

The L2 development and processing of Arabic grammatical gender

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Research Questions

How do L2 learners acquire **gender agreement between verbs and nouns** in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)?

- The effect of the **semantic properties of nouns** (i.e. human vs non-human features)
- The effect of the **absence vs. presence of gender features** in the L1 grammar

Study Design: Web-based Acceptability Judgment Task

Independent Variables		Gender	
Animate Noun	V-S Gender Agreement	Masculine	Feminine
		16G x 16UG=32 minimal pairs	16G x 16UG=32 minimal pairs
Human	Matched	يحكي الجدّ قصة لأحفاده قبل النوم.	تحكي الجدّة قصة لأحفادها قبل النوم.
	Mismatched	تحكي الجدّ قصة لأحفاده قبل النوم.	يحكي الجدّة قصة لأحفادها قبل النوم.
Animal	Matched	يمشي الناقة مسافات طويلة في الصحراء.	تمشي الناقة مسافات طويلة في الصحراء.
	Mismatched	تمشي الناقة مسافات طويلة في الصحراء.	يمشي الجمل مسافات طويلة في الصحراء.

Dependent Variables

Gorilla Experiment Builder

يحكي الجدّ قصة لأحفاده قبل النوم.

1) Accuracy of Response
2) Speed of Response

غير متأكد غير صحيحة صحيحة

Gender Agreement

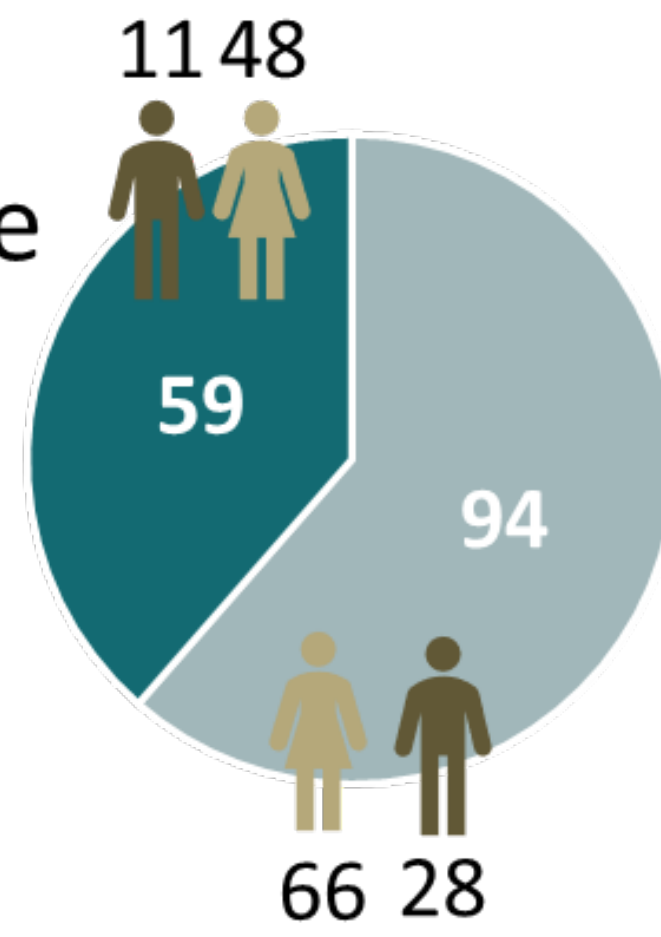
Imperfective V-S word order

1a) ya'-kulu I-muʕallim-u
3MS-eat the-teacher.MS-Nom
'The teacher eats/is eating.'

2a) ta'-kulu I-muʕallim-ah
3FS-eat the-teacher.FS-Nom
'The teacher eats/is eating.'

Study Sample

L1 Arabic
L2 Arabic



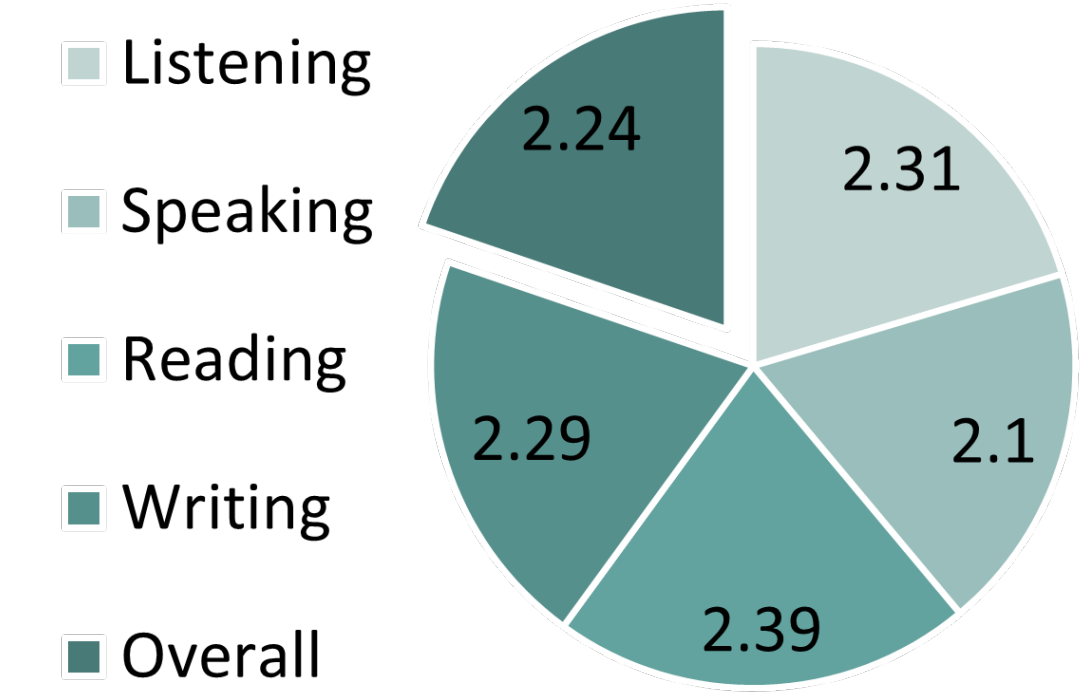
Experimental Group

- Age at testing
- age range (18-73 yrs.)
- average age 27 yrs.

Control Group

- Age at testing
- age range (21-62 yrs.)
- average age 36 yrs.

L2 Arabic Proficiency

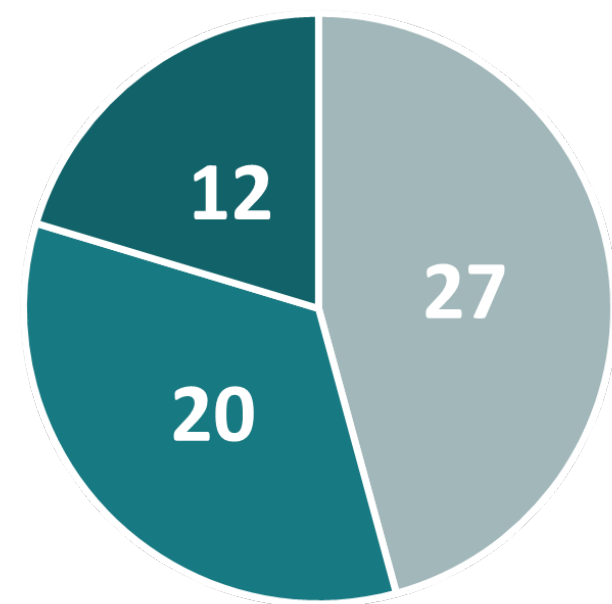


Experimental Group

Self-rating proficiency			
Novice (1)	Intermediate (2)	Advanced (3)	Superior (4)

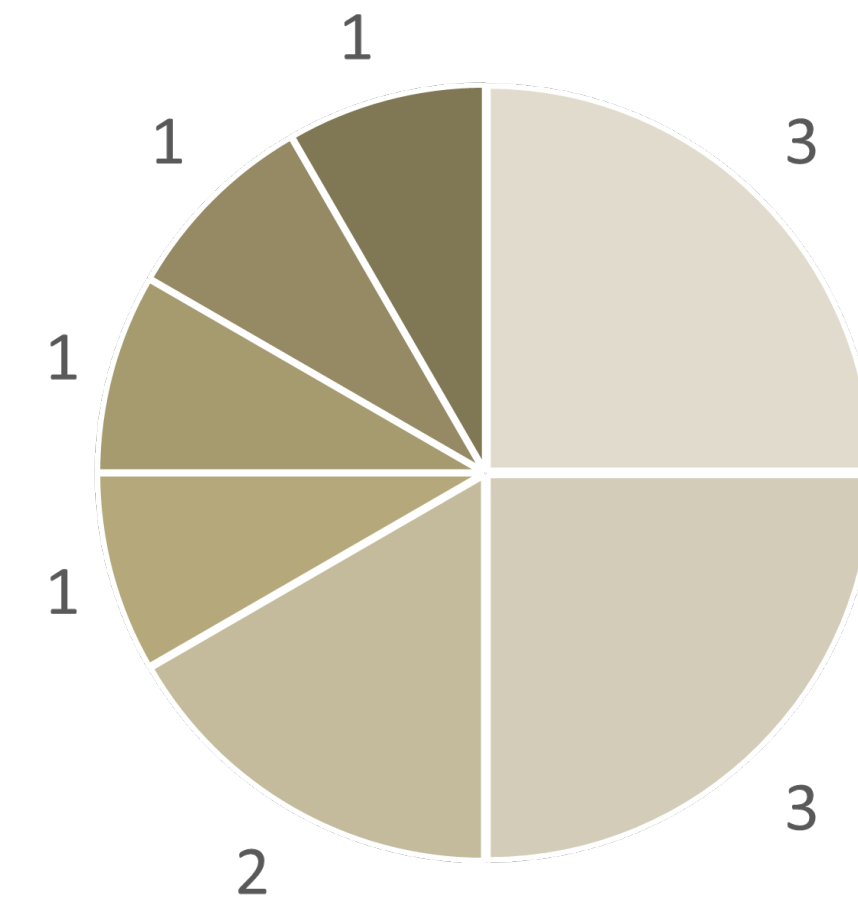
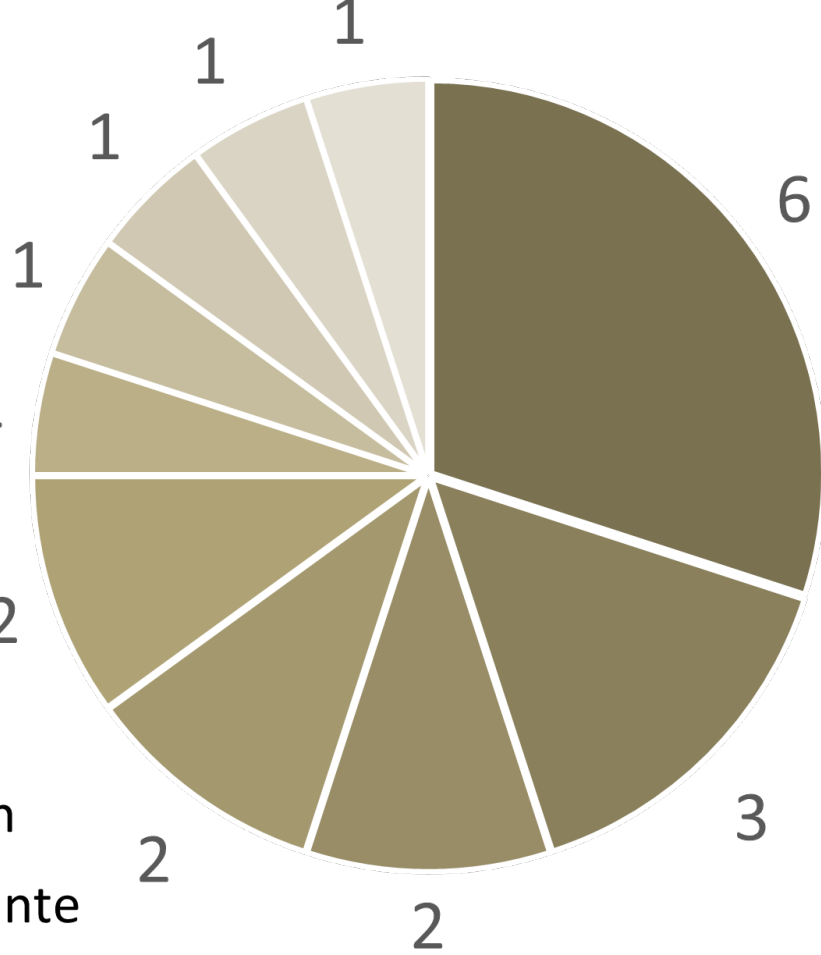
L1 Background

- L1.English Monolinguals
- 2L1.English Bilinguals
- L1.Other



2L1 English Bilinguals

- 2L1.English-Urdu
- 2L1.English-Filipino
- 2L1.Bengali-English
- 2L1.English-Somali
- 2L1.English-Tamil
- 2L1.French-English
- 2L1.Spanish-English
- 2L1.Bosnian-English
- 2L1.Malayalam-English
- 3L1.English-Hausa-Asante

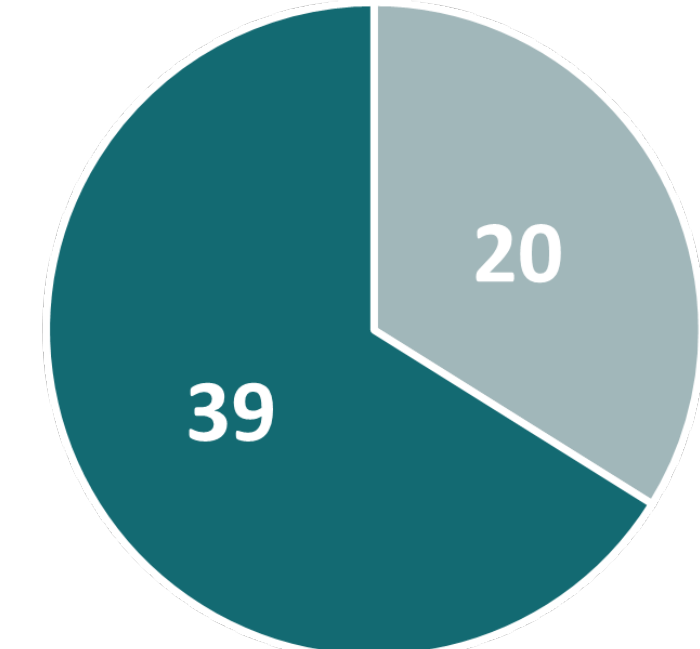


L1.Other

- L1.Urdu
- L1.Filipino
- 2L1.French-Soninke
- L1.Polish
- 2L1.Yoruba-Oyan
- 2L1.Urdu-Punjabi
- 2L1.Norwegian-Somali

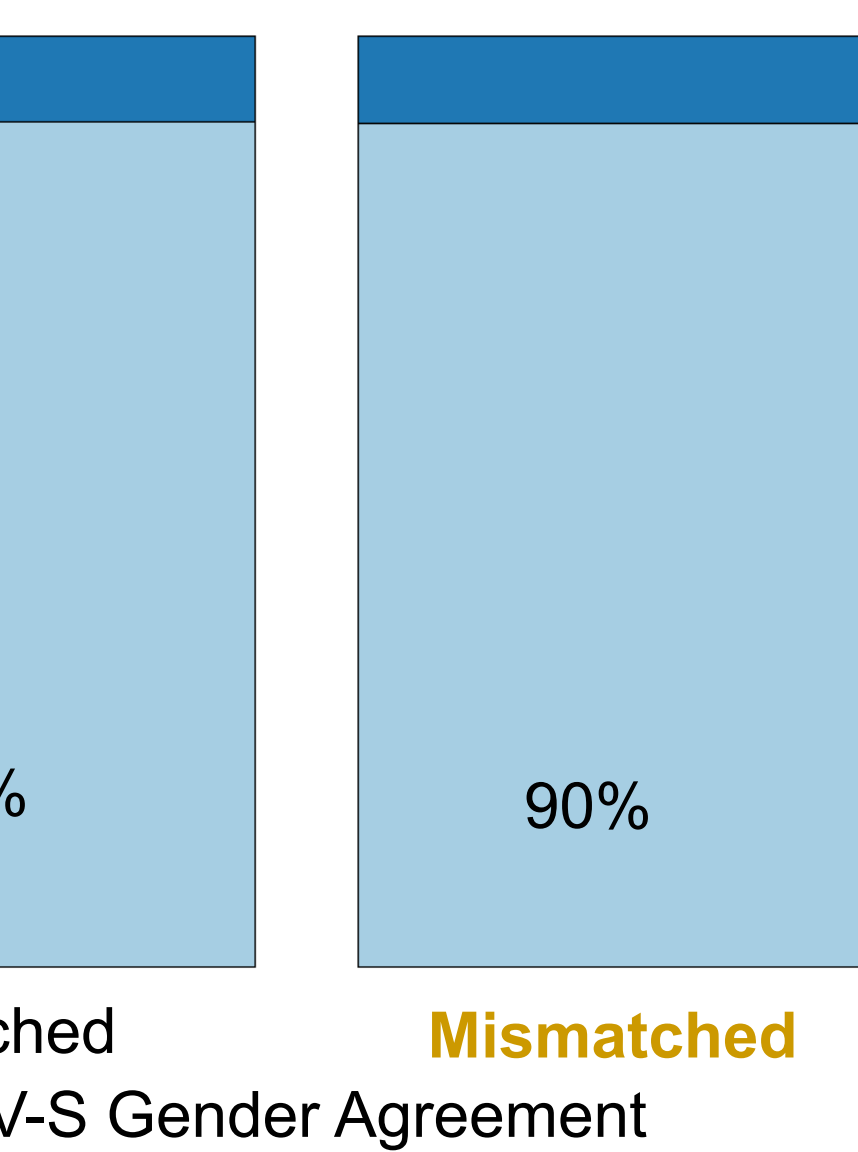
L1 [+/-] Gender Feature

- Presence (Yes)
- Absence (No)

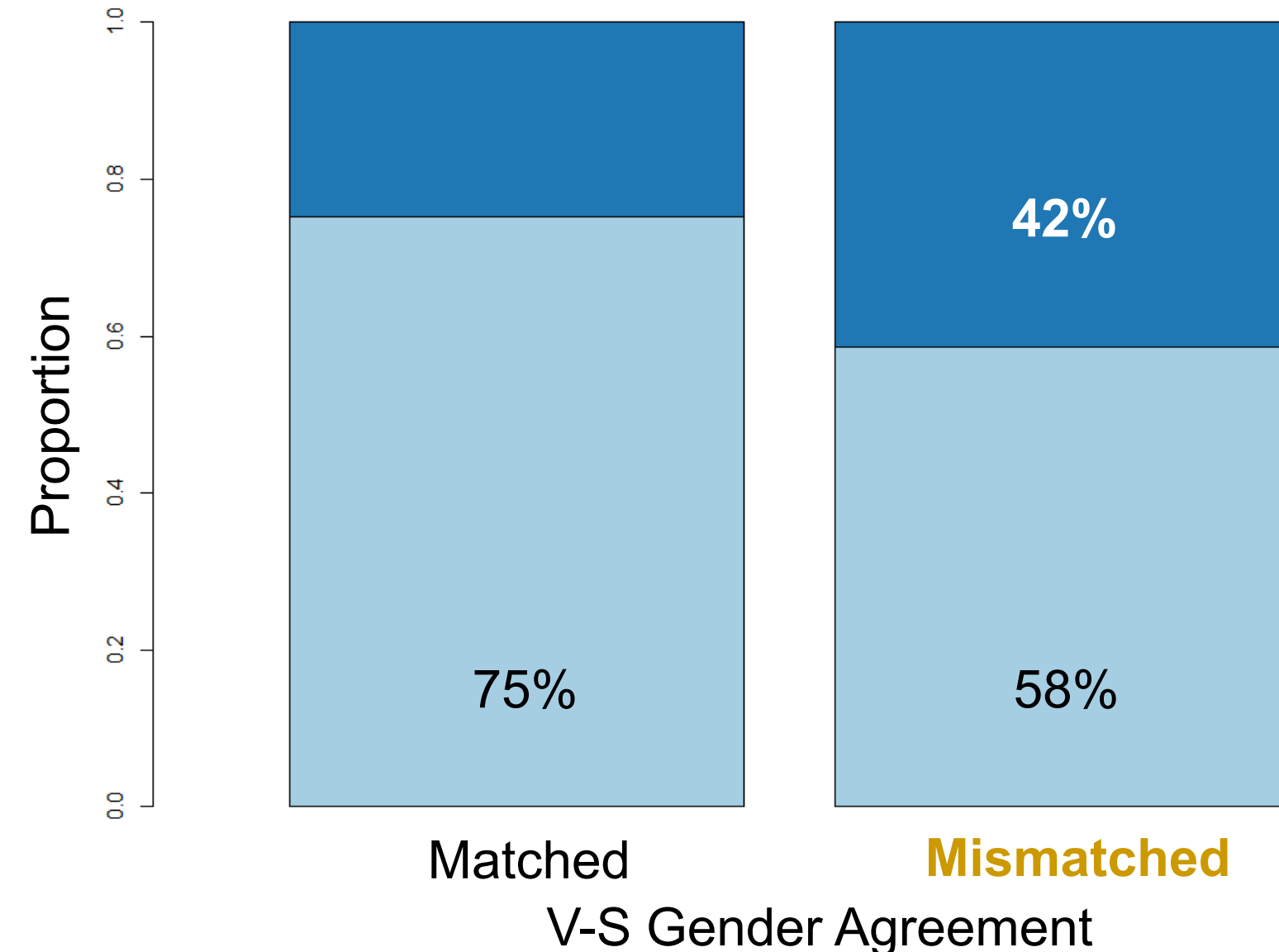


Group Accuracy on Gender Agreement

L1 Arabic Speakers



L2 Arabic Speakers

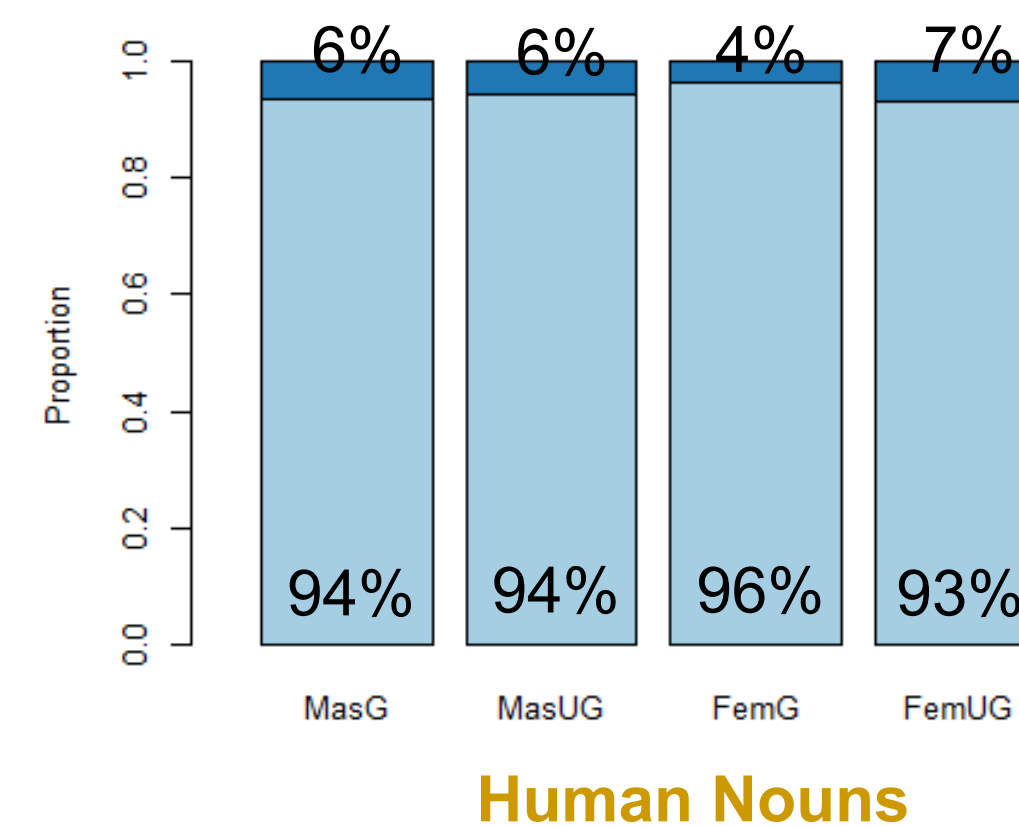


Accuracy
Incorrect
Correct

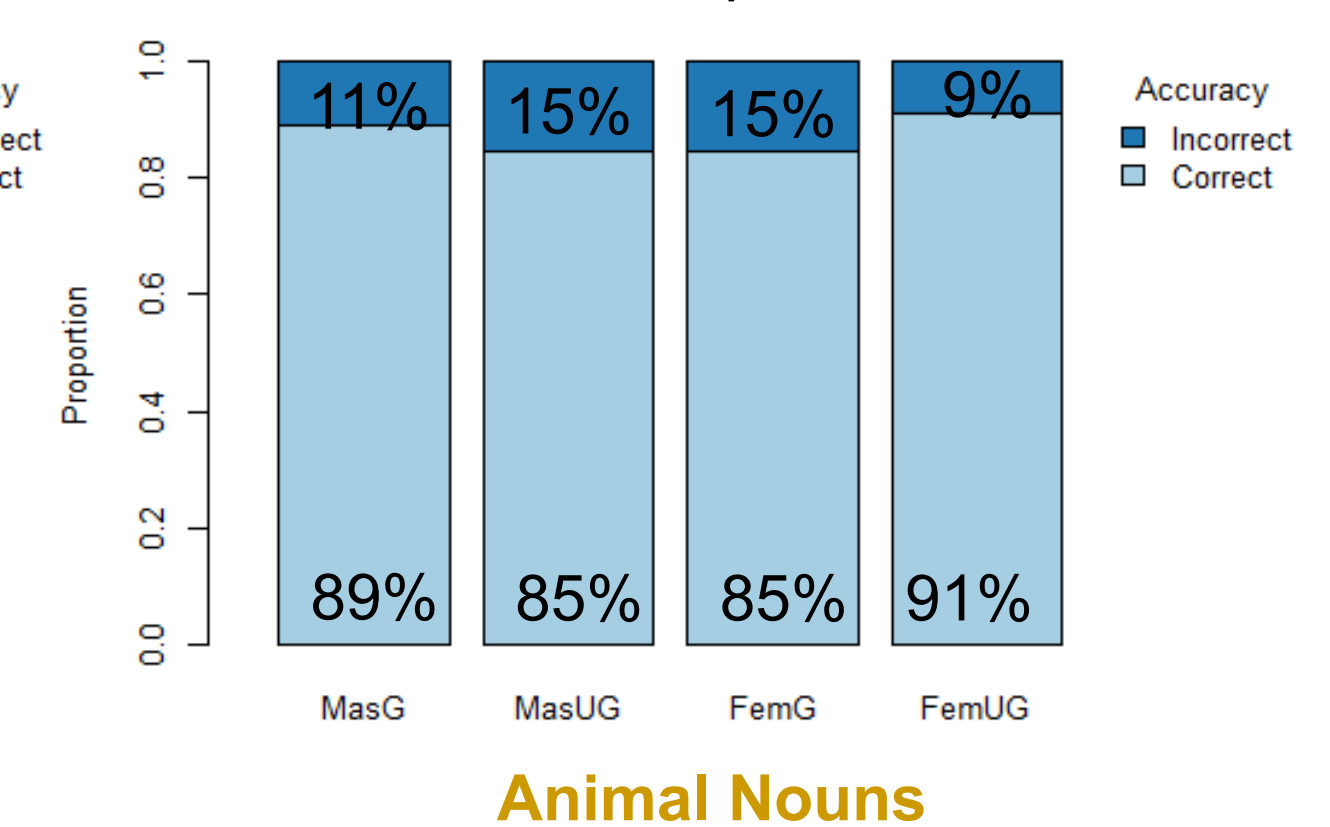
يحكي الجدّ
يحكي الجدّة
يمشي الناقة
تمشي الجمل

Group Accuracy on Gender Agreement by Noun Class and Gender

L1 Arabic Speakers



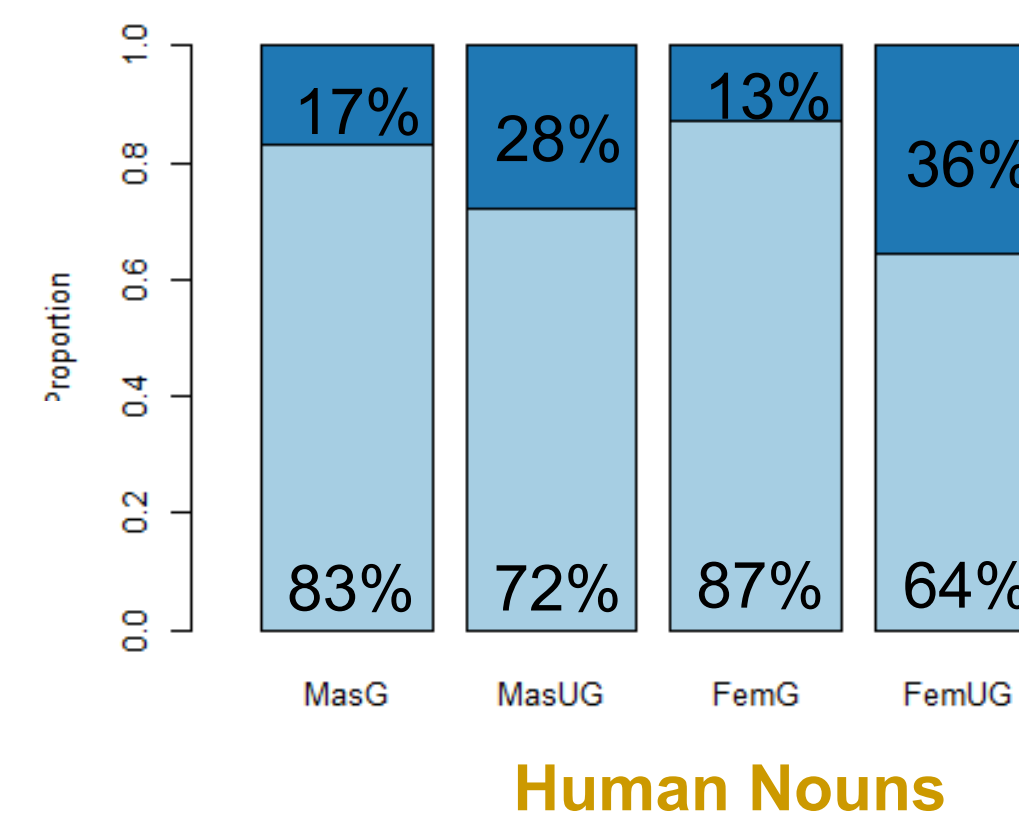
L1 Arabic Speakers



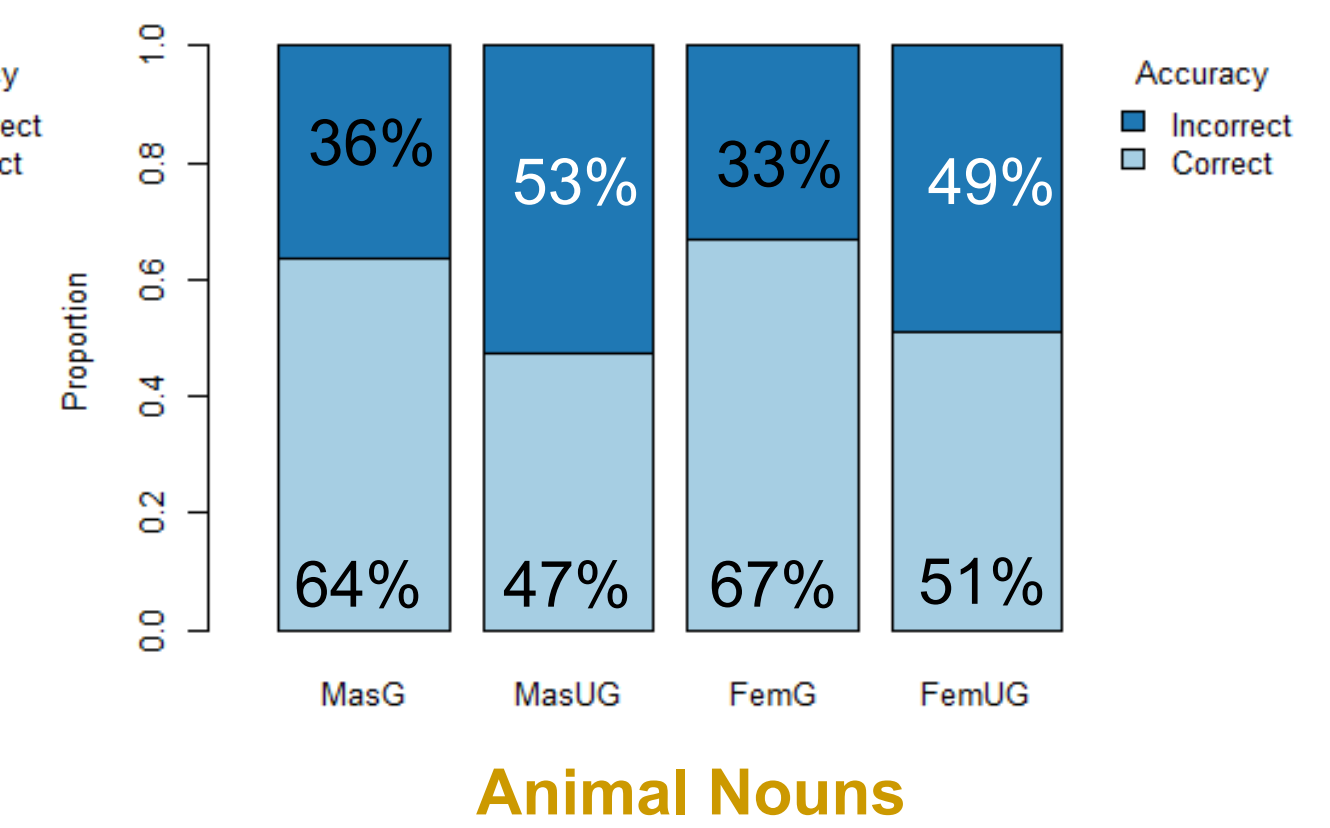
Human Nouns

Animal Nouns

L2 Arabic Speakers



L2 Arabic Speakers

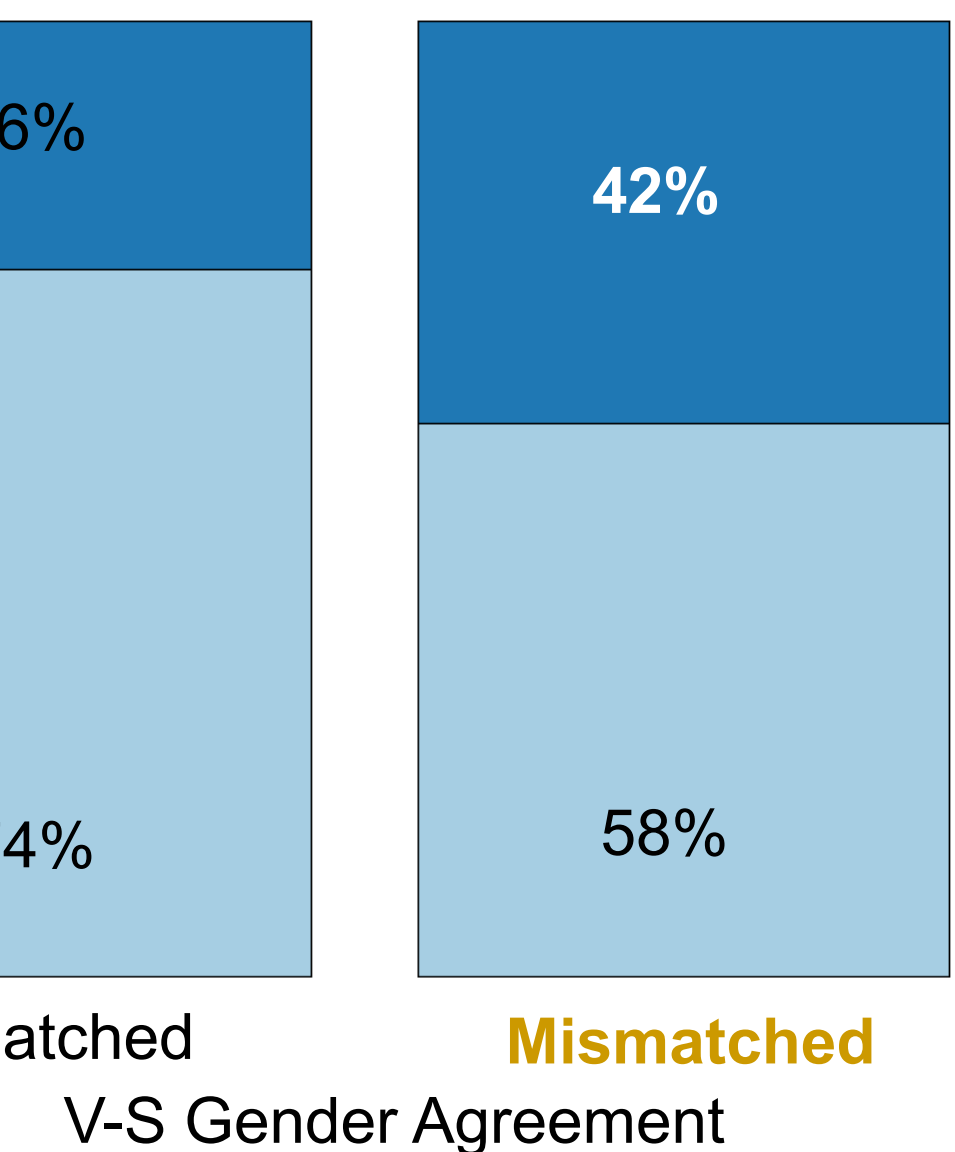


Human Nouns

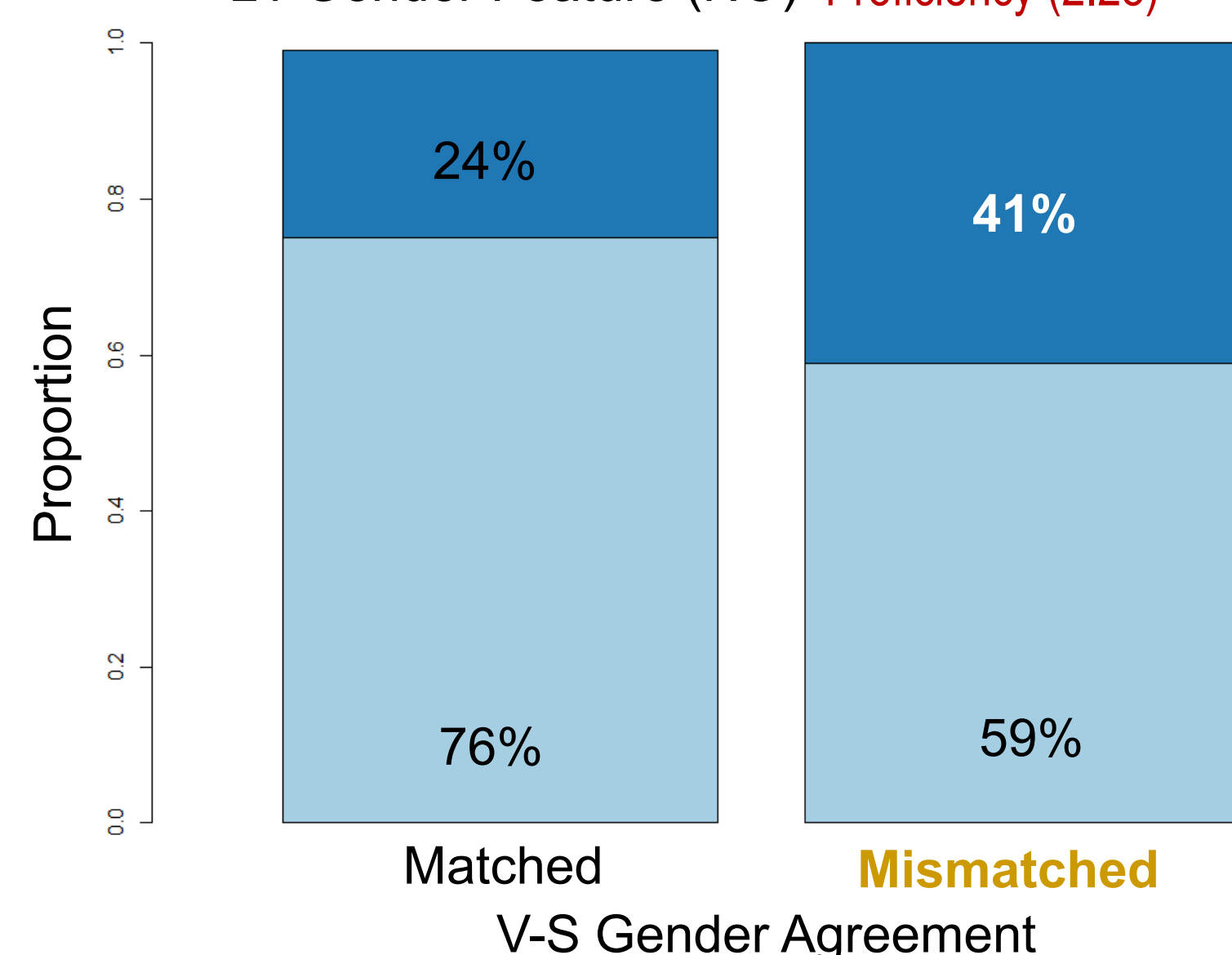
Animal Nouns

Accuracy on Gender Agreement by L1 (+/- Gender)

L1 Gender Feature (YES) Proficiency (2.25)

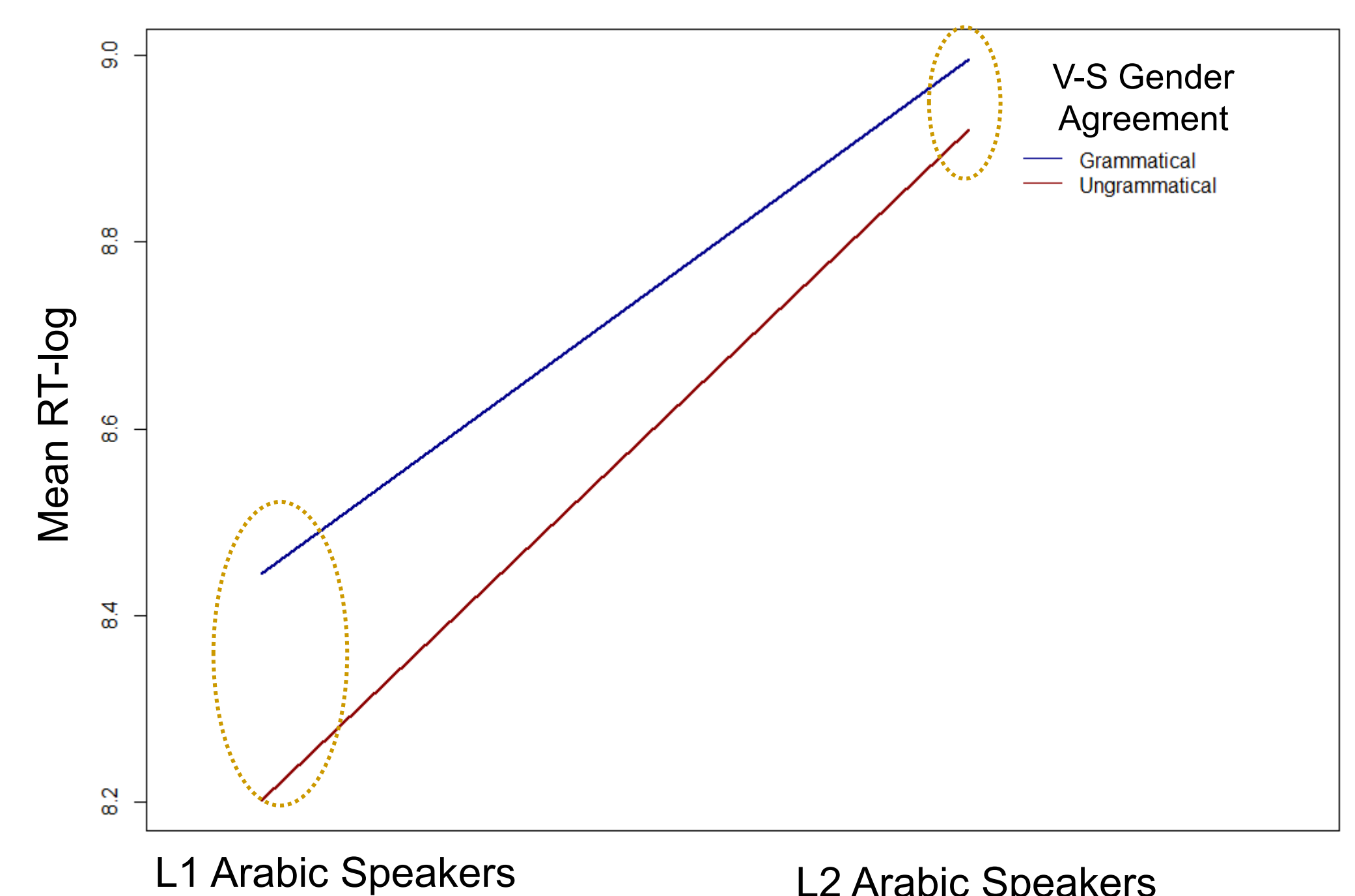


L1 Gender Feature (NO) Proficiency (2.28)



Accuracy
Incorrect
Correct

Reaction Time by Group



Conclusion

- In L2 development of Arabic, V-S gender agreement is affected by noun class but not by gender type:
 - Gender agreement develops with nouns of human before animals.
 - The effect of the noun class seems temporary in development as with increased proficiency its effect decreases.
- In L1-L2 processing of Arabic, the mismatched V-S gender agreement triggered faster responses than the matched agreement cases.
- The absence vs. presence of the gender feature in L1 doesn't seem to influence the L2 development of grammatical gender in Arabic.