and determine if the writer’s English fluency was sufficient to enter university classes or if lack of fluency necessitated enrollment in the university’s intensive English program. The financial and social impact of performance on this composition task cannot be understated so the likelihood of a student sloughing off on this assignment, through either inattention or poor attitude, are minimal. Although it is curious that the topic assignment is grammatically deficient in article usage, I surmise that this was a test device the institution intended to foil imitators. The repeated use of this particular topic at the institution and its role in accurate student placement speaks to its instrument reliability and internal consistency. The student compositions, based on this topic instrument, were obtained more than one year after they were written by the students, and this study was not done in conjunction with, nor was ever associated with, the original fluency assessment. Since the compositions were completed independently of this study, there is no impact from students knowing that they are part of a study (the Hawthorne effect) or from students trying to provide content that they feel is expected (the halo effect) (Mackey and Gass, 2011, p. 114; Bergen, 2016, p. 195). This study performs error correction, data analysis, and supplemental grammatical correlations on thirty compositions written in an L2 English by native Arabic writers, which were written to fulfill the above referenced university fluency assessment.

The composition sampling that populates this study was done randomly within the L2 English fluency assessment setting with a stipulated participant characteristic of native Arabic writer from Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact that biometric information is not available for these writers, the thirty compositions exhibit concrete references to locale and culture that support the writers' link to the Arabic language and having lived the Saudi experience. Although the sample group is small, their random sampling from the highly specified cluster of native Arabic speakers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia makes the results of this study generalizable to similar language/cultural groups (Mackey and Gass, 2011, pp. 119-120). In addition, the results may be generalizable to the larger group of native Arabic speakers/writers as a whole, a group that has become globally significant.

In a study of noun phrase/verb phrase agreement and resolution rule application, the content validity requires that the writers have opportunity to use the breadth of their vocabulary knowledge and have time to consider and employ their best syntax paradigms for maximum writing competence and intelligibility. The timed topic-writing task provides for these needs in one of the least stressful manners for most writers. The topic that the writers need to address is loose, allowing many avenues of coverage and also is both appropriate and experiential for each of the L2 writers. The open nature of the task allows each writer to best express their thoughts in the fashion and idiom that best highlights their English linguistic strengths, a valid goal of any testing instrument (Mackey and Gass, 2011, p. 107). The measurement criteria used in error analysis for this study is English grammaticality that forms the foundation of all L2 English instruction, training, and *in situ* learning. The writers of the compositions used in this study have every opportunity to use only the vocabulary and constructions with which they are most familiar and/or knowledgeable. The topic-writing task examined in this study is a valid test instrument for

these students and the content validity is supported by the grammaticality error analysis method implemented.

In the data analysis phase of this study, where verbs are examined for agreement errors, the accuracy of the corrections have been checked and commentary is provided where judgments are necessarily holistic. These grammaticality assessments are straight-forward and there is no attempt to be hyper-critical in enforcing syntax minutiae nor to be ultra-sensitive to native idiom constructions. In attention to a study on phi-feature resolution rule application by L2 English writers, the method of data analysis employed on these compositions “adequately captures the construct of interest” (Mackey and Gass, 2011, p. 108) for such research. In a similar vein, the use of archived compositions from the same source, written in fulfillment of the same function on the same day, and administered according to the same parameters ensures the internal validity of this study (Mackey and Gass, 2011, p. 109). Research validity is integral to the production of a worthy study and I have paid attention to the necessary requirements to ensure that the instrument is valid and the project analysis is reliable.

The scale of measurement used in this study is more interval than ordinal. An ordinal scale is employed initially to establish the credibility of the sample group and posit face validity for the instrument, but that is the extent of the ordinal scale in this study. In terms of interval measurement, although rank of writers by word use or by auxiliary verb errors is evident in the analysis tables, rank is less important to this study than the number of measureable error units for each particular category. The interval between scores within a category is less pertinent than the scores within a category across the composition set. The aim of the study is to assess phi-feature agreement competence and record how this competence may be influenced by L1 syntactic

resolution rules. The measurement scales imposed upon the data are less important than the broader perspectives that the data sets themselves provide.

Participants

The composition samples used for data in this study were obtained from an intensive English language program at a university in the central United States. Because of restrictions associated with privacy issues, the biodata that is available about the writers is limited to their nationality, their native language, and what little can be gleaned from their compositions themselves. Among the most important participant characteristics for second language research are language background, language learning experience, and proficiency level (Mackey and Gass, 2011, p. 109). Of these three characteristics, only one is known for the writers used in this study, and that is that all the writers share a common language background. Nothing is known of the specific schooling past of these writers, but all are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and received their secondary education within the Kingdom. While it is also not known if they are from Jeddah, Riyadh, or Dammam, all writers are citizens of the KSA, form a homogeneous sample set of native Arabic writers, and attend the same US university. These thirty writers are the participants used for this study. The compositions that they wrote and that are used in this study were written at least one year prior to this study.

Despite not being privy to the graded proficiency level of the writers used in this study, or the rubrics used by the institution to score them, I will show that the native Arabic authors of these compositions are at differing levels of English language proficiency on a rough continuum from low intermediate to advanced. Writers of this range provide a workable sample group of native Arabic writers writing in an L2 English.

Identification and Judgment of Composition Elements

For the initial phase of this project, I performed an extensive numerical analysis of each composition. I first established a total word count for each composition, and then I focused my attention exclusively on verbal elements. I highlighted all verb usages in each of the compositions. I made a distinction between isolated main verb usage and auxiliary verb/main verb usage. This distinction allowed closer analysis of the more complex constructions that auxiliary verb/main verb phrases are comprised of. Compositions that contain a greater number of these auxiliary verb/main verb phrases in proportion to the total number of verbs used in the composition often indicate that the writer has more proficiency with the language. Phrase constructions containing gerunds and infinitives were not identified as verb forms as those forms “fulfill the function of noun without being formally nouns” (Koffi, 2010, p. 212). Likewise, verbal participles were also not examined in this study since they usually serve an adjectival function (Koffi, 2010, p. 213) and were therefore outside the parameters of this study.

Once the main verb and auxiliary verb/main verb constructions were identified, I performed error detection and correction of phi-feature agreement on each of the compositions. In phrase constructions that contain both an auxiliary verb and a main verb, although the auxiliary verb handles phi-feature agreement between the verb and subject (Koffi, 2010, p. 168), I also examined the main verb for construction problems. Although auxiliary verbs are carriers of tense, mood, and aspect information, this information was not pertinent to a study of phi-feature agreement. Once the pertinent verbs were identified, I then determined if they were used correctly or if they were used incorrectly. In order to error-correct the compositions, I used what Braidì refers to as ‘native-speaker competence rules’ (1999, p. 3) and verified their validity against English grammars listed in References.

If the verbs were used incorrectly, I determined if the error was related to phi-feature agreement or was due to another usage mistake. If an incorrect verb was used in the composition (e.g., “be” should have been used instead of “have”), the correct verb usage was indicated but the incorrect verb was used in the error analysis. The results of these findings were then parsed and processed.

Cataloging and Analysis of Data Points

Once all phi-feature errors were identified, I then distributed the errors that were found on the compositions into six groups depending on if the errors reflect person, number, gender, subject omission, copulative verb omission, or aux verb agreement/resolution rule mistakes. Of these six error groups, only the first three (person, number, and gender) pertain to resolution rule usage by the composition writers. The subject omission and copulative verb omission error groups reflect mistakes that are endemic to L2 writers from L1 languages that are pro-drop and zero copula. The final error group, aux/main verb, covers the more complex verb phrase constructions that are troublesome for L2 writers in English. These six groups of errors account for all of the mistakes that were made by the composition writers in agreement instances between a noun/noun phrase and a verb phrase.

Once all phi-feature errors were identified and cataloged, I examined the error data statistically to determine any trends and/or anomalies in the findings between error groups and among verb misuses. This analysis also allowed me to identify how these composition writers fared against other writers in the group. This statistical analysis provides a glimpse of the verb errors commonly made by native Arabic writers writing in an L2 English.

Determining Resolution Rule Correlations

After parsing the data statistically, I then turned my attention to the primary phase of the study, determining if verb errors made in English by native Arabic writers showed any

correlation to Arabic verb resolution rules that may be contributing to verb errors in English. As was discussed earlier (in Agreement in the American English Language and in Agreement in Modern Standard Arabic), in syntactic terms Arabic and English exhibit vastly divergent grammatical parameters and these differences could be readily evident in English compositions written by native Arabic writers.

Although this study focuses on agreement errors found in L2 compositions and how these errors might relate to the resolution rules that apply for the English and Arabic languages, other systemic agreement errors found in the compositions were also examined and analyzed in terms of how agreement requirements differ between languages. An examination of the agreement problems that Arabic L1 writers displayed in their English L2 provide valuable pedagogical insights into L2 English learning issues that could be addressed in the classroom. I found with this small sample size, realizing any far-ranging conclusions is not possible, but these compositions provide a valuable glimpse at how resolution rules and other verb agreement issues are dealt with by native Arabic writers when writing in an L2 English.

CHAPTER 6: IDENTIFICATION, JUDGMENT, AND CATALOGING OF COMPOSITION COMPONENTS

The first construct of this study is conducting error analysis on compositions written in English by native Arabic writers and examining them for statistically significant data. Using error analysis for positive reinforcement was first postulated by Corder and refined with his distinction between systemic errors (or ‘transitional competence’ which reveals an L2 student’s “underlying knowledge of the language to date”) and non-systemic errors (self-correctable mistakes which are made in performance) (Corder, 1981, p. 10). The examination of classroom topic compositions, which are written in a looser and more creative medium, targets content that is representative of this “underlying knowledge” that is systemic. Schachter supplies a summation of this method, “The main assumption is that error analysis will reveal to the investigator just what difficulties the learners in fact have, that difficulties in the target language will show up as errors in production. The second assumption is that the frequency of occurrence of specific errors will give evidence of their relative difficulty” (cited in Braidi, 1999, p. 12). This method is not without fault, but it will serve the purpose of the study concerning subject/verb agreement.

Unfortunately, the study of anonymous compositions does not allow for direct positive reinforcement. However, the findings may provide insight for other writers from the same linguistic background or for teachers instructing students who are native to this linguistic background. This study will examine systemic errors that are produced on creative compositions written in an L2 English by Arabic L1 speakers/writers, a method also used by Diab (1996) and AbiSamra (2003).

In the effort to perform a valid compilation of errors within the student compositions, I have made every attempt to be both consistent and accurate in my assessments and keep holistic

judgments to the minimum. Although in most cases errors were straightforward and left little room for interpretation, there were instances where this was not the case. While I never tried to be overtly dogmatic when there were error judgment issues between compositions, I was clear and comprehensive in my distinction between correct and incorrect. In instances in which I felt that error judgments were not clear-cut, I have described these instances in detail. The following sections will delineate the processes that were followed to deal with such instances in this study.

As an overview to what is covered in this study, I will provide a brief summary of what is included in each of the following chapters. Chapter 6: Identification, Judgment, and Cataloging of Composition Components will cover the errors found and their organization into data sets. Chapter 7: Results of Error Data Collection will describe in detail the agreement errors found in the compositions and how they were parsed and conflated. Chapter 8: Analysis of Verb Errors in Compositions will examine the data and uncover the agreement constructions that prove the most troublesome for these composition writers. Chapter 9: Summary of Results and Implications will take these data findings and forward the salient pedagogical implications of this analysis. Chapter 10: Limitations will discuss the caveats of this study and Chapter 11: Conclusion will distill the findings of this study into a potent elixir with just a touch of phi-feature agreement bitters.

What DOES NOT Constitute an Error

In the process of reading the compositions and highlighting errors, it immediately became necessary to delineate between errors that were *a propos* to this study and those that were not. To reiterate, this study focuses on the grammatical agreement between a subject noun/noun phrase and a verb phrase. Errors within the compositions that fall outside of this usage are deemed beyond the scope of this study, but language in actual usage is complex and occasionally there exists a grey area in seemingly simple turns of phrase. In order to clarify any confusion about

what constitutes an error in this study, this section will catalog and explain examples that illustrate recurring errors which I find beyond the scope of this study.

It would seem obvious to exclude any errors with non-finite verb forms as superfluous, but there are instances where that could be debated. In composition 5, there are several instances in which the writer has used the auxiliary verb + main verb + infinitive form correctly (e.g., “would like to get...”) and instances where the auxiliary verb + main verb form is correct but the infinitive form is incorrect (e.g., * “would like [to]¹² become...”). In this composition, errors with the infinitive also occur with the main verbs “want” and “like” (e.g., * “I like [to] buy...” and * “they want [to] become...”); in these constructions, I consider such infinitive instances beyond the scope of this study. In constructions such as those with an auxiliary verb + verb infinitive and a main verb + infinitive, I restrict my error analysis to the auxiliary verb or to the main verb; I consider the uninflected infinitive form in both of these instances beyond the scope of the study. These constructions occur in numerous compositions, but I only subject the auxiliary verb or main verb to error analysis.

I also do not correct for tense problems. Although tense issues are distracting and even blatant to the native English reader, this study focuses on phi-feature agreement and as long as the correct verb form is used in terms of phi-agreement, I consider the instance correct. In composition 8, the writer has a good grasp of present verb forms but does not distinguish well between present and past forms (e.g., “I move[d] to St. Cloud...”). Many of the writers of the compositions are proficient in English usage but struggle with tense, for example, * “...they do[did] that when they are[were] children,” referencing the past (composition, henceforth ‘comp,’ 2) and * “What they are eat[ing] and what they are get[ting]...” (comp 11). In composition 21

¹²In examples from the compositions that are cited, I will indicate the proper verb form or the suffix that should have been employed in square brackets adjacent to the incorrect form.

the writer states, * “When the people move to my country they used my country ruols [rules]” but I do not consider the tense incorrect ‘used’ an error because ‘they used’ is correct according to the appropriate resolution rules within its clause. Tense issues also arise with the many irregular verb forms in English, for example, * “I weared[wore]...” (comp 3), and with tense mistakes when using the <Do-Support> construction (Koffi, 2010, p. 181), for example, * “I didn’t talked[talk]...” (comp 10). Despite their dissonorous nature, tense transgressions are not tracked forensically for this study.

Another interesting conundrum appeared during the error analysis, one that I found quite surprising. The writer of composition 15 does not appear to be proficient in English vocabulary or syntax, or in handwriting the English script for that matter, but the writer uses many complex verb construction flawlessly, for example, “People...should adapt with the new customs...” and “they may have a holiday you must celebrate it with them” plus “you don’t know anything about the culture.” This writer does not display an overall proficiency in English usage but their verb usage is curiously exemplary.

What DOES Constitute an Error

Since English lacks distinct markers for distinguishing number and person, in some instances it is difficult to determine definitely if the error is due to number agreement or person agreement confusion. For example, composition 23 contains the sentence, * “When someone follow[s] the customs of the new country, her/his life will be much easier for many reasons.” In the instance, the quandary is whether the mistake with the verb ‘follow’ is due to a person or number error. I interpret this mistake as a number error arising from the use of the indefinite pronoun ‘someone’ as a plural term. It could as easily be argued that there is confusion between second and third person usage with ‘someone’ as well. This writer makes no other number or person errors, so that cannot be used as a factor to favor one interpretation over another.

Where possible, I use context and surrounding text to make a determination on verb errors. For example, composition 7 contains the sentence, * “Every countries in the world have[has] diffrant [sic] customs.” Although in this case I could have interpreted ‘countries’ to be correct and ‘every’ to be mistaken, from the handwriting I could see that the plural of country was a correction by the writer and so I interpreted the verb error with ‘have’ as a number error.

Identifying errors within the compositions would appear to be straightforward, but distinguishing the probable cause of the error is often not as clear. I have attempted, where possible, to interpret error causes based on information gleaned from other constructions within the composition and other errors in noun/noun phrase and verb phrase agreement within the same work. Likewise, I have attempted to be consistent in my error analysis across the full range of the compositions and have made multiple passes through the compositions to ensure that errors that I identify in one composition are consistent across all thirty compositions. Errors that have wandered beyond the norm have been exemplified in this section and in the previous section **What DOES NOT Constitute an Error.**

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS OF ERROR DATA COLLECTION

The thirty compositions written in an English L2 by native Arabic writers were examined for errors in the use of noun phrase/verb phrase constructions. Errors in these constructions were found in all of the compositions except one, and the results of the findings are discussed below in Errors Cataloged by Composition. The statistical methods and analysis performed provide a clear visualization of the data findings. The accompanying analysis details the resolution rules (person, number, and gender) in play and the other particulars of English agreement that prove most problematic for this group of composition writers (copulative verb usage, pro-drop omission, and auxiliary verb usage). In compiling and cataloging the errors found in resolution rule agreement, it became apparent that there were other subject/verb agreement parameters that also proved challenging to these writers. In order to accommodate my study to these mistakes beyond resolution rule errors, I also collated errors of subject omission, copulative verb omission, and incorrect auxiliary verb usage. Owing to the volume of errors made in auxiliary verb/main verb constructions, I cataloged these errors with greater granularity. Each of these resolution rules and agreement problem constructions is examined in detail within a dedicated section below.

Errors Cataloged by Composition

A detailed compendium of the all of the errors that occurred in the thirty compositions is presented in Table 7. The errors in this table have been organized by individual composition, indicated by the nominal scale on the left represented by the rows numbered 1 through 30. The columns indicate the word use, verb use, and agreement error findings for each of those compositions. I have used color-coding by column to make the error categories more apparent.

Table 7: Errors by Composition

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	sux V use	main V use	total V use	PERSON NUMBER	GENDER	COP miss	COP extra	COP order	COP wrong	SUB miss	SUB sim	SUB com	SUB sc	AUX miss	AUX extra	AUX order	AUX wrong	AUX MIVpro	AUX TOTAL
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	4
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	1	0	7	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	4
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	237	48	36	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	4
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
12	296	47	19	14	14	9	0	2	2	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	0	1	1	0	0	0	7	0	7	3	0	0	1	0	1	2
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
17	134	32	14	9	9	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
18	273	35	27	4	4	5	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
19	254	62	23	20	19	9	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	3
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	4
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
22	423	72	34	19	19	16	5	1	1	0	0	0	6	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	3
23	363	60	30	15	15	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
26	230	48	24	12	12	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	236	25	21	2	2	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
30	232	36	34	11	11	40	10	1	7	3	0	0	11	0	11	4	5	0	0	3	0	8
TOTALS	7769	1383	780	392	391	324	29	25	35	6	1	1	25	19	36	17	19	4	6	15	27	71

The first column (**comp**) shows the nominal organization by composition number, from 1 to 30. The second column (**word use**) indicates the total number of words that appear in each composition. The third column (**total V use**) indicates the number of verbs used in each composition, either correctly or incorrectly, and is the sum of the next three columns (**main V use**, **aux V use**, **main V use**). The first **main V use** column (shaded yellow) indicates occurrences of the use of simple (non-auxiliary) verb constructions; the **aux V use** and **main V use** (shaded light green) columns indicate occurrences of the use of complex auxiliary verb + main verb constructions. The seventh column, **total V err** (shaded white), indicates the number of verb errors (both in main verb and in auxiliary verb/main verb constructions) found in each composition.

The columns to the right of column seven (**total V err**) catalog all of the errors found in each composition and are summed in column seven (**total V err**). The **PERSON**, **NUMBER**, and **GENDER** columns indicate occurrences of errors in the use of the appropriate resolution rule by composition. The columns under the **COP** heading (shaded yellow) indicate how a copulative verb was used incorrectly, organized by composition. The **miss** column indicates that a copulative verb is not present where one is necessary; the **extra** column indicates that a copulative verb was used when there should have been none; the **order** column indicates that a copulative verb was used correctly but was positioned incorrectly relative to the verb; and the **wrong** column indicates that the wrong copulative verb was used within the construction.

The columns under the **SUB** heading (shaded bright green) indicate the details of subject omissions (pro-drop errors), organized by composition. The **miss** column indicates the total for each composition where a subject is not present where one is necessary. The total number in the **SUB miss** column is the sum of the three **SUB** columns to the right which indicate the nature of

the subject omission error. The **sim** column indicates that a subject was omitted in a simple pro-drop construction and the **com** column indicates that a subject was omitted from the second clause of a complex sentence construction. Within the set of second clause subject omissions (the **com** column), the **sc** column indicates that a relative pronoun (subject) was the subject that was omitted from the second clause of the complex sentence construction.

The columns under the **AUX** heading (shaded light green) indicate how an auxiliary and/or main verb was used incorrectly within an auxiliary verb/main verb construction, organized by composition. The **miss** column indicates that an auxiliary verb is not present where one is necessary; the **extra** column indicates that an auxiliary verb was used when there should have been none; the **order** column indicates that an auxiliary verb was used correctly but was positioned incorrectly relative to the verb; the **wrong** column indicates that the wrong auxiliary verb was used within the construction; and **MVpro** indicates that an error was made in the use of the main verb within the auxiliary verb/main verb construction. The final column (**TOTAL**) under the **AUX** heading indicates the sum of the auxiliary verb/main verb construction errors (the previous **AUX** five columns).

Errors in Auxiliary Verb/Main Verb Constructions

In cataloging the errors that were made in the thirty compositions, it became apparent that noun phrase/verb phrase constructions that used auxiliary verb components posed agreement problems for many of these native Arabic writers writing in an English L2. The greater complexity of these constructions allowed me to compile a verb usage and agreement error table that provides increased granularity in the use of auxiliary verbs within the compositions. The errors in this table have been organized by auxiliary verb available for usage in English. The columns indicate the verb use and agreement error findings for each of those auxiliary verbs.

Table 8: Auxiliary Verb Errors by Auxiliary Verb

AUX VERBS	aux V use	main V use	aux V err	AUX miss	extra	order	AUX wrong	MV prob
> DO	62	62	13	5	1	1	2	4
> HAVE	20	19	6					6
> BE	35	35	30	8	2		12	8
> MAY/MIGHT	7	7	2	1		1		
> WILL/WOULD	66	66	7	2	1	1	1	2
> SHALL/SHOULD	26	26	2			1		1
> CAN/COULD	67	67	5	1		2		2
> MUST	9	9	6	2				4
TOTALS	292	291	71	19	4	6	15	27

The first column (**AUX VERBS**) shows the organization of Table 8 by auxiliary verb (both aspectual and modal) available for use in English (**DO**, **HAVE**, **BE**, **MAY/MIGHT**, **WILL/WOULD**, **SHALL/SHOULD**, **CAN/COULD**, and **MUST**). The aspectual auxiliary verbs are in the top three rows and the modal auxiliary verbs are in rows 4 through 8. The second column (**aux V use**) indicates the number of instances auxiliary verbs were used in the thirty compositions. The third column (**main V use**) indicates the number of instances a main verb was used in a complex auxiliary verb + main verb construction with each of the auxiliary verbs in the thirty compositions. The fourth column (**aux V err**) indicates the total number of verb errors (in either the auxiliary verb or the main verb component within the auxiliary verb/main verb construction) that occur for each auxiliary verb.

As with the previous columns, each of the error incident columns is organized by auxiliary verb available for use in English. The **AUX miss** column indicates that the auxiliary verb is not present where one is necessary; the **extra** column indicates that an auxiliary verb was used when there should have been none; the **order** column indicates that an auxiliary verb was used correctly but was positioned incorrectly relative to the subject and/or main verb; the **AUX wrong** column indicates that the wrong auxiliary verb was used within the construction; and the

MV prob column indicates that an error was made in the use of the main verb within the auxiliary verb/main verb construction.

CHAPTER 8: ANALYSIS OF VERB ERRORS IN COMPOSITIONS

The verb usage errors that have been discovered and cataloged in these thirty compositions provide a small, yet valuable, window into the verb agreement and resolution rule issues that native Arabic writers must contend with when writing in an L2 English. As was discussed in the Participants section, no data is available on the English fluency or writing experience of the writers of the compositions, but the analysis reveals problem areas in English verb usage for most of these native Arabic writers. The statistical functions that were performed on this data set highlight the difficulty of the more complex verb constructions that English has and allow me to draw assertions about the nature of writing fluency in an L2 English.

Examining Word Use, Verb Use, and Total Verb Errors

Analysis began by looking at the three categories that provide the most valuable overall perspective on the proficiency of the writers: word use, total verb use, and total verb errors.

Table 9 provides a detail of the word use, verb use, and verb error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition.

Table 9: Error Analysis, Basic

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err
1	231	40	22	9	9	8
2	327	52	40	6	6	4
3	191	27	19	4	4	6
4	349	64	42	11	11	6
5	274	52	36	8	8	5
6	329	59	37	11	11	12
7	233	45	33	6	6	6
8	190	27	19	4	4	2
9	257	48	36	6	6	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9
11	181	35	19	8	8	7
12	256	47	19	14	14	9
13	199	31	13	9	9	4
14	387	67	41	13	13	11
15	240	46	10	18	18	3
16	217	41	25	8	8	2
17	154	32	14	9	9	7
18	275	35	27	4	4	9
19	294	62	23	20	19	9
20	186	39	9	15	15	5
21	186	30	18	6	6	9
22	425	72	34	19	19	16
23	365	60	30	15	15	5
24	292	49	27	11	11	7
25	244	38	18	10	10	2
26	250	48	24	12	12	8
27	193	31	21	5	5	7
28	274	43	33	5	5	2
29	226	25	21	2	2	4
30	232	56	34	11	11	40
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224

Mackey and Gass state that a frequency bar graph will “provide a succinct summary of the basic characteristics of the data” (2011, p. 251), and these characteristics will inform a statement on the sample set of writers used in this study.

Table 10: Data by Word Usage

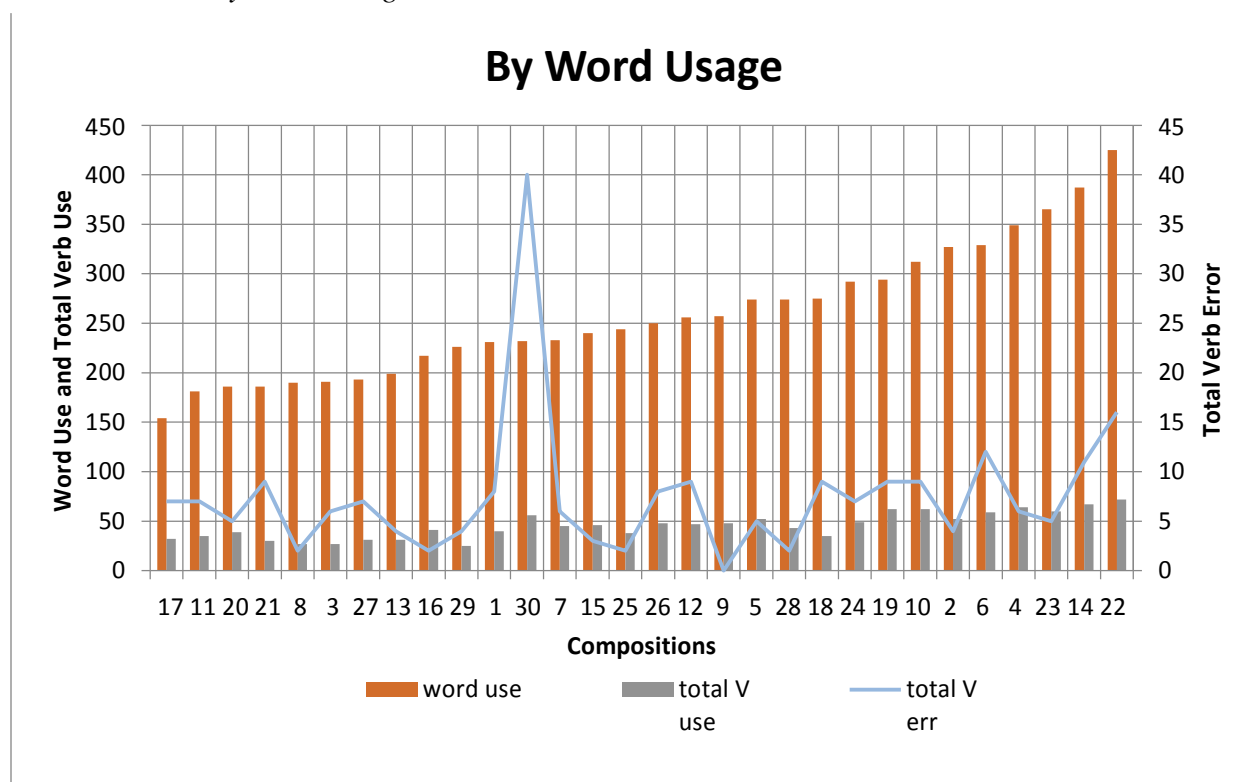
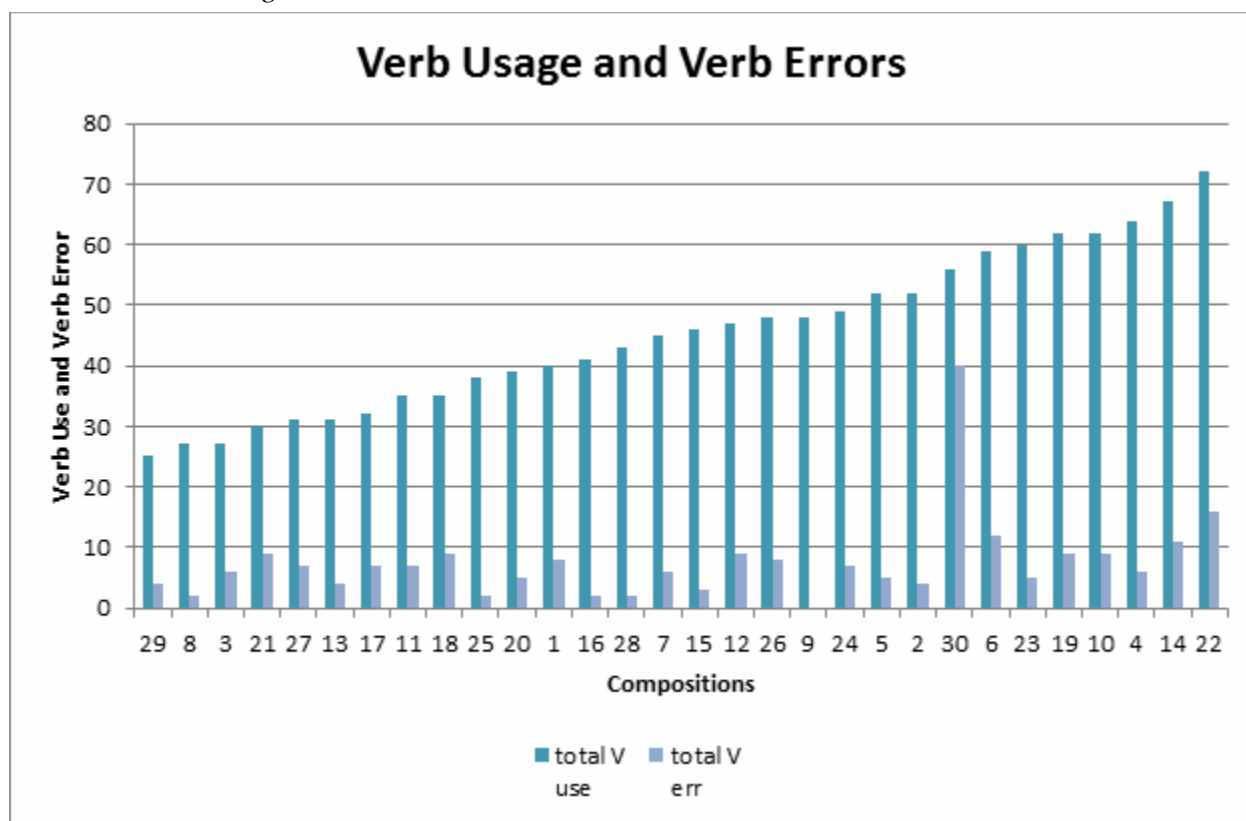


Table 9 provides total verb use and total verb error data points for each of the thirty compositions, organized by word use. Although there is a positive trend for the compositions in word usage (**word use** bars plotted to the primary axis on the left, from 154 to 425, with a standard deviation of 66.81 from the mean of 258.97), the verb usage (**total V use** bars plotted to the primary axis on the left) within the compositions does not show the same tendency. The range of verb usage for the thirty compositions is 25 to 72 with a standard deviation of 13.12

from a mean of 45.43. As word use increased, total verb use did not increase commensurately. Total verb error (**total V err** line plotted to the secondary axis on the right) fluctuated throughout the word use range without drawing any meaningful correlation to total verb use or total word use. Notice that the writer of composition 22 used both the greatest number of words and the greatest number of verbs in their composition. Also notice that although the writer of composition 30 is in the middle segment of the group in terms of word use and total verb use, this writer is an outlier with respect to total verb error.

Table 11: Verb Usage and Verb Errors



Drawing my analysis closer to the primary thrust of my study, Table 10 shows the relation between total verb usage and total verb errors for these thirty compositions. Across the

thirty compositions, organized by total verb usage, the verb usage increases steadily from 25 to 72, however, the total verb errors do not demonstrate a similar linear increase. Those writers that use the greatest number of verbs in their compositions are not necessarily the writers that commit the greatest number of verb usage errors indicating a range of English writing ability that rises with those writers that use more total verbs. The range of total verb errors falls between 0 and 41 with an average of 7.46 errors per composition, a standard deviation of 7.02, and a median of 6.5 errors. Excluding the 41 errors of outlier composition 30, the range of total verb errors falls between 0 and 16 (the greatest number of verb errors committed by the writer of composition 22) with an average of 6.35 errors per composition, a standard deviation of 3.48, and a median of 6 errors. Depending on the inclusion of the outlier in the group, the average error per composition does not shift substantially but the standard deviation shifts significantly indicating that the outlier does not match the performance of the other writers in the group. Despite the performance difference of the outlier, the writers of these compositions who employ more verbs do not suffer from a disproportionate increase in total verb errors, and it appears that this sample group of writers exhibits a continuum of English writing proficiency from low intermediate to advanced.

Although the terms ‘intermediate’ and ‘advanced’ could be argued *ad nauseam* relative to language fluency, I use the terms merely to assert that this group of thirty L2 English writers is a representative sample set of writers. Taking into account their native Arabic background, the ability to simply write legibly in a Roman script and to express even rudimentary ideas in the Western tradition of the English idiom demonstrates a substantial linguistic accomplishment. Within the wider perspective of L2 English writers, this group of writers exhibit competence in the systemic “underlying knowledge” of the English language and form a reliable test group to investigate possible correlations between the knowledge and application of resolution rules and

agreement paradigms in the Arabic and English languages and to determine if other phi-feature agreement problems may be present.

Examining Person Resolution Rule Errors

Having established that this group of writers represent a viable sample set of L2 English writers, I now initiate a discussion of the resolution rule/verb agreement errors that were uncovered in the compositions of these thirty L2 English writers. The first phi-feature under discussion for resolution rule analysis is person. For convenience, below are the person resolution rules for both Arabic and English:

Person Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the elements include a first person, first person agreement forms will be used;
- II. If the elements include a second person, second person agreement forms will be used;
- III. The default condition is that third person agreement forms are used.

(Corbett, 1983, p. 176)

Table 12 provides a detail of the person resolution rule error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 13 provides a detail of the person resolution rule error data.

Table 12: Error Analysis, Person Resolution Rule

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	PERSON
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	3
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	1
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	2
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	1
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	0
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	0
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	0
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	0
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	0
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	0
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	1
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	0
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	1
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	1
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	0
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	3
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	5
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	0
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	0
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	1
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	0
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	0
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	0
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	0
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	10
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	29

Table 13: Person Resolution Rule Errors

Total person RR errors	1 st instead of 3 rd	Incorrect infinitive	Error follows indefinite pronoun
29	28	1	7

The resolution rules for person are identical for both Arabic and English, and so expectations of grievous and/or copious errors were not anticipated. The resolution rule person errors that were identified in the thirty compositions lived up to that expectation and were in fact virtually all of the same kind. Of the 1072 verb usages where person errors could have possibly been committed (main V use + aux V use; main V use within auxiliary verb constructions are not included as they do not require resolution rule agreement), only 29 errors were made on 11 compositions (2.7% of the total number of verb errors). Statistically this is not significant across all of the verb uses in the compositions, but the fact that all but one of the errors were of the same type is noteworthy. In all, 28 person agreement errors occurred in which a third person construction should have been employed but was not. Examples of these person agreement errors

include * “so sometimes it depend[s] on you and it’s your choice” (comp 4), * “In fact, my religion [sic] teach[es] my about how to care about that” (comp 16), and * “...but the one thing that make[s] me comfuios [sic] little bit some time...” (comp 22). These examples are representative of third person construction errors that were found in the compositions. Although Arabic does make a distinction between [+human] and [-human] in terms of agreement parameters, the subjects in these examples are all [-human] [-plural] and the agreement anomalies in Arabic constructions are always [-human] [+plural]. In light of this, these errors are most likely not due to negative transfer but due to confusion with English usage.

The 1 person agreement error that did not exhibit a first instead of a third person agreement mistake wrongly used an infinitive form of the verb *be*, and I cataloged/catalogued this error against the person designation. This singular instance of a person agreement error in the infinitive was written as * “The American people can drink alcohol when they be[are] 21 years old, but the muslims [sic] cannot...” (comp 25). Although the writer could have been mistaken in their use of the [+collective] ‘American people,’ the difficult inflectional nature of the English verb *be* still eluded this writer, which was unusual with this group of writers as will be seen later in the analysis.

With the exception of the verb *be*, English has a simple verb conjugation schema. Nevertheless, eleven of the thirty composition writers made person resolution rule/verb agreement errors. But English also has pronoun constructions that can be baffling for L2 learners. Of the 29 documented person resolution rule agreement errors, 7 (24%) were verb agreement mistakes that followed an indefinite pronoun subject. Koffi characterizes the indefinite nature of these elements succinctly: “Indefinite pronouns refer to people, objects, or things whose nature or identity is not clear, or is not intended to be clear” (2010, p. 416). Koffi goes on to describe

how they are formed “...by compounding indeterminate quantity terms such as <some>, <any>, <no> and <every> with the words <body>, <one>, <thing>” (2010, p. 425). Warriner asserts that “[t]he words *each, either, neither, one, everyone, everybody, no one, nobody, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody* are referred to by a singular pronoun—he, him, his, she, her, hers, it, its” (1988, p. 524). The indefinite pronouns are designated as third person elements in terms of verb agreement.

In the person error instances of the compositions that included an indefinite pronoun (i.e., *everyone, nobody, anyone, someone, anybody, and everybody*), in all cases the writer failed to use a third person verb when one should have been used. Examples of this improper agreement with indefinite pronouns include * “that what I thing[think] and anyone in the world have[has] a differnt [sic] answer” (comp 6), * “everyone like[s] his or her customs, and I prefer my customs...” (comp 18), and * “...before fife[five] years age everybody move[s] to my country you should [be] used the rouls[rules]” (comp 21). Person agreement following indefinite pronouns appears to be a struggle for many of these L2 English writers, but the primary issue for these writers appears to be the [+collective] nature of these indefinite pronouns.

Unfortunately, making a concrete correlation between collective noun/verb agreement in Arabic and English is troublesome. In Chapter 4: Resolution Rules Approach to Linguistic Agreement, the irregular agreement parameters in Arabic of several collective [+human] and genus nouns was discussed, but irregular agreement with [+collective] nouns is more widespread. In Arabic, the parameters of agreement between quantifiers ([+collective] elements) and verb are muddled, at best. Ryding states that “[p]atterns of agreement with quantified construct states can vary in MSA and...a verb may agree in number and gender with either the quantifier (invariably masculine singular) or with its complement” (2011, p. 235). The quantifier agreement patterns

that are acceptable in Arabic show a wide variance, as is communicated well by Ryding in a footnote about an especially anomalous usage: “[a]s my colleague Amin Bonnah states, the usage here depends on ‘a mix of grammar, style, logic, and meaning’ (2011, p. 236). Fassi Fehri also grabbles for a clear accounting of quantifier agreement:

The feminine singular marker on the verb occurs with collective nouns, which suggests that it can be seen as a form of collective agreement. In fact, collectives vary as to whether they are associated with this form of agreement (a) obligatorily, (b) optionally, or (c) whether they are incompatible with it... That is, not all lexically collective nouns trigger collective (or ‘feminine singular’) agreement, although this state of affairs would have been semantically motivated. (2012, pp. 299-300)

To add to the confusion, “collective agreement is not sensitive to VSO/SVO order alterations, but the non-collective is” (Fassi Fehri, 2012, p. 302). Verb agreement with [+collective] nouns in Arabic is seldom straightforward, and in the next section (Examining Number Resolution Rule Errors) it will be shown that English suffers from this collective agreement malady as well.

The resolution rule errors in these thirty compositions that entailed person agreement were restricted to a narrow band. The fact that the resolution rules that apply to the person phi-feature are identical for both Arabic and English would indicate that the isolated errors in person agreement would not be due to confusion with the resolution rules themselves or their application, but perhaps with English usage and with the [+/-collective] element. Although the [+/-human] element could be an issue, agreement with [+/-human] nouns is not applicable to English so I find the [+/-collective] element more suspect in most instances. In these compositions, 28 out of the 29 person agreement errors chose a first person verb in instances where a third person verb was required. Of these 28 errors, 24% of them were due to confusion with the person designation of an indefinite pronoun, pronouns which carry [+/-collective] agreement issues. It would appear from this data that person resolution rule errors with native Arabic writers in an L2 English follow a pattern and could be addressed pedagogically.

Examining Number Resolution Rule Errors

The second phi-feature under discussion for resolution rule analysis is number. For convenience, below are the number resolution rules for both Arabic and English:

Number Resolution Rules (English and Arabic)

- I. If the sentence is a VSO construction, then the verb is always in the singular; for SVO sentence constructions, the following rules apply [Arabic only].
- II. If all elements are non-human plural subjects, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form [Arabic only];
- III. If there are two singular elements only, both of which are in the singular, then dual agreement forms are used (although use of this form is currently diminishing) [Arabic only] or the plural agreement forms are used [English only];
- IV. In all other cases, providing there are at least three elements, the plural agreement form will be used.
- V. If there is only one singular element, the singular agreement form will be used. (adapted from Corbett, 1983, p. 177)

Table 14 provides a detail of the number resolution rule error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 15 provides a detail of the number resolution rule error data.

Table 14: Error Analysis, Number Resolution Rule

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	NUMBER
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	1
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	4
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	0
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	0
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	1
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	0
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	0
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	2
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	1
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	0
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	0
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	2
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	3
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	0
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	0
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	0
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	1
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	1
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	1
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	0
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	1
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	4
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	1
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	1
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	1
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	25

Table 15: Number Resolution Rule Errors

Total number RR errors	SNG > PL	PL > SNG	Expletive sentence	Error follows pronoun	Error follows indefinite pronoun
25	23	2	5	2	4

The resolution rules for number differ between Arabic and English since Arabic includes the dual number value, but there are also other factors in Arabic that can come into play to make those differences even greater. The conceptual difference between singular and plural should be clear for these writers, but the absence of a dual in English may provide some confusion. Of the 1072 verb usages where number errors could have possibly been committed (main V use + aux V use; main V use within auxiliary verb constructions are not included as they do not require resolution rule agreement), only 25 errors were made on 15 compositions (2.3% of the total number of verb errors). Most of the resolution rule number errors that were identified in the thirty compositions were of the same kind (23 of 25), where the singular was used when the plural verb form should have been used. Examples of these singular instead of plural number errors included * “they should know the culture in first, and thinks[think] about them customs what is mean in the new country” (comp 1), * “So, in my country most of the customs depends[depend] up on [sic] the men and the women” (comp 12), and * “I feel the customs for here is[are] the good one for me” (comp 22). Incorrect use of the singular instead of the plural in number agreement was more prevalent in these compositions, but they were not exclusive. I do not think that negative transfer was primary in these errors, but feel that referential agreement confusion was to blame for many. In two of these examples, the referent is isolated from an

immediate pre-verb position and agreement is wrong. When the subject of the verb is not directly adjacent to the verb, agreement proves more difficult.

The remaining two number agreement errors used the plural when the singular should have been used. Instances of these plural instead of singular number errors included * “Every countries in the world have[has] diffrant [sic] customs” (comp 7) and * “When someone follow[s] the customs of the new country, her/his life will be much easier for many reasons...” (comp 23). It is noticeable that both of these plural instead of singular number agreement errors occur in an indefinite pronoun construction in which quantification of the verb referent played a role. Koffi states the quantifier issue evident in these examples, “[i]mplicit in ‘every’ and ‘someone’ are the ideas of ‘all countries’ and ‘all people’” (personal communication, 2016). I will return to use of indefinite pronouns and quantifiers later in this discussion. Although there were fewer number agreement errors made than person agreement errors, it is notable that number agreement errors were committed by exactly half of the composition writers (instead of 37% of the writers for person agreement errors).

English has a simpler number schema than Arabic with only singular and plural, but number agreement with the English pronoun and with “there is/are...” constructions prove confusing to some of these writers. Of the 25 documented number resolution rule agreement errors, 5 (20%) were verb agreement mistakes in *there* sentence constructions and 2 (8%) were verb agreement mistakes that followed pronouns. Examples of *there* sentence agreement errors include * “In fact, there is[are] some people [that] agree with follow customs...” (comp 2) and * “There isn’t[aren’t] any houes [sic] because [they] go to other country” (comp 30). It is worth noting that 4 of the *there* sentence number agreement errors occurred in composition 2 and the fifth occurred on outlier composition 30, so these errors do not indicate an error that was wide-

spread for this group. *There* is used in sentence constructions as, in Clark's words, "a dummy subject called 'existential there'...to warn the hearer or reader that new information is coming up" (cited in Koffi, 2010, p. 466). Warriner refers to these sentence constructions as expletive sentences, and says that *it* can also be used as an expletive, "a word to get the sentence started" (1988, p. 435). In expletive sentences, the initial *there* must agree with the referent, which occurs later in the sentence; the number resolution rule errors in these constructions are "because there is a dichotomy between the grammatical subject [*there*] and the logical subject [referent]" (E. Koffi, personal communication, 2016). Agreement issues with isolated referents are a common theme in these compositions.

A referent number agreement error was also the cause of the 2 pronoun number agreement errors found in the compositions: they also must match in number. Examples of these pronoun number agreement errors include * "Because they was[were] studying in America from a long time ago" (comp 12) and * "And their personality's choice does not mean they does[do] not respect the other's customs" (comp 26). Definite pronouns did not lead to copious number agreement errors in these compositions, but indefinite pronouns and quantification again proved troublesome for many native Arabic writers.

Of the 25 documented number resolution rule agreement errors, 4 (16%) were verb agreement mistakes that followed an indefinite pronoun subject. Indefinite pronouns and quantification not only present problems in person resolution rule agreement (as was discussed above in Examining Person Resolution Rule Errors), but also in number resolution rule agreement. It was shown (in Examining Person Resolution Rule Errors) that [+collective] construction problems are onerous and difficult to definitively diagnose by examining the inconsistent quantification parameters that operate in the Arabic and English languages, but there

could also be an issue for writers in distinguishing between a grammatical subject and a logical subject (E. Koffi, personal communication, 2016). In the number agreement error instances of the compositions that included an indefinite pronoun (i.e., *every*, *everybody*, *everyone*, and *someone*), in the cases using *everybody* and *everyone* the writer used a singular verb when a plural verb should have been used. In these cases, the logical subject would appear to be singular because of the singular *-body* and *-one* compounds in *everybody* and *everyone*, but the grammatical subject in these instances is actually due to the plural nature of the *every-* portion of the compound. In the cases using *every* and *someone* the writer used a plural number verb when a singular verb should have been used (examples of both instances are cited above). Confusing logical and grammatical subject for agreement purposes is especially troublesome with indefinite pronouns. Warriner spells out the unique case of indefinite pronouns as subjects in English:

“[p]ronouns like everybody, someone, everything, all, and none, which are more or less indefinite in meaning, present special usage problems. Some of them are always singular, some are always plural, and others may be singular or plural, depending on the meaning of the sentence. In addition, such pronouns are often followed by a phrase. Therefore, you must first determine the number of the pronoun and then remember the rule about phrases that come between subjects and verbs.” (1988, pp. 512-513)

Indefinite pronouns and proper quantification can be difficult for even native writers of English, and they provide a challenge as well for L2 English learners.

In the number agreement errors with indefinite pronouns in these compositions, the writers demonstrate incomplete or faulty understanding of the agreement parameters that indefinite pronouns require. The *-one* and *-body* morphological components of some of the indefinite pronouns used often do not conform to the number paradigm that would seem logical. Likewise, *every* would appear to refer to a plural group, but when used in the phrase “every countries in the world...” it requires a singular verb as well as a singular noun (*country*)

(Warriner, 1988, p. 520). In Arabic, the noun كل (kull; English: 'everyone,') always agrees with [+masc][-plural], which is often (but not always) the case in agreement with quantifiers (Ryding, 2011, pp. 229, 237). The concept of a logical [+collective] such as *everyone* or *every country* finding agreement with a grammatical [-plural] would be normal for an Arabic writer, and the fact that both *someone* and *everyone* require a singular verb in English would not be unexpected. However, the grammatical and logical confusion that is inherent in indefinite pronouns lead to number resolution rule errors for these writers.

The resolution rule errors in these thirty compositions that entailed number agreement were fewer in number than person errors, but included a greater quantity of writers. The resolution rules that apply to the number phi-feature differ between Arabic and English, but the Arabic use of the dual form does not appear to add confusion to the resolution rules that apply for English. For number resolution rule errors, 11 of the 25 errors (44%) can be attributed to grammatical components that are not strictly number-based but included confusion with expletive sentence constructions and use of pronouns. Although there are some writers of these compositions who have trouble with strict resolution rule adherence, a sizable number of the writers of the compositions appear to have difficulty with constructions and elements that are specific to English usage. The agreement problems, both number and person, that were encountered in pronoun constructions were most likely due to difficulties with quantifier usages in English, and the confusion between logical and grammatical subject that can precipitate. The similarity in the way both Arabic and English handle subject/verb agreement with the *every* quantifier and its derivatives defy the errors that were found. It would appear from the data pertaining to number resolution rule usage that number resolution rules (as well as person resolution rules) present a lesser issue for more proficient L2 English writers than complex

constructions that include isolated verb referents, expletive sentences, pronouns, and quantifiers.

These vagaries of English usage could be addressed pedagogically.

Examining Gender Resolution Rule Errors

The third phi-feature under discussion for resolution rule analysis is gender. For convenience, below are the gender resolution rules for both English and Arabic:

Gender Resolution Rules (English)

Resolution rules are not necessary in English for gender agreement with verbs. Gender agreement is only implemented in singular third person pronoun usage (*she*, *he*, and *it*), and does not impact verb form in either singular or plural; plural noun phrase elements will always require a plural construction and plural pronouns are unmarked in English.

Gender Resolution Rules (Arabic)

- I. If one of the following conditions is met, then the verb is always in 3rd person singular feminine form:
 - humans are referenced as an abstract group
 - the word *shu 'uub/*'peoples' is used
 - all elements are non-human plural subjects, unless:
 - the subjects are genus collective nouns
- II. If at least one element is masculine, then the masculine form is used;
- III. The default condition uses the feminine form;

Table 16 provides a detail of the gender resolution rule error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 17 provides a detail of the gender resolution rule error data.

Table 16: Error Analysis, Gender Resolution Rule

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	GENDER
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	0
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	0
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	0
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	0
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	0
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	0
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	0
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	0
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	0
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	0
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	0
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	0
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	0
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	0
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	0
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	0
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	0
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	0
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	0
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	1
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	0
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	0
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	0
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	0
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	1

Table 17: Gender Resolution Rule Errors

Total gender RR errors	<i>it</i> instead of <i>they</i>
1	1

The resolution rules for gender differ greatly between Arabic and English, and are much more pronounced than those between person and number. However, although the grammatical requirements for gender agreement are quite involved for Arabic, they are simple in English. In English, the only gender-specific components are third person [-plural] pronouns, and the associated verb requires no gender differentiation. Despite the fact that English utilizes a neuter pronoun in the third person [-plural] that Arabic does not use, this [+neuter] form does not appear to present a problem for these L2 English writers. Of the 1072 verb usages in the thirty compositions (main V use + aux V use; main V use within auxiliary verb constructions are not included as they do not require resolution rule agreement), only 1 gender error was made on 1 composition (0.4% of the total number of verb errors).

The writer that made the sole gender resolution rule error in this study (the writer of composition 26) committed 8 resolution rule errors overall, which places them in the middle of the group of writers judged by verb error. This writer performed within the middle of the sample set, using 12 auxiliary verb constructions and nearing the average for both word use and total verb use. The sole gender agreement error found in these compositions is * “Of course, the people like to wear their own customs, but that does not mean they do not like the other customs. Because it[they] likes[like] the happet[habit]. Also, the people like their own food” (comp 26). This writer mistakenly uses the [-plural] [+neutral] *it* pronoun instead of the [+plural] [+/-masc] *they* pronoun; although this error could also be categorized as a number agreement issue, it stands out as the only instance of a gender error and I chose to categorize it as such. More fundamentally to this writing task, it is obvious from this excerpt that this writer has mistaken the topic of the composition assignment to be ‘clothes’ when the topic is actually ‘customs’; the writer of composition 19 also made this fundamental thematic error. A single gender error within the confines of this entire study does not provide a significant agreement problem marker, and it does indicate that gender in an L2 English does not pose a problem for these native Arabic writers.

It is not surprising that the simple requirements of gender resolution rules in English led to few errors for these writers, and the fact that only one gender mistake was made in thirty compositions supports that assertion. Of the three phi-feature resolution rules in play for English, in this study gender agreement appears to be the rule that presents the least trouble for these writers. Addressing gender agreement specifically in a pedagogic setting would seem to be superfluous.

Examining Copulative Verb Errors

English requires the use of copulative verbs, even in constructions in which it would appear redundant (e.g., *Solvig is thirsty* where *is* serves as a copulative verb); Arabic is a zero copula language that does not use a copulative verb in present tense constructions. This facet of L2 English was a greater hindrance for these thirty native Arabic writers than any one of the resolution rules.

Table 18 provides a detail of the copulative verb error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 19 provides a detail of the copulative verb error data.

Table 18: Error Analysis, Copulative Verb

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	COP miss	COP extra	COP order	COP wrong
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	1	0	0	0
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0	0	0	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	1	3	0	0
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	1	0	0	0
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	2	0	0	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	7	0	0	0
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	0	0	0	0
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	2	0	0	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	2	0	0	0
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	1	0	0	0
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	2	0	0	1
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0	0	0	0
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	1	0	0	0
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	0	0	0	0
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	0	0	0	0
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	0	0	0	0
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	0	0	0	0
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	1	0	0	0
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	0	0	0	0
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	2	0	1	0
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	1	0	0	0
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	1	0	0	0
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	1	0	0	0
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	0	0	0	0
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	1	0	0	0
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	0	0	0	0
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	0	0	0	0
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	1	0	0	0
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	7	3	0	0
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	35	6	1	1

Table 19: Copulative Verb Errors

Total cop verb errors	Omission	Extra	Order	Wrong
43	35	6	1	1

In this collection of compositions, 43 errors were made in the use of copulative verbs on 18 compositions (4.0% of the total 1072 verb errors). As would be expected from native writers in a language that does not require copulative verbs, the majority of the errors were errors of omission (35 errors, or 81.4% of the 43 total copulative verb errors). Arabic grammar has what are called nominal (verbless) sentences (Fassi Fehri, 2012. pp. 66-67), which include only a subject and a component “that which tells news [about the first component]” (Alhawary, 2011, p. 90) without a verb. These Arabic verbless sentences are also referred to as ‘equational’ sentences in some circles (Ryding, 2011, pp. 58-59). In Arabic, nominal (verbless) sentences are only acceptable in the present tense, and the use of any other tense requires the complete verb form. The omission errors that were made in these compositions fit this pattern in Arabic, such as * “I [am] international studen [sic] from Saudi Arabia...” (comp 4). These errors do not detract from intelligibility, but are grammatically incorrect.

Six of the copulative verb errors were due to writers inserting a copulative verb where none was required in English, equally divided between two writers. The writer of composition 3 wrote, * “I am always like to be different...” and two other variations on that pattern. This writer only committed 6 verb errors on their composition and 4 of them were copulative verb errors. The other writer that used copulative verbs where none was required was my outlier, the writer of composition 30. This writer inserted 3 unneeded copulatives in their composition, but also neglected to insert copulative in 7 instances where they were required. I would imagine that these two writers were aware of the difference between Arabic and English on copulative verb usage and were prone to overcompensation in their writing. The remaining 2 copulative verb errors were 1 copulative verb order mistake and 1 wrong copulative verb used.

While copulative verb errors in English seldom lead to issues of intelligibility, they are nonetheless incorrect and mark the writer as less than proficient. In this study, 18 writers out of 30 committed at least one error with copulative verb usage, which makes these errors prevalent in this group of native Arabic writers. In the classroom, it would be propitious to include coverage of proper copulative verb usage in English and how it differs from the many other languages that allow nominal (verbless) sentences including Arabic, Russian, Attic Greek, Latin, and Italian.

Examining Subject Omission Errors

Another syntactic feature that Arabic does not share with English is the ability to exclude a pronoun from a sentence construction. Arabic is a pro-drop language in which “every inflection in a verb paradigm is specified uniquely and does not need to use independent pronouns to differentiate the person, number, and gender of the verb. For Modern Standard Arabic that means that there are thirteen different inflections in every verb paradigm” (Ryding, 2011, p. 438). Table 15 shows the imperfect active conjugation of the Form I Arabic verb ‘eat’ (CJKI Arabic Verb Conjugator, 2014) and the English verb ‘eat.’

Table 20: Imperfect Active Conjugation of 'eat'

	Arabic	IPA	English
1 st SG	أَكُلُ	əkulu	I eat
2 nd SG MASC	تَأْكُلُ	təkulu	You eat [+masc]
2 nd SG FEM	تَأْكُلِينَ	təkulinə	You eat [-masc]
2 nd DL	تَأْكُلَانِ	təkuləni	You two eat
3 rd SG MASC	يَأْكُلُ	jəkulu	He eats [+masc]
3 rd SG FEM	تَأْكُلُ	təkulu	She eats [-masc]
3 rd DLMASC	يَأْكُلَانِ	jəkuləni	They two eat [+masc]
3 rd DLFEM	تَأْكُلَانِ	təkuləni	They two eat [-masc]
1 st PL	نَأْكُلُ	nəkulu	We eat
2 nd PL MASC	تَأْكُلُونَ	təkulunə	You all eat [+masc]
2 nd PL FEM	تَأْكُلْنَ	təkulnə	You all eat [-masc]
3 rd PL MASC	يَأْكُلُونَ	jəkulunə	They eat [+masc]
3 rd PL FEM	يَأْكُلْنَ	jəkulnə	They eat [-masc]

The simple and repetitive verb paradigm forms in English do not permit the omission of the subject¹³, as often the pronoun is the sole indicator of verb referent (e.g., *I eat, you eat, we eat*, and *they eat* in English, whereas Arabic has a different verb form for each instance).

Table 21 provides a detail of the subject omission error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 22 provides a detail of the subject omission error data.

¹³ Grammarians stipulate that a subject is required to form a grammatically correct sentence in English. That subject is most often overt, however, imperative sentences have implicit subjects and some profane sentence constructions have no subject (Bergen, 2016, pp. 129-131).

Table 21: Error Analysis, Subject Omission

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	SUB miss	SUB sim	SUB com	SUB sc
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	0	0	0	0
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0	0	0	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0	0	0	0
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	0	0	0	0
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	1	1	0	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	2	2	0	0
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	1	1	0	0
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0	0	0	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	3	2	1	0
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	0	0	0	0
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	2	0	2	1
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	3	2	1	1
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	7	0	7	5
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	1	0	1	0
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	0	0	0	0
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	1	1	0	0
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	4	3	1	0
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	2	2	0	0
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	1	0	1	0
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	1	0	1	0
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	6	3	3	2
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	1	1	0	0
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	2	1	1	1
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	0	0	0	0
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	2	0	2	0
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	2	0	2	2
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	1	0	1	1
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	1	0	1	0
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	11	0	11	4
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	55	19	36	17

Table 22: Subject Omission Errors

Total subject omission errors	Pro-drop	...In 2 nd clause of compound/complex sentence	Subject in 2 nd clause	Pronoun in 2 nd clause
55	19	36	19	17

Errors were made in the omission of subject pronouns 55 times in 24 compositions (5.1% of the total 1072 verb errors). As would be expected from native writers in a language that does not require use of a subject pronoun, all of the errors were errors of omission. The pronoun omissions that occurred in the compositions were of two types, simple omission and omission in the second clause of a compound sentence. The simple omission errors numbered 19 (34.6% of the total 55 subject omission errors) in the compositions and included * “[need SUBJ] Depends on their culture,…” (comp 13), * “In my country [need SUBJ] has a lot of tribe [sic]” (comp 18), and * “But [need SUBJ] are some people who keep thier [sic] own customs” (comp 23). These simple phrases exhibit textbook pro-drop pronoun omission that would be acceptable in Arabic sentence construction and are still largely intelligible to the reader in English. Although these

subject omission errors are minor, but they are nonetheless grammatically incorrect. These simple pro-drop errors, given that Arabic and English stand on opposing sides of the pro-drop issue, indicate that negative transfer could be playing a role for these writers.

The greater number of subject omission error cases occurred in the second clause of compound and complex sentences in which the second clause either lacks a subject or lacks a relative pronoun. The complex omission errors numbered 36 (65.5% of the total 55 subject omission errors) in the compositions and were almost equally split between subject omission (19 or 53%) and relative pronoun omission (17 or 47%). In the cases where a subject was missing in the second clause of the sentence, although English allows use of ellipsis, “a syntactic transformation that deletes elements of the second clause if they are identical with those of the previous clause” (Koffi, 2010, p. 355), the subject omission error cases in the compositions did not satisfy this condition. The complex subject omission errors in the compositions included * “In my opinion, I do not think [need SUBJ] is good idea to change your customs” (comp 12), * “...they should have more money because [need SUBJ] is not shep seam [sic] your country” (comp 20), * “they might like to change and try new thing, [need SUBJ] could not cook their own food, or they respect new customs” (comp 26), and * “everyone like what [need SUBJ] have in his or her country...” (comp 29). In some cases, the missing subject was easily extrapolated from the context, in others the meaning was veiled in a muddle of possible referents. These complex subject omission errors, occurring within second clauses, could demonstrate more a difficulty with proper English sentence structure than negative transfer from the pro-drop Arabic, even though the negative transfer argument is a cogent one.

The subject omission error cases in which the subordinate clause of a complex sentence lacks a relative pronoun are found throughout the range of composition writers. Warriner

specifies three roles for the relative pronoun: “1) It refers to a preceding noun or pronoun; 2) It connects its clause with the rest of the sentence; and 3) It performs a function within its own clause by serving as the subject, object, etc., of the subordinate clause” (1988, pp. 466-467). The errors of this type found in the compositions display a distinct unfamiliarity with the importance of relative pronouns. The complex relative pronoun omission errors in the compositions included * “there are many people [need REL PRO] decide to not follow other customs...” (comp 14), * “...there are a lot of people [need REL PRO] like own customs...” (comp 22), * “In this world there are a lot of people [need REL PRO] move to different countries for different reasons [sic]” (comp 24), and * “...it is little bit defective [sic] for people [need REL PRO] want to live in another country [sic]” (comp 27). As was the case for the complex subject omission errors, in some instances the missing relative pronoun was easily extrapolated from the context; in others the meaning was much less clear. These complex relative pronoun omission errors, occurring within subordinate clauses, could also demonstrate a greater difficulty with proper English complex sentence structure than negative transfer from the pro-drop Arabic

In the cases of subject omission within simple constructions in these compositions, intelligibility is seldom sacrificed, but fluency is noticeably lacking. In the cases of subject or relative pronoun omission in complex constructions in these compositions, confusion is a much greater potential. Although there were 55 errors that I have termed subject omission, I have shown that they fall into three distinct groups, based on the grammatical statute that each is in conflict with. The simple pronoun omission errors are correctly termed pro-drop errors, and given that Arabic is a pro-drop language and English is not, negative transfer is most likely playing a role for these writers. The complex subject omission errors and the complex relative

pronoun omission errors appear to be less likely negative transfer than an unfamiliarity with correct complex sentence construction in English.

Examining Auxiliary Verb Construction Errors

One of the more difficult facets of English grammar, especially for L2 English learners, is construction of proper auxiliary verb phrases. In English, auxiliary verbs carry tense, aspect, mood, and voice information and are also responsible for connoting negation, questioning, and possibility (Koffi, 2010, p. 165; Fromkin et al., 2014, p. 129). In the words of Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, “Aux specifies the agreement features of the subject...[and] another function of the syntactic rules is to use Aux as a ‘matchmaker’ between subject and verb. When the subject and the verb bear the same features, Aux makes a match; when they have incompatible features, Aux cannot make a match and the sentence is ungrammatical” (2014, p. 148). Creating this correct match between subject and verb with auxiliary verbs is difficult for native speakers, and is only more so for L2 English learners. Despite the fact that the overriding AUX syntactic category is considered universal, not all languages use auxiliary verbs to convey information (Koffi, 2010, p.166). Although Arabic does make use of the AUX syntactic category, auxiliary verbs are used much less often than in English.

The use of auxiliary verbs highlights the difference in tense systems between Arabic and English. In the words of Alhawary,

“Unlike English and other languages, Arabic does not have a complex tense system. Any given verb in Arabic has two basic forms (the perfect/past and the imperfect/present). Therefore, tenses in Arabic are expressed paraphrastically, that is, by means of one of the two forms of the verb and additional, simple words.” (2011, p. 80)

Temporally specific tenses can thus be communicated in Arabic through auxiliary verb constructions, but they are limited and occur within “obligatory occurrence with specified complex tenses, be they perfects or imperfects, active or passive” (Fassi Fehri, 2012, pp. 69-70).

Ryding confirms that “Arabic verbal constructions may consist of more than the main verb. Auxiliary verbs may be used in conjunction with a main verb to express variations of tense and aspect” and are composed of the past auxiliary كان (kaana:, English: ‘was/were’) plus a main verb (2011, p. 446). While the existence of a single Arabic verbal auxiliary might equip the L2 English writer with the awareness to construct complex verb constructions in English, the breadth and variety of English auxiliary verbs will still prove daunting in writing essays.

While Arabic and English both use auxiliary verbs to specify a temporality for the action of a main verb, in English, auxiliary verbs also communicate linguistic information about aspect, mood, and voice and express the concept of question inquiry, negation, and possibility. There are two groups of auxiliary verbs in English. The first group of auxiliary verbs is comprised of aspectual verbs, which include *do*, *have*, and *be* (Koffi, 2010, p. 180). These aspectual auxiliary verbs *do*, *have*, and *be* can also serve as main verbs within a sentence, and, while filling this role, can also avail themselves of auxiliary verbs (Koffi, 2010, p. 185). The auxiliary verb *do* is used in English to create both negative statements and to form questions. The aspectual auxiliary verbs *have* and *be* are inflected to agree in tense and number with their subject, and *be* “has the distinctiveness of being the verb which has the most varied form in the English language. Children and English language learners have more problems conjugating <Be> than any other verb” (Koffi, 2010, p. 183). These three aspectual auxiliary verbs are necessary to complete many complex constructions in English, including past tenses, passive voice, negative statements, and yes/no questions, and analysis of the compositions demonstrated their difficulty for these writers.

The second group of auxiliary verbs also proved challenging. This second group is comprised of the modal verbs, which include *may/might*, *will/would*, *shall/should*, *can/could*, and

must (Koffi, 2010, p. 180). The nine modal auxiliary verbs are primarily communicators of the mood of the speaker and are not inflected for agreement with their subject in the present tense (Koffi, 2010, pp. 182, 186). All being communicators of some degree of possibility, probability, permission, obligation, necessity, and/or desire, the meanings of these auxiliary verbs exhibit overlap which can be disconcerting to the L2 student. Koffi calls out “the striking semantic similarities between all these modal verbs” (2010, p. 182) and Yanovich gives voice to this conundrum by trying to parse tangible differences between them:

“may is restricted to expressing permission and epistemic possibility, and to some extent, circumstantial/metaphysical possibility. But permission and circumstantial/metaphysical possibility may also be expressed by can, and epistemic possibility by might.” (2016, pp. 496-497)

Although maintaining subject/verb agreement with these uninflected modal auxiliary verbs is simple, the nuances of meaning that are in play between these verbs have definite lines which cannot be crossed. A writer may confuse *may* and *might* without consequence, but the same is not true of confusing *can* and *must*. Suffice it to say, the use of both aspectual and modal auxiliary verbs in English is substantially more involved than the use of the past auxiliary verb in Arabic.

Table 23 provides a detail of the auxiliary verb error data from Table 7: Errors by Composition, and Table 24 provides a detail of the auxiliary verb error data.

Table 23: Error Analysis, Auxiliary Verb

comp	word use	total V use	main V use	aux V use	main V use	total V err	AUX miss	AUX extra	AUX order	AUX wrong	AUX MVpro	AUX TOTAL
1	231	40	22	9	9	8	0	1	1	0	1	3
2	327	52	40	6	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	191	27	19	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	2	2
4	349	64	42	11	11	6	1	0	0	1	2	4
5	274	52	36	8	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	329	59	37	11	11	12	2	0	0	0	0	2
7	233	45	33	6	6	6	2	0	0	1	1	4
8	190	27	19	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	257	48	36	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	312	62	36	13	13	9	0	0	0	2	2	4
11	181	35	19	8	8	7	1	0	0	0	5	6
12	256	47	19	14	14	9	1	0	0	0	1	2
13	199	31	13	9	9	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
14	387	67	41	13	13	11	0	0	1	0	1	2
15	240	46	10	18	18	3	1	0	0	0	1	2
16	217	41	25	8	8	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
17	154	32	14	9	9	7	0	0	0	3	1	4
18	275	35	27	4	4	9	0	1	0	0	0	1
19	294	62	23	20	19	9	0	1	2	1	1	5
20	186	39	9	15	15	5	2	1	0	0	1	4
21	186	30	18	6	6	9	0	0	0	0	2	2
22	425	72	34	19	19	16	3	0	0	0	0	3
23	365	60	30	15	15	5	0	0	0	2	0	2
24	292	49	27	11	11	7	0	0	0	1	2	3
25	244	38	18	10	10	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
26	250	48	24	12	12	8	1	0	2	0	0	3
27	193	31	21	5	5	7	0	0	0	0	1	1
28	274	43	33	5	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	226	25	21	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
30	232	56	34	11	11	40	5	0	0	3	0	8
TOTALS	7769	1363	780	292	291	224	19	4	6	15	27	71

Table 24: Auxiliary Verb Errors by Auxiliary Verb

AUX VERBS	aux V use	main V use	aux V err	AUX miss	extra	order	AUX wrong	MV prob
> DO	62	62	13	5	1	1	2	4
> HAVE	20	19	6					6
> BE	35	35	30	8	2		12	8
> MAY/MIGHT	7	7	2	1		1		
> WILL/WOULD	66	66	7	2	1	1	1	2
> SHALL/SHOULD	26	26	2			1		1
> CAN/COULD	67	67	5	1		2		2
> MUST	9	9	6	2				4
TOTALS	292	291	71	19	4	6	15	27

In these compositions, 71 errors were made in auxiliary verb constructions in 25 compositions (6.6% of the total 1072 verb errors). The complexity of the English auxiliary verb paradigm was reflected in the number of auxiliary verb errors found in these thirty compositions. As can be surmised from the discussion of modal auxiliary verbs above, their lack of inflection makes their correct deployment in sentences easier for L2 English writers. This was borne out in the results of the error analysis, as errors with the nine modal verbs were only 31.0% (22 out of 71 total) of the total number of auxiliary verb agreement errors. In addition, the errors were

spread widely across the range of error possibility and did not exhibit any single strong area of difficulty for the writers.

Table 25: Auxiliary Verb Construction Errors

Total aux verb errors	w/modal aux verb	w/aspect aux verb	Aspect aux verb <i>have</i>	Aspect aux verb <i>do</i>	Aspect aux verb <i>be</i>
71	22	49	6	13	30

Examples that are representative of errors with modal auxiliary verbs include main verb errors such as * “I would to talk [talk] about customs when I move to another country...” (comp 4); errors with order in the use of the auxiliary modal verb *can* such as * “There are some customs can the people [can] prefer them and think to try and There [sic] are some cannot the people prefer” (comp 26) and an omission of the auxiliary modal verb *must* such as * “Accourding [sic] to that [I must] to communicate with them with good way” (comp 15). As a note on analysis methodology, in this last example of an omission, the auxiliary modal verb *should* would have also been appropriate but the writer of this composition used the auxiliary modal verb *must* in sentences on either side of the example sentence cited and only used *should* in the final paragraph of the composition. Although there were errors with the modal auxiliary verbs, they were not numerous and did not reveal a significant single point of difficulty for these thirty writers.

The three aspectual auxiliary verbs led to substantially more errors than did the modal auxiliary verbs for this group of L2 English writers. Of the 71 total auxiliary verb errors that were uncovered in this study, 49 errors (69.0% of the total auxiliary verb errors) were due to issues with these three aspectual auxiliary verbs. The aspectual auxiliary verb with the fewest errors in the compositions was the verb *have* with 6 errors (8.5% of the total auxiliary verb

errors) that were due only to an issue with main verb usage. The mistakes that were cataloged against an improper use of the main verb in the auxiliary verb *have* constructions included, * “I have never think[thought] about any change in my religion” (comp 13) and * “I have been wear[wearing] a new customs since I got in the trable[trouble] on Minneapolis” (comp 19). Of the aspectual auxiliary verbs, *have* proved to be the least difficult for these thirty L2 English writers.

The auxiliary verb *do* proved to be a little more troublesome for these native Arabic writers, but with only 13 errors (18.3% of the total auxiliary verb errors) the numbers were not striking. The majority of these errors were with omission and main verb problems, but there was also an extra instance, an auxiliary verb order issue, and 2 instances where the *do* auxiliary verb was used incorrectly. Examples of omission included * “Why [do] I prefer that?” (comp 7) and * “In my country, [we do] not allow the friendship between the girl and boy...” (comp 22) and examples of main verb problems included tense, as in * “I didn’t talked[talk] to people specially [sic] girls” (comp 10) and complete omission of the main verb, as in * “I don’t [want] to look different, I want to look just like them...” (comp 24). I found it curious that there was only 1 order issue with *do* despite the complexity of English <Do support>, which was * “Also, I asked one of them, why [don’t] you don’t like to wear a jeans?” (comp 14). Of the aspectual auxiliary verbs, the auxiliary verb *do* led to more problems than the auxiliary verb *have*, but the auxiliary verb *be* was the most troublesome for these native Arabic writers.

Despite having the most difficult inflection of any English verb, the auxiliary verb *be* in this study was not inflected incorrectly in any composition (although the infinitive *be* was used incorrectly in comp 25, as noted above in Examining Person Resolution Rule Errors). The auxiliary verb *be* was responsible for 30 errors (42.3% of the total auxiliary verb errors). It was

wrongly omitted 8 times, such as * “So they [are] use to it now and forget...” (comp 12) and * “I [am] used to all the customs for my country when I was I little child” (comp 22). It was inserted incorrectly twice, as in * “...the people in all the countries will be respect my culture” (comp 18) and * “The customs is came from the cultur [sic] in long time a go [sic]” (comp 24). The auxiliary verb *be* was combined with an improper main verb or main verb form 9 times. Examples of these main verb errors included * “...and see what the people [are] doing, what they are eat[ing] and what they are get[ting]” (comp 11) and * “Some people are reach[ing] they like to cheeng[change] to a new custom...” (comp 29). While omission and improper main verb usage were difficult in auxiliary verb *be* constructions for these writers, the most prevalent errors with the auxiliary verb *be* were its improper usages.

Table 26: Wrong Auxiliary Verb Usage

Correct verb	must	can	be	have	do
Wrong verb used					
would	1				
do		1	1		
be	1			3	8

In these compositions, three auxiliary verbs were used incorrectly. The modal auxiliary verb *would* was used incorrectly once (the verb that should have been used was *must*) and the aspectual auxiliary verb *do* was used incorrectly twice (the verbs that should have been used were *can* and *do*). However, the aspectual auxiliary verb *be* was used incorrectly 12 times (40% of the errors with *be*). In order to get a better sense of how the auxiliary verbs were misused, I examined the misuses against the auxiliary verb that should have been used in each construction. Of the 12 errors with auxiliary verb *be* misuse, 1 construction should have used the auxiliary verb *must*, as in * “So bad because some my friends in US they are[must] have a job to buy their

school” (comp 16). In 3 auxiliary verb *be* constructions, the auxiliary verb *have* should have been used, as in * “This country many people is[have] [to] come USA” (comp 30, the outlier, where 2 of these 3 errors were made). In these compositions, 8 of the incorrect auxiliary verb *be* constructions should have used the auxiliary verb *do*. Examples of these errors include * “I was[did] worry while I go out alone, but after I knew them I got more comfortaple [sic]” (comp 10); * “Second, some people are[do not] unfollow customs becaus [sic] it’s difficult than...” (comp 17); and * “Many of this people are[do] prefer being part of a group” (comp 23). While the auxiliary verbs *do*, *have*, and *must* were the only ones that were mistaken in auxiliary verb *be* constructions in these compositions, it appears that further pedagogical emphasis could be placed on the proper use of the various auxiliary verbs available for the writer in English.

In this analysis of auxiliary verb construction errors with these native Arabic writers writing in an L2 English, it is apparent that proper usage of the auxiliary verbs available for English writers present problems for many writers, especially the use of the aspectual auxiliary verbs. Within the realm of aspectual auxiliary verbs, the auxiliary verbs *do* and *be* seem to present the most problems for these native Arabic writers in an L2 English. When the auxiliary verbs are examined as a whole, it is apparent that the main verbs in these complex constructions also create problems. In this study, 38% of the problems with auxiliary verb constructions were found in the main verb component of those constructions, whereas 21.1% were attributed to wrong auxiliary verb usage and 26.8% were attributed to auxiliary verb omission. Problems with auxiliary verb constructions presented a sizable trouble sector for the writers in this study (6.6% of all verb errors) and the pedagogical implications of this finding could be addressed in the classroom.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

My hope is that the results of this study on subject/verb agreement will have positive implications in the L2 classroom. While many see a chasm of uncertainty between the findings of a research project and benefits in the classroom, if research findings are understood as a useful identifier of probable trouble areas in the acquisition of an L2, this research study may prove to have worth. In the words of Braidı, “No research finding will or can address all of these potential learning factors...[however,] L2-research findings can form one body of information from which teachers re-evaluate what they do in the classroom and why they do it” (1999, pp. 183, 184). Although this study was with native Arabic writers in an English L2, other researchers have found in their studies that “learners of different native languages made similar errors” (Braidı, 1999, p. 11) and the findings of this study may also prove useful to a wider audience of L2 English learners. I find the research itself fruitful and challenging, but I would be greatly pleased if the results could realize pedagogical dividends. To that end, this section will discuss the results of this study and the possible classroom implications for its findings.

The composition analysis phase of this study compiled the findings of the error detection phase and determined the most common agreement problems for the writers of these thirty compositions. The focus of this study has been the application of resolution rules on phi-features (person, number, and gender) in an L2 English by native Arabic writers, but the results also provided valuable data about agreement beyond those pertaining specifically to resolution rules.

Table 27: Summary of Error Data

Error	TotalV	RRtotal	RRpers	RRnum	RRgen	CopV	SubOm	AuxV
#	224	55	29	25	1	43	55	71
%	100	24.6	12.9	11.2	0.5	19.2	24.6	31.6

A summary of the agreement errors that were detected in the thirty compositions that comprised this study are shown in Table 20 above. While discussions in Chapter 8: Analysis of Verb Errors in Compositions cover the details of the constructions that proved most troublesome for these native Arabic writers, Chapter 9: Summary of Results and Implications will highlight possible classroom applications of these findings. Although this data is only representative of the compositions used in this study, it is hoped that this study will provide a valuable starting point for further quantitative research in the as-yet weak area of participant data collection and analysis of actual resolution rule issues, especially with native Arabic writers.

Pedagogical Implications of Resolution Rule Findings

This study found that the disparity between the resolution rules that apply for the Arabic and English languages were somewhat troublesome for this group of thirty composition writers. Of the three phi-features that resolution rules govern (person, number, and gender), person and number exhibited larger error volumes, volumes that were not mirrored by gender. With only one error in these thirty compositions (and that error exhibited a number issue as well), the simplistic gender parameters of the English language can be dismissed as a feature worthy of greater attention in the classroom. Both person and number resolutions rules presented more problems for these native Arabic writers, and could be aided by more attention in the classroom. However, a large proportion of the errors committed in resolution rule usage with these features were committed in indefinite pronoun constructions.

Pedagogical Implications of Indefinite Pronoun Usage Findings

As was noted in Examining Person Resolution Rule Errors and Examining Number Resolution Rule Errors, the usage of indefinite pronouns proved quite difficult for many of these thirty composition writers. Indefinite pronouns are especially hard to parse for L2 English

learners because of the ‘every,’ ‘one,’ ‘any,’ and ‘body’ [+/-collective] elements that often pose contrary agreement parameters. It may prove helpful to focus more attention for the second language learner on these [+collective] quantifier elements of the English tongue, as well as isolated referent conditions, since both are commonly used and can be difficult to master, especially in complex indefinite pronoun constructions.

Pedagogical Implications of Copulative Verb Usage Findings

As was noted previously, zero copula languages do not require the use of copulative verbs in equational constructions. Arabic is one of these languages that allows the use of verbless sentences, and it is apparent from this study that this feature provides a sizable difficulty for many of these L2 English writers. Omission of the copulative verb in English was common with these native Arabic writers, and it provided a clear fluency disconnect. Although copulative verb errors seldom lead to intelligibility issues, they are a marker of proficiency and their usage should be covered extensively in the L2 English classroom.

Pedagogical Implications of Subject Omission Error Findings

While pro-drop is a feature that is common to many languages, English is not one of those languages. Omission of the subject was an error that proved quite common with these native Arabic composition writers. When the subject omission occurs in a simple construction, comprehension is seldom compromised; however, when the omission occurs in the second clause of a complex construction, intelligibility is often at risk. In complex constructions where either the subject or the necessary relative pronoun is missing, comprehensibility is usually lacking. In the classroom, it would perhaps prove propitious to cover both absolute subject inclusion in English and the crucial role of relative pronouns in complex sentence constructions, especially when subordinate clauses are involved.

Pedagogical Implications of Auxiliary Verb Usage Findings

In many facets, the English language is a rather simple language, but when auxiliary verbs are added to the mix the picture becomes more complex. Auxiliary verbs in English carry much syntactic weight and convey much communicative information. English makes a greater use of auxiliary verbs in tense structures than Arabic and the aspectual auxiliary verbs in English (*do, have, and be*) present much greater difficulty than the largely uninflected modal auxiliary verbs (*may/might, will/would, shall/should, can/could, and must*) for these writers of L2 English. The data of this study indicate that auxiliary verb usages, and especially aspectual auxiliary verb usages, should be pursued actively in the classroom. It is also apparent that main verb agreement parameters with aspectual auxiliary verbs should likewise be a priority in the L2 English classroom.

CHAPTER 10: LIMITATIONS

Although the initial aim was to produce a study generalizable to a larger body of native Arabic writers acquiring English as a second language, I feared that the agreement exceptions and phi-feature minutiae of Modern Standard Arabic grammar would be unfamiliar to many writers of the language. If the Arabic writers in this study lacked this more esoteric agreement knowledge, drawing a correlation between the usage of English and Arabic resolution rules would prove difficult. I also had concerns that the diglossic realities of the Arabic world might trump the ubiquitous influence of written Arabic from media and entertainment, but these writers all shared a common culture and Arabic dialect. Contrary to my initial reservations, the variety of Arabic language dialects and the intricate grammar of its agreement parameters did not render the results of this study purely academic. In the final analysis, the findings of this study demonstrate that despite the limited verb inflection requirements and rudimentary resolution rules that determine subject/verb agreement in the English language, these writers did demonstrate that performance of basic linguistic agreement by the application of resolution rules on phi-features is challenging in an L2 English.

Not only did basic linguistic agreement in an L2 English prove troublesome for these native Arabic writers, but by examining all phi-feature agreement in the compositions I demonstrated that there are other agreement parameters and syntactic components in English that are also challenging. By allowing the noun phrase/verb phrase agreement conversation to encompass issues beyond the resolution rule focus of this study, I fear that I may have stretched the constraints of thesis protocol. However, I feel that the value-add of this deeper error analysis made that scope slip worthwhile. In fact, the limitations of this study now revolve around my inability because of time and focus to pursue each of these valuable L2 English agreement topics in depth. There are limits when studying a small, single L1 sample set of writers, but the

subject/verb agreement results uncovered here carry well beyond the Arabic L1 of these thirty writers as they exhibit learning difficulties in English that are also exhibited by a wider L2 audience.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to identify the resolution rules that govern noun phrase/verb phrase agreement in both the Arabic and English languages, use student compositions to determine how well those resolution rules are applied by native Arabic writers in an L2 English, and ascertain whether agreement errors detected were due to negative transfer from L1 resolution rules. It was discovered that the simplicity of the resolution rules that apply for subject/verb agreement in English present some difficulty for the writers in this study. Errors were made in resolution rule application, to be sure, but there were also noun phrase/verb phrase agreement errors uncovered that fell outside of the strict resolution rule application arena.

It was discovered from deeper analysis of the data that there were indeed agreement constructions that presented greater difficulties for these native Arabic writers. The proper use of indefinite and relative pronouns was a stumbling block for many of the writers in this study, but these difficulties were usually rooted in isolated referent and quantification issues. Negative transfer also played a part in the numerous constructions that exhibited copulative verb omission errors and pro-drop subject omission errors, constructions that are widely used in Arabic writing; however, word order played no noticeable role in subject/verb agreement errors. The single most error-prone construction in these L2 English compositions was one that used auxiliary verbs. It is the hope of this writer that these findings provide tangible evidence for increased attention to these English agreement constructions in the L2 English classroom.

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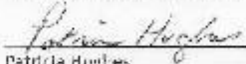
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APPENDIX 1: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

 OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS <small>SOUTH CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY</small>	Institutional Review Board (IRB) <i>Administrative Services 210</i> <i>Website: stcloudstate.edu/osp Email: osp@stcloudstate.edu</i> <i>Phone: 320-308-4932</i>	IRB Application Determination
Name: Ian Collier Address: 2 Lily Pond Road North Oaks, MN 55127 Email: icol1207@stcloudstate.edu	USA	
Co Investigators Advisor: Tithen Kuffi Project Title: Application of English L2 Resolution Rules by Native Arabic Writers Comments: Project report cannot include timeframe date was originally collected or when participants were admitted to SCSU.		3/2/2015
<p>The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application to conduct research involving human subjects. We are pleased to inform you that your project has been APPROVED in full accordance with federal regulations. Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.). - For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension. - Exempt reviews only require the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed. - Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates. <p>The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.</p> <p>Good luck on your research. If you require further assistance, please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 320-308-4932 or e-mail lidunnay@stcloudstate.edu. All correspondence should include your SCSU IRB number as indicated on this letter.</p>		
For the Institutional Review Board:  Linda Dunneay IRB Administrator Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	For St. Cloud State University:  Patricia Hughes Interim Associate Provost for Research Dean of Graduate Studies	
OFFICE USE ONLY		
SCSUIRBP#	1417 1733	Approval Date: 3/2/2015
Type of Review:	Full	Expiration Date: 3/1/2016

APPENDIX 2: COMPOSITIONS

The following pages contain the original thirty compositions that were used in this study. They are numbered sequentially from 1 to 30 with letters (e.g., A, B, C, etc.) used to designate pages within the same composition.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

①A
Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

Some people moved their country to another to get job, study or to have fun. Some of them decide to follow the customs of the new country. Other prefer to keep their own customs.

When people change their customs to the new country they live in it's better for them, because they will be look like native. On other hand, if they keep their own customs in the new country, the native will see a lot of strange things. For example, in the Middle East, the man cheek hand with his friend for long time and kiss him, if they do that in U.S.A they will be gay from native.

Some of customs should people keep with

it, like generous. For instance, in Middle East, when the group go to the restaurant with each other, one person will buy for them. It is good custom to keep with it in any country with your friends.

In my opinion, when people moved to another country, they should know the culture in first, and thinks about them customs what is mean in the new country, and think what native will think about you when you do your customs, like when you kiss your friend. If you think it is good, do it.

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In concluding, every country has a different culture. When you want to move to another country, you should know the culture.

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(2)

Do you think to follow the customs of the new Country you will go better or not? Actually, there is some people choose to follow the customs of the new country they will go, but some of them do not. In my opinion, I agree with people who choose to follow of the new country. In fact, there ^{is} some people agree with follow the customs, but some people disagree with that.

Actually, there are a lot of people prefer to follow the customs of the new country they will live on, although of some people prefer to choose their customs. In fact, people who choose to follow the customs of the new country have some reasons for that. The first reason is to respect the people in the new country and respect their customs. For example: If you wear your traditional clothes they will think their clothes are bad.

In the other hand, there is some people choose to still with their customs, even though they go to another country. In fact, they prefer to choose their traditional customs, because they want to keep their traditional everywhere. Also, they prefer that because they do that when they ^{were} children. For example: they prefer to wear their clothes because they do that when they were children.

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In my opinion, I prefer to follow the customs of the new country. In fact, there are a lot of reasons keep me think to follow the customs of the new country. The main reason is to respect the culture and the traditional of the country. Also, you will respect the people who live in the country,

Finally, there is some people prefer to follow the customs of the new country, although of some people do not. Also both of them have reasons for that. In my opinion, I prefer to follow the customs of the new country, because I will respect the people and there traditional if I do that.

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Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

③

I am the one choosing to following customs of new country. And choosing that makes me feel good and comfort. Also there are reasons to choosing me that, I like style, I like to follow the rules, and I don't want to be weird between the people.

When I was in my country I am always like to be different with what I am wearing. Eventhough with traditional customs, I am always try to did some thing no one did it before like choosing color or design. And this makes me feel special sometime.

My first time I leaved my country, I went to the Russia and I thought my style like them style. but I was wrong. I was tryed to wear my country custom

in the airport but they didn't allowed
me, by they said to my you have take off
your clothes to checking you and to change
it too. After that I know in all countries
have own rules, and I respect that.

ARY
In my first semester I came to United
State, I weard top that is the tradicanl
custom of my cuntry in Saudi clap.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

④ A

I International student from Saudi Arabia. I would to talk about customs when I move to another country. If I should change my customs, or keep my original customs. Some people like to change their customs when they moved to another country and they like also their culture to look same people whom are original from the country, but some people love to use their original customs to look same where he or she comes from, so sometimes it depend on you and it's your choice.

Now I would talk about my opinion and what I prefer. For me it doesn't matter to keep my customs or not, but I prefer to change my customs because I came to America to start new life and it's hard to bring a lot of clothing because there is no enough space. I better to get new customs because I will live here for a long time not because of people talk to me weird, but I like American's customs. In other hand I have no idea about women if it's hard to change their customs or it's easier than men, anyway I support to prefer my customs because here is cheaper than back home. The types here are better than there also it's not easy to get back home and get your original customs then come back because it's far way from here and I will spend money to buy ticket. I have been here since 2011 and I am really comfortable with my new customs and I think it's not big deal to change it or keep it.

7

This is what I know about customs like what I wrote some people like to change and some of them don't like to change customs and I think it depends on your opinion what you like to do. It's really nice to change my customs to a new one maybe I will look better in this country, but also I don't care if I change my customs or not. Finally, like what I wrote I prefer to follow customs of new country.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

⑤

Customs of new country

Which do you prefer? Why? I

Prefer customs of new country because when I want to buy new costume I go to new country for two things nobody have like my customs and I can get it.

There are many people would like to get new customs because they want become special people. For example they go to new country to buy new customs. About myself when I want to buy or get new customs I go to another country because I want like become famous person or special person.

I can save when I want to sell like while I was in my country I buy new customs from U.S., then I save in my country because I get all of money. I sell that customs to other company because they don't have like my customs.

I think a lot of people would like to buy new customs from other countries, but this not good for them because they can buy from his country, but good for them. When they want be special people.

like when I buy new customs I feel

I did good thing because many people

may be ask me about that. I always

go to new country to buy customs

like U.S. and china, but sometime I

buy in my country because they

have make for customs, and nobody
have like my customs.

There are many people go to

new countrise to buy customs because

they prefer new customs from other

country because they want to make

business like sell it. about myself

I like buy that because I think

and I think for pessness that
is good.

Student ID Number

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

⑥

All country in the world have different customs. In my country we have different customs. Like in my country, we have just two holy day the name is Eid Al Adha Eid Al Fitr. we don't have another holy day. In my country the women can't work anywhere, and the women can't drive, and we have school spich for women and school for man, and we can't drink alcohol in my country. When police see anyone drink he get him to jail that different in the US.

Very hard to me to choose follow customs of new country or keep customs of original my country, because I like some of new country (USA) and some of them I dislike, for example I like people here in the USA that always smile, so friendly and help another people. I see here in the USA most people when he know you came in another country they happy to know about another customs, and most people when I good person, don't lie, that like you don't care you came in any country don't care about another bad in your country. People here help us so much, and I like some holy day here in the US.

I dislike some things like drink alcohol club night, and some other holiday I forget what name for another holiday I dislike, any way I think that very hard to me to choose, but I will do what I like customs of my country and what I like of new country, that what I do. I can't choose just one thing, I keep some customs of my original country and for sure I add some customs of new country. I like to know about another country, and I think that help your life to be better, that what I think, and anyone in the world have a different answer, that according to my order is, that what I see.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

⑦

Every country in the world have different customs. There are many people like to keep customs of original country. I prefer to follow customs of new country. Why I prefer that? Because there are three reasons for that, to know different customs, to be one of the country people and respect.

First, there are a lot of different customs in the world. I prefer to follow customs of new country. Second when you follow a new customs you know how to eat like them, you know how to speak like them, you know how to do anything like them. When you follow their customs, they feel you are one of them.

Next, when you follow customs of new country better than you keep your custom. When you are doing like them they don't scare from you. After that, if you follow their they feel you are one of them.

Three

Finally, when you follow customs of new country they feel you are one of them. If you that feel you respect them. If you don't some people say "Why! They don't wear like us" They feel you are stranger.

In my opinion, when you follow customs of new country better than you keep your custom. When you do that you show people respect and you are one of them. For all of these reasons I prefer to follow customs of new country.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

⑧

Customs from my country and another country

I am from Saudi Arabia, I move to St. Cloud state in America to study. There are many different in customs like: the people wear Thoub and Abayah, people say Al-Salam Alikum and they sometimes eat rice in the lunch.

The people in Saudi Arabia wear Thoub and Getrah for the men, but they also can wear Greenze and T-shirt. The women wear Abayah for all the time if they outside the home. The customs in St. Cloud the people don't wear Thoub and Abayah.

The people in Saudi Arabia can say Al-Salam Alikum for any. In St. Cloud state the people can say good morning every morning but not every one they see.

The people in Saudi Arabia eat rice mostly every lunch. They have different kinds of food like: kabsa, mandey and baryani. They have some thing the same with St. Cloud state like noodles, macaroni and pasta.

There are some different and some customs from each country. I prefer the customs from my country, but not all customs. Because this country I live in it when I am young and I love it very much.

II ⑨

When people move another country, some of them decide to follow the customs of new country. Other prefer to keep their own customs. Customs are clothes, food, and drink. That is your choice if you want to follow your own customs or the customs of the new country.

First, some people when they move to another country they follow the customs of the new country. They follow the new food, drink, clothes, and values. That is good because they want to be member in the new country and they want to adjust with the new life. Another reason, some people don't want to fit a have different style, they want to be like the native people.

21

Second, other people prefer to keep their own customs. They keep their culture, behavior and everything. The reason of that is because they believe that they have to keep their customs. Other reason, some people could not leave their customs because they do not feel comfortable with the new customs.

||

In my opinion,
 I prefer both of them. I prefer to keep my own customs. Also I prefer to follow some of the customs of the new country. I prefer to keep what is great from my customs and values. In addition I prefer to take what is good in the new customs. However, I only prefer to keep my own customs in the food, because when I came to the U.S., I tried to follow the new food

31

I got ill which is stomachache and I still have it.

Every month at least I go to see my doctor.

Finally, it is your choice if you want to keep your own customs or follow the new customs. No one can interfere in your choice. That is freedom. Anyone can do what he/she believes.

About Me in US

(10)

Anywhere people travel to other country they learn new things in their life. Some of the people didn't change ^{their} customs, while they are staying in the other country. For example they brought all their food from their countries, ^{and} they stay in different countries with their cultures at their countries. On the other hand most of the people change their customs to new customs like people who live around. In my opinion people should change their habits to enjoy their time in new country, be comfortable, and learn new things about new culture.

When I came to US in spring 2011 I was bored, because I didn't have a lot of friends. I didn't talk to people specially girls, because in my country I can talk with any female, and didn't be open mind and talk with people. I stayed for three months, and it was boring. I started to try talk to people, and I got great friends.

We still talk to each other until now, and sometime we hang out.

We go out every weekend, and have fun.

My life changed 100% after I knew new friends. I was
worry while I go out alone, but after I knew them I got more
comfortable. We became look like family, we care, and help
each other. I became happy person and I liked stay with them in US.

I learn new things and I love them, because they change my
life in US. first talking to female and be a good friend. We can help
each other at our hard time. second try to talk to new people
maybe you will be good friends in the future.

Anyone can has his culture in other country, also he can

In my opinion you should
change it. I ~~prefer~~ change your culture in the new country

because you still happy ^{and live} in the other country.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(11)

Keep my customs in new country

I like to read my customs in any country I go to them. I do this every time in my country, and I'm born in this customs and I like this customs, I don't change my customs because my father and grandfather walk in this customs. I do some time customs like the country I go to them, but not every thing. There are some thing I can not because I can not in my country. but I like to do any thing new and I like to read my customs, and I like to buy some dress in a new country I visit or anything about customs in this country. and I like to see anything

ID:

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eat and what they are get the dreas,
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I tal them about my calsher and
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every waer I go. becos this my liev
In this word.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(12)

Some of people like to follow another countries customs because they do not like their customs or they do not comfortable with it. On the other hand, I like to follow my customs even if I go to another country I will follow it and I can follow another country customs, but I can not leave my country customs to follow another country customs.

In my country Saudi Arabia there a lot of customs we have to follow it. For example, the women have to put scarf on her face and wear long dress when she want to go outside. Also, The men should not

go out with strong women "I mean not from the family". So, In my country most of the customs depends up on the men and the women.

When I arrived in America I saw a lot of people from my country change their customs. Because they was studying in America from a long time ago. So, they use to it now and forget what they used to it.

In the end, I think the benefits from the other countries customs are to learn the good things that will help you in your life, but I do not think you can leave your customs because you like other countries customs. Also, the differences between my country Saudi Arabia and America are very big so if I want to follow America's customs I can not live in Saudi Arabia. In my opinion, I do not think is good

idea to change your customs.

3

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Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(13)

When people move to another country, some of them decide to follow their customs, other follow the new customs in new country. Depends on their culture and religion. So, for muslim people can't follow the customs of a non muslim country and for non muslim isn't possible.

people who like to follow their customs in a foreign country they will face many problem specially for muslim people. They will be strang little bit and for some people they may not like to recopact them. When you follow the new country's customs you will be able to be one of them as idea, thinking and how to say your suggestion in front of them.

It's difficult to change your customs to other one, but you have to do so you can live very easily with new people. I prefer to stay with my origin customs with a little change that I need in America. The reason is of my religion, I have never think about any change in my religion. My religion makes the customs very amazing. People are more close to each other and useful.

In some customs is difficult to change their traditional to follow other one even in foreign country.

(14) A

Travel is the best things to try different kind of customs. do you think everybody want to follow different customs? No there are many people don't like to try different kind of customs, because some reasons. First, they want to teach other people there own customs. second, they think it's traditional things. On the other hand, there are many people, such as me prefer to follow the other customs because, I want to know other cultures, and meet other people. In this essay I will write why the people don't decide to follow other customs and why ~~the other people and I~~ prefer to follow other customs.

First, there are many people decide to not follow other customs because they want to teach other people there own culture. For example, some of my friends here in U.S. A are Always invite other people from different countries to try there own food. Also, they give the people some information about there own country.

Second, there are some people

don't want to follow other customs, because it's traditional. For example, I went to my friend's house and I saw some people cooked "Kabsa" and asked them, why you don't like to try other food? they said it's traditional things I want to try different food. Also, I asked one of them, why you don't like to wear a jeans? he said I can't because if my father saw me he will kill me.

on the other hand, some people decide to follow other customs, because they want to see other cultures. For example, there are many of my friends like to eat different kind of food, such as, Chinese, Italian, and Spanish. Also some of them want learn other things because they tired of their own customs. For example, there are some people said we can't eat or wear the same things. they want to try different thing.

Finally, I prefer to follow other customs because some reasons.

③

For example, when I came to U.S to study I liked the people how to wear. Also, I liked the American food, such as Hamburger, French Fries, and Turkey.

In the end, every one has his idea if he wants to try different customs or not. In my experience, I would like to tell the people, you have to try different customs.

MECHANICS

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DATE: 3.12.2012

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Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 20...

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

(15)A

Moving to new country

A lot of people move from their country to another country to study. Those people will stay in the country they have moved to it for long time. People who moved to another country should adapt with the new customs in the country which they have moved in, for three reasons, communicate with people, to not be rude with people you live with, and to see the difference between the original customs and the new customs.

First of all, you will like with people in the new country. You will like with people in the new country. You will like with people in the new country. You will like with people in the new country.

First of all, you will live with new people in their country for several years. You must live with them with the same culture they have. According to that to communicate with them with good way.

Secondly, you will make friends and sometime they may have a holiday you must celebrate it with them. If you say not they may consider that as a rude habit.

Finally, you came to new country which is you don't know anything about the culture. The people in the country you have moved in, they don't know about your culture, and they don't have to know. You moved to their country, according to that you must adapt to live with their culture.

In summarize, People should try to live with the new customs, and respect other people culture. In my opinion people should live with the customs in the place or country which they live. I prefer to follow the new customs to avoid disrespect the other people.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

16

When people move to another they are confused about the culture. So right now I want to compare between my country Saudi Arabia and U.S.

There are many different between my country and U.S. In my country we can't drink alcoholic but in U.S they can drink. The reason is because we are Muslims. And I agree with that because many people in U.S died when they are drunk. In addition, there are many crimes. In U.S the white people do not like the black but in my country we love every person he has a good heart. In fact, my religion teach me about how to care about that. Because we are the same. When I saw the movie about U.S I thought the parents care about their sons, but when I came here I don't see that. In example: when their sons grow up to 18 years old their parents don't give him a money. That's so bad because some of my friends in U.S they are have a job to buy to their school. In my country we don't have like that, it's so hard when you work and study.

In the end there are good things and bad things in each country. But we can't change the past and make the future better.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2014

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(17)

Some people move to another country for business or something like that for a long time. Some people they follow customs and some people they don't follow customs. I will talk about the people who follow customs and people who unfollow customs.

First of all, some countries are the same customs like culture and clothes. It's easy to follow customs. Some countries are exactly same.

Second, some people are unfollow customs because it's difficult than other customs like the countries in the middle east they have own customs it's hard to change it.

Finally, in my opinion it's hard to change own customs. If someone told me what is the customs you will change I will told him I will choose my customs because that is my customs.

Some people they can change there customs easily because the customs are same. For some people are so hard to change there customs specially in middle east.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

18A

There are many customs in the world. Each country has a different customs from another country. I keep customs of my original country, also, I prefer it the customs, because I ~~wear~~ the customs when I was young. In my country has a lot of different customs, but almost people have a same dress. Although the people in my country have a different accent, tradition, and dress.

First of all, there are many accent in my country, such as, the people of eastern have a different slang accent from the people of western. However, these people can understand together. Also, in my country was a lot of tribe and each tribe has different slang.

Secondly, the traditional in my country it's difficult, because I can't understand it. For example, in my family has a private tradition, and other families have a different tradition. So, that is why understand the traditional in my original country.

Finally, there are several of customs dress in my country, such as, the north, east, and middle in my country they have a same dress, they wear Ewal, Thau, Shemay. but the south and west of my country have a little different from this dress, like they don't wear the Ewal and Shemay they wear Omamata on the head, and they have design for the Thau.

②

ID Number:

In concluding, everyone like his or her customs, and I prefer my customs and I like to try any new customs and traditional in the world, because I respect all the customs and tradition in the world, because the people in all the countries will be respect my culture, traditional, customs.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

(29) A

Customs

Every country has a special kind of customs. Usually it's depend to the culture. If you moved from your country to a new country, will you keep your own customs, or you will wear the new country's customs. Here some comparison between these two things.

Wear your own customs on the new country. People on the new country have their own customs, and it is not weird to them. But, when you walk while you wear your own customs from your country, you will be strange. People will look at you strangely, and may they laugh, or will talk about you. Also, almost every country has racism people. They will bother you when they see that you are not from their country, and maybe they will do something bad to you. For example,

XXI

I have been on Minneapolis several times. The first time,

I was wearing my own customs. When some visism people saw me, they follow me. Then they catch me on my. They hit me, and they stealed my wult, so wearing your own customs on a new country will probably bring the trouble to you.

Wear customs in the new country. I have been wear

an new customs since I got in the trouble on Minneapolis.

There are many partical things of wearing the new country's customs. First, people will look at you normally. Second, that will get you away from visism people. Because they will think that you are from their country.

In my opinion, follow customs of new country is a good way to live with its people, and that will get you away from the problem, and it will make

DATE: 3/11/11

19B

#2

best essay with the people. In the end wear what
do you want, and don't worry about any thing.

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19C

Student ID Number _

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(20)

Visit Country

When I will go to the U.S or any countrys next to my country I should buy something and take me something like new caloes, money, pasbored.

When I go or visit to the U.S I should buy new caloes because I live ther maybe 2 or 3 years. But when I visit any countrys for next to my county I shouldn't buy new caloes because I just visit one or two days.

When people visit any countrys they should heve money. But when people want to live another countrys they should heve more money because is not shep seam your country.

When peopl from Arabic want to visit any countrys at next to them country they shouldn't have pasbored. They should have card of them country and they can visit any countrys from Arabic. But when people from Arabic come to the U.S the should have pasbored, itwone and ID because deffrent them countrys. So shouldn't taket with them card of them country.

So people from Arabic or any
countrys should have more money
any care about them self any
have buspored like this.

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(21)

«Customs»

When someone moves to another country you should use the rules of this country, because every country has different rules. For example, when people move to my country they use my country's rules, because now everybody needs his self family. For example, the women when they move to my country they mostly use the customs for the women, because all the women wear black coffee and black dresses even if you are international. In the holiday in my country, Eid Aladha, just the men wear thouband and red coffee even if the man is international.

The other prefer for the women
before five years age everybody move to
my country ^{you} should used the roads. but from
2007 to 2012 everybody can keep their own
customs. for example the women now she
can go outside without cover even if she
international or she is from Saudi Arabia. Now
all the world is open mind, because
can control his self.

I think some of them decide to follow
the custom of the new country. But the
other keep their own customs, because
is it idibans for the people.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(22)

There are big difference between customs my country Saudi Arabia and here in USA. For example here in USA it's more free than my country such as the women here can wear any thing she want and the women can drive and do any thing she want. In my country most of people have close mind such as the women can not drive on the same time she can not wear any thing she want when she went to go out side home. Also she should cover her hair and no body can see it form out her family.

Also here in USA have wonderful rules for every thing like in the education we don't have limit age for the study and you can study two different major. Also in my country we have a good rules except in education because in education we have limit age for each level. I like the rules for here more than my country because, I feel it's more comfortable and we do not have limit age for the success you can be successful for any age.

I like the customs of new country more than customs for my country. I feel the customs for here is the good one for me. but I used to all the customs for my country when I was a little child so, this is maybe be difficult when you want to change to follow the customs for new country you should have many time to used the new thing for a new country.

Some time I cannot follow all the customs
 thing for my country because so difficult doing all of
 them. In country have more free down than my country
 some people can follow the customs for two country
 as them like. For example in my country not allow
 the friendship between the girl and boy but, the students
 when came her they are making a lot of friendship.
 It mean if you transfer to a difference country and
 a difference culture you should follow the rules for the
 new country.

1) Finally, there are a difference customs in the
 USA and KSA and there are a lot of people like
 own customs and never changed. I like the culture
 for her, but the one thing that make me confused
 little bit some time I can follow the customs for her
 because I am a muslim and have customs for the
 Muslims also have customs for my country.

DATE: 12/3/12

22B

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

23

People are always moving from place to another. Many of this people are carrying with them their beliefs and custom. There are two groups of people who move to another country. The first one is a group of people who can follow the custom of the new country easily. In the other hand, there some people who can't follow the customs of others, so they keep their own customs. Both of the two groups have the right to choose their way of life.

When someone follow the customs of the new country, her/his life will be much easier for many reasons. one of the reasons is that the person will interact easily with others without putting any barriers. Also there are some people who don't care about what others think or believe so it will be a waste of time if I keep acting with others based on my beliefs. I think following the new country customs is not a bad thing specially when I want to be part of the community. Being part of the society is very important because it allows the people to accept each other and living a peaceful life. And that doesn't mean some people will forget about their beliefs or customs. We can interact with others and keep our beliefs, customs, religion and history at home. We can keep it for our families and children and teach them about it.

But are some people who keep their own customs when travelling or moving to another country. Many of this people are prefer being part of a group. And most

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of them are care about thier belives and background. And I belive that they have the right to behave and act as they want and live. But Sometime some of this people find it diffeult to deal or interact with others. Or sometime the othe people Can't accept them easily.

In my opinion following other Customs is not a dingoes thing if we keep our belives to ourselves. I prefer being part of the community and melt into the society easily. And by accepting other and respect their belives and Customs we can have a great and peachful life.

Customs

(29)

In this world there are a lot of people move to different countries for different reasons. For each country in the world has different customs, and culture and daily things. In my opinion I prefer to follow the new country customs because I don't want to look different, I want to look just like them cause I am follow their customs.

In different country has their own customs and they love it. If I move to another country I will be happy to wear their customs and I will look like them. But when I don't follow their customs and I follow mine they will seem weird this my opinion. In my country we have those the specific customs and I haven't wear it yet in U.S.

The customs is came from the culture in long time ago. My first time when I came to U.S because I had no idea about their culture and it was really hard for me until I learned and I got use to it. I respect all the different culture and the world and I like to learn more about them. U.S has really simple and nice culture and I like to follow it.

ader)

For each country has holy days they celebrated every year. For each country has different customs holiday and its depend about the country. Sometimes you have to wear weird customs because the holy day came like this such as Holy week. I love to celebrated all the holy days with my country and U.S.

Everyone can move to other country to work there or study. Some people don't care about the customs and these stuff but I do. For each one in this world has his or her own opinion to follow.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

(25) A

Each country has its own culture and customs. There are many differences between the countries. In this essay I will talk about the differences between the culture of the muslims country and the culture of the USA.

It is hard for some people who move to another country to be like the native people in that country. Each of the muslim countries has its own food, uniform, and customs. The muslim people have to pray five times a day and fasting the ninth month on the Arabic calendar. In the old Arabic culture, if they have guests, they have to feed them three days and find a place for them to sleep, but now this has been changed. The American culture has its own food, uniform, and customs too. The American people can drink alcohol when they are 21 years old, but the muslims cannot, because it is a bad thing in their religion and they call it (Haram). Also, the American can hang out with boys, if she is a girl or girls hang out with boys, but the muslims cannot even, in some cultures the woman must cover their faces. That's why I prefer to keep the customs of my original country. In my opinion, the people who move to another country have to keep their own customs and culture, recognize the culture of that country, and have living experience after that, they can be like the native people of that country.

(26)

Compare

All countries have their own customs, but which of them can the other accept to try to follow? A lot of people move to live in the other country, but some of them back home for some reason and may be the customs one of them. There are some customs can the people prefer them and think to try and there are some cannot the people prefer. For example: clothes, food, and celebrations.

First of all, when the people move to another country and they find and like new customs, there are many reasons. For example, they might like to change and try new thing, could not cook their own food, or they respect new customs.

Secondly, there are some people when they move to another

country, they like to keep their own customs. Of course, the people like to wear their own customs, but that does not mean they do not like the other customs. Because it likes the happy.

Also, the people like their own food.

Thirdly, when the people follow custom of a new country or keep custom of original country, that is up to their personality.

And their personality's choice does not mean they does not respect the other's customs.

Finally, all people have the own customs and they have to respect the other's customs. From my opinion, I like the people who keep their original customs. Because the publish the customs and culture. So, all people can know and think to try the other's customs.

Student ID Number _____

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

(27)

So in my country we have following the customs that all people should follow for long time. So these customs comes from people that love their country but it's important for them to learning about their customs.

original country well. You grow up with a customs that your family teach you for it. So the one thing is, original country they can't change their customs even they move to for living in different country so they still have it and customs.

So people have different customs that make them look different because their decide to their culture. But one thing is when you move to another country you have to learning their customs because they will think you from their country too.

Sometimes customs has prompts that makes people get anger from people comes from different countrys, because they don't have their customs, so that it is little bet defecitly for people want to live in another countrys.

student ID number:

including customs are so important for all people from the world. But customs has many things to learn about people from different countries. So that is why many people keep their own customs.

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Dec. 3, 2012

In my prefer is people that move to another country, it's the best, because when they move to another country they will learn many things and they will see new places.

I have more reasons for the people move to another country, like to learn another language or they want test kinds of food, or they want listen different music, or to enjoy with their family or their friends, they want meet with new friends or they want shop in nice stores and they want buy some gifts to their family, or they want watch cinama with their friends, or they want change to ruten and relax. I don't like just keep in my country. My country is good but I want open in the world and I see different things there aren't in my country. America is a good choice to people.

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Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country.
Which do you prefer? Why?

In the beginning, I come to America to complete my learn. I'm so happy here. I like every things here. Like, food, shop and places. There are a lot of stores. There are nice places. There are many kinds of food. When I come to here the people help me in more things. The people are good.

I'm from Saudi Arabia. we have good cultur. I hope to know a new cultur, like; American cultur. to collect a lot of things and I know different language "English language". I don't like just keep customs of original country. I like to travel and to know new people from different countries. When I know more people from different countries, I will take more informations about more things as regions, languages, food and music.

Dec/3/2012 (29)

My Original Custom

Eachday, everyone like what have in his or her country because it is traditional. Also, many love new things. For example, a new house, cars, clothing.

In my country we love our custom for example, Shemak, thope. All man and children we dress the Shemak and thope. Also, on holidays like Eid we sellpret we dress a new thope and shemak. Also any sellpret we dress these that our traditional.

Then, Some people are reach they like to change to a new custom for example, a new car, car clothing or travel to another country to find a new things like places or a new life or to have new business to open a company to make friends to work together.

After that, Our custom we love it we have many things to show to all people to let them know our culture for example, we have a museum for the King Abdulziz how the one open the K.S.A he died for a long time in the museum we have his picture and books that people write about King Abdulziz for example, the factories that he did.

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Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Compare: choose to follow customs of new country, or keep customs of original country. Which do you prefer? Why?

30

Some day do you go other country. This ^{is} do you as K self when people move to other country and what is decide custome good, now he rating which one is good.

Some day one do you go other country because study English and speak English very well. This is do you come from K.S.A.. He go to U.S.A.. This do you not come only study English but study other magring. This do you imagine big drama.

He is do you want good work and mines life. There isn't any houses because go to other country. This is do you not maek any infrachn. This is do you not murried. He is do you like other country and like people other country.

There are more people same from coming other country. People are come U.S.A because popular country and the bust country. Amraik people freindly and he is do you and other people very freindly. He is do you come only one customs not two customs because freindly do you. This do you like old other country. He is twenty-one years old. He is like U.S.A because the bust country very thing.

Now this very inPoten do you study English and study magring very well. This is store talking what or which prefer custome. I talking the bust custome freind! Poepel and fun. This country many people is come U.S.A exepel chices, Maxide, Spaink and mid esta. finally I alking now which and why the bust customs. Thanks for good
TOPIC