

## LECTURE 2

# Linguistic **Universals**



**Safieh Moghaddam**

University of Toronto - Centre for French and Linguistics

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# Learning Outcomes



# Learning Outcomes



By the end of today's lecture, you should be able to:

- 1. observe and understand the similarities and differences between different languages**



# Learning Outcomes



By the end of today's lecture, you should be able to:

1. **observe and understand the similarities and differences between different languages**
2. **make generalizations about the data**



# Learning Outcomes



By the end of today's lecture, you should be able to:

1. **observe and understand the similarities and differences between different languages**
2. **make generalizations about the data**
3. **draw conclusions based on those generalizations**



# Roadmap: Today's Lecture



1. Linguistic Universals
  - i. Chomsky: On Human Language
  - ii. A definition

# Roadmap: Today's Lecture



1. Linguistic Universals
  - i. Chomsky: On Human Language
  - ii. A definition

2. Agreement
  - i. Noun Phrases
    - a. English
    - b. French
    - c. Arabic
  - ii. Making Generalizations
  - iii. Discussion

# Roadmap: Today's Lecture



1. Linguistic Universals
  - i. Chomsky: On Human Language
  - ii. A definition

2. Agreement
  - i. Noun Phrases
    - a. English
    - b. French
    - c. Arabic
  - ii. Making Generalizations
  - iii. Discussion

3. Exit Ticket (Today's Reflection)





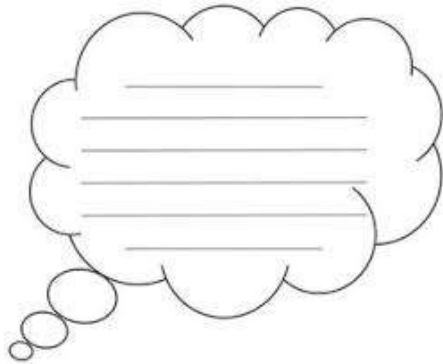
# Noam Chomsky: One Human Language



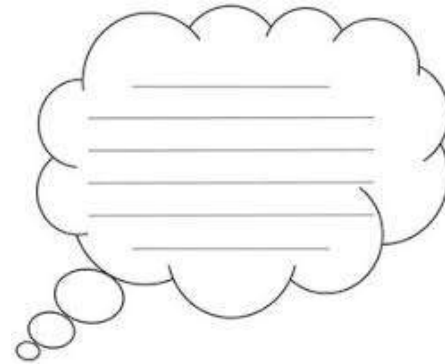
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# Reflection

Interesting Fact #1



Interesting Fact #2



So... What are **Linguistic Universals**?



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So... What are **Linguistic Universals**?



**Linguistic Universals:** patterns that occur systematically across natural languages.



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**In other words**, properties shared by all languages. These are also known as **principles**.



So... What are **Linguistic Universals**?



**Linguistic Universals:** patterns that occur systematically across natural languages.

**In other words**, properties shared by all languages. These are also known as **principles**.

**Some examples:**

- All languages have nouns.
- All languages have verbs.
- All languages have pronominal categories involving at least three persons and two numbers.



# Questions



1. What do languages of the world have **in common**?



# Questions



1. What do languages of the world have **in common**?
2. How do they **differ** from each other?

# Questions



1. What do languages of the world have **in common**?
2. How do they **differ** from each other?

One important aim of most linguistic theories is to pin down what the languages of the world have in common despite their differences.

Questions 

But why are we trying to understand  
these similarities and differences?



**Answer:**

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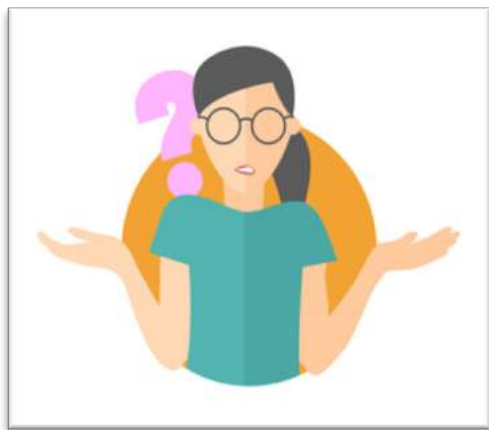
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# Is Agreement a Universal Feature?

Today, we are going to look at three languages:

- ✓ **English**
- ✓ **French**
- ✓ **Arabic (Iranian Arabic)**

to see if we can make any generalizations based on our data.



# Agreement



Let me take you on a little journey...

# Agreement



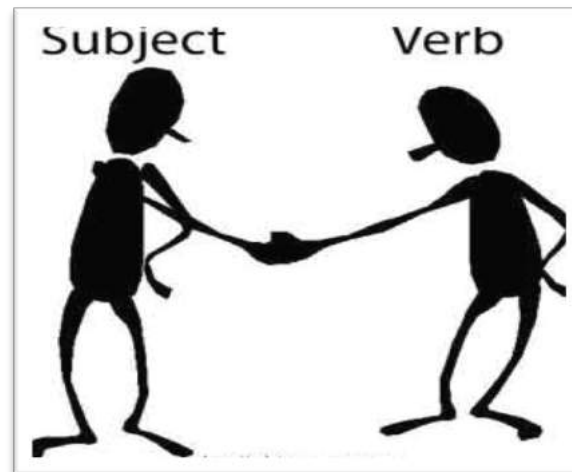
Let me take you on a little journey...

**Agreement:** a phenomenon in natural languages in which the form of one syntactic category (i.e. verb) changes in order to match the form of another syntactic category (i.e. noun) in a sentence.

# English

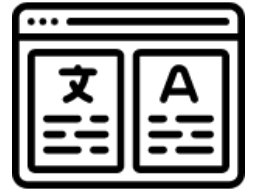


# English





# English



1) The student listens**s** to the teacher.

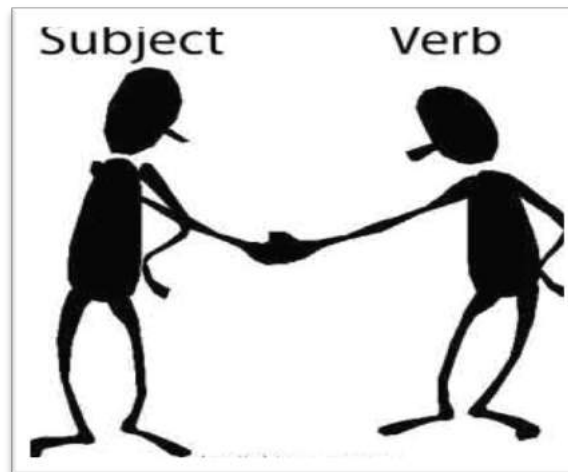
N                  V

2) The students**s** listen to the teacher.

N                  V

3) \*The student listen to the teacher.

N                  V



**Question:** where else can we see agreement?



**Question:** where else can we see agreement?



**English Nouns**

- 1) student **(sg.)**
- 2) student**s** **(pl.)**

**Question:** where else can we see agreement?



## English Nouns

- 1) student (**sg.**)
- 2) student**s** (**pl.**)

Grammatical marker of the  
number feature in English: -s

**Question:** where else can we see agreement?



## English Nouns

- 1) student (**sg.**)
- 2) student**s** (**pl.**)

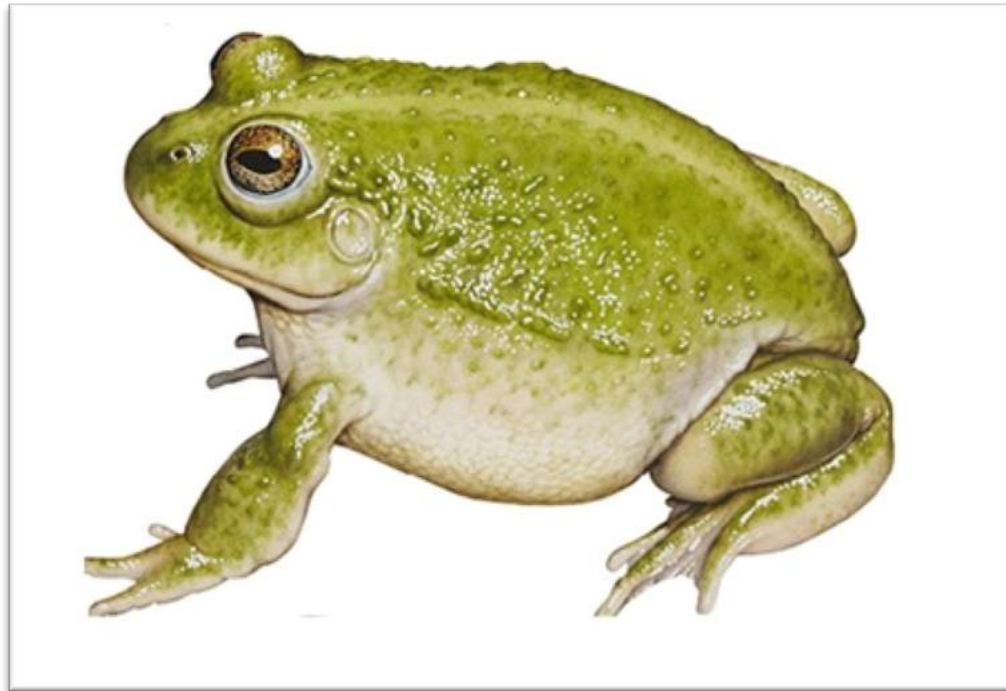
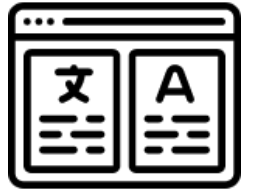
Grammatical marker of the number feature in English: -s



Now what if we add a determiner?

Determiners	Examples
Articles	a, an, the
Possessive	my, your, his, her, ...
Demonstratives	this, that, these, those
Indefinites	any, some, every, ...
Interrogatives	which, whose, ...

# English





# English: Determiners & Modifiers

## **Det. (demonstrative) + Noun = NP**

- 1) This book-Ø
- 2) These books

## **Adjective + Noun = NP**

- 1) Four books
- 2) Small books
- 3) Four small books
- 4) The four small books
- 5) \*Four-s books
- 6) \*Four-s small-s books

# English: Generalization

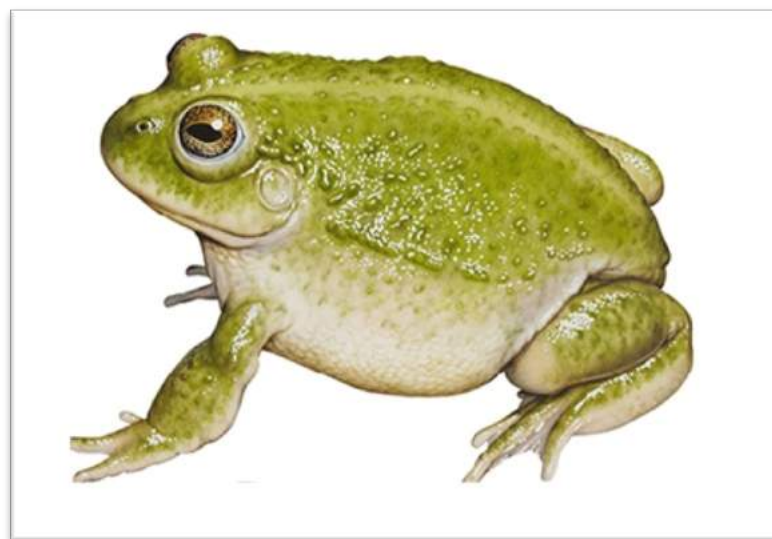


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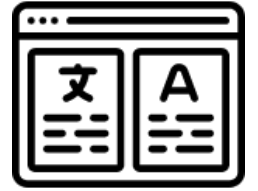
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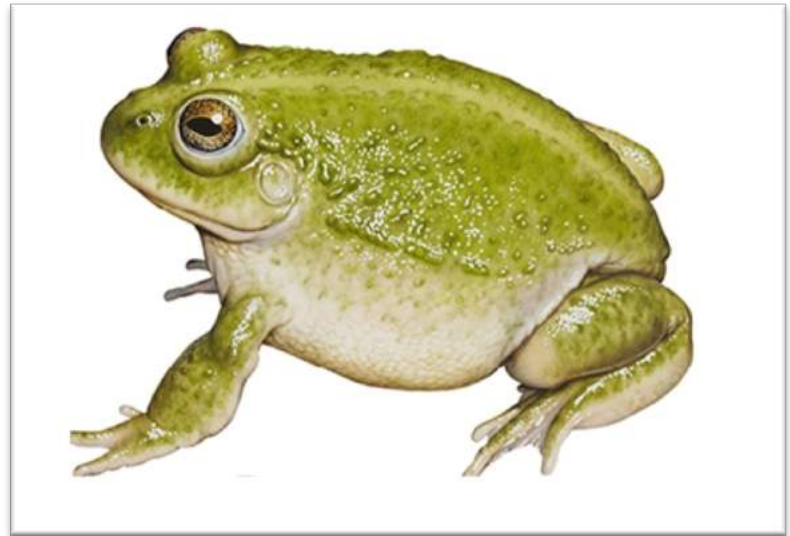


# English: Generalization

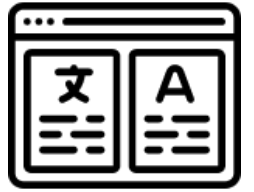


There is agreement in NPs English, **BUT** it is relatively limited...

In English NPs, only demonstratives agree with the head noun.



# French





# French: Determiners

## Definite Article + N

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) <b>le</b> garçon              | 1) <b>la</b> fille                 |
| 2) <b>l'</b> étudiant            | 2) <b>l'</b> étudiante <b>e</b>    |
| 3) <b>les</b> garçons <b>s</b>   | 3) <b>les</b> filles <b>s</b>      |
| 4) <b>les</b> étudiants <b>s</b> | 4) <b>les</b> étudiantes <b>es</b> |



# French: Determiners

## Definite Article + N

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) <b>le</b> garçon     | 1) <b>la</b> fille       |
| 2) <b>l'</b> étudiant   | 2) <b>l'</b> étudiante   |
| 3) <b>les</b> garçons   | 3) <b>les</b> filles     |
| 4) <b>les</b> étudiants | 4) <b>les</b> étudiantes |

## Demonstratives + N

- 1) **ce** garçon
- 2) **ces** étudiants
- 3) **cette** fille
- 4) **ces** étudiantes



# French: Determiners

## Definite Article + N

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) <b>le</b> garçon     | 1) <b>la</b> fille       |
| 2) <b>l'</b> étudiant   | 2) <b>l'</b> étudiante   |
| 3) <b>les</b> garçons   | 3) <b>les</b> filles     |
| 4) <b>les</b> étudiants | 4) <b>les</b> étudiantes |

## Demonstratives + N

- 1) **ce** garçon
- 2) **ces** étudiants
- 3) **cette** fille
- 4) **ces** étudiantes

**Generalization:**

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# French: Modifiers

## [ D + Adj + N ]

- 1) **le** garçon
- 2) **le** petit garçon
- 3) **les** petits garçons



# French: Modifiers

## [ D + Adj + N ]

- 1) **le** garçon
- 2) **le** petit garçon
- 3) **les** petits garçons

- 1) **la** fille
- 2) **la** petite fille
- 3) **les** petites filles



# French: Modifiers

## [ D + Adj + N ]

- 1) **le** garçon
- 2) **le** petit garçon
- 3) **les** petits garçons

- 1) **la** fille
- 2) **la** petite fille
- 3) **les** petites filles

## [ D + Adj + Adj + N ]

- 1) **les** quatre petits garçons





# French: Modifiers

## [ D + Adj + N ]

- 1) **le** garçon
- 2) **le** petit garçon
- 3) **les** petits garçons

- 1) **la** fille
- 2) **la** petite fille
- 3) **les** petites filles

## [ D + Adj + Adj + N ]

- 1) **les** quatre petits garçons
- 2) **les** \*quatre petits garçons

- 1) **les** quatre petites filles
- 2) **les** \*quatre petites filles

# French: Generalization



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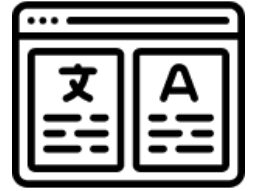
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# French: Generalization



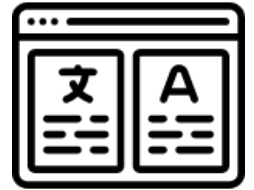
In French,

1. Adjectives agree with the head noun in number and gender.

[D + Adj + N]  
↪ ↪



# French: Generalization



In French,

1. Adjectives agree with the head noun in number and gender.

[D + Adj + N]



2. Adjectives (cardinal numbers) do not agree with the head noun in number and gender.

[D + Adj(Num.) + N]



# Pop Quiz



Which of the following statements is **TRUE**?

- A. In English, determiners agree with the head noun in gender.
- B. In English, adjectives agree with the head noun in number.
- C. In French, determiners agree with the head noun in gender.
- D. In French, all adjectives agree with the head noun in number.

# Pop Quiz



The answer is...

# Pop Quiz



Which of the following statements is **TRUE**?

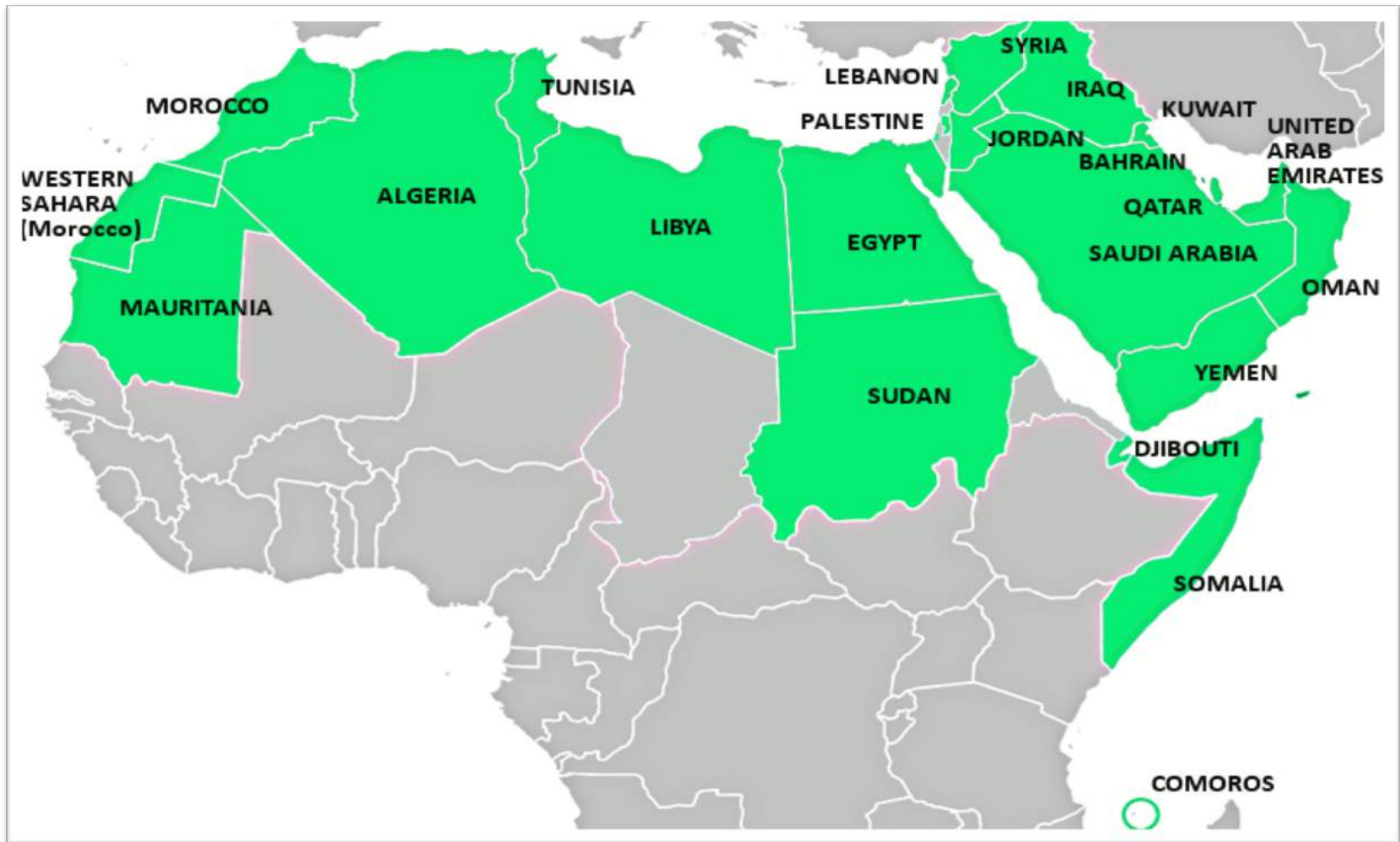
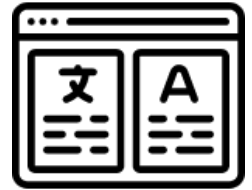
- A. In English, determiners agree with the head noun in gender.
- B. In English, adjectives agree with the head noun in number.
- C. In French, determiners agree with the head noun in gender.**
- D. In French, all adjectives agree with the head noun in number.

# Arabic (Iranian)

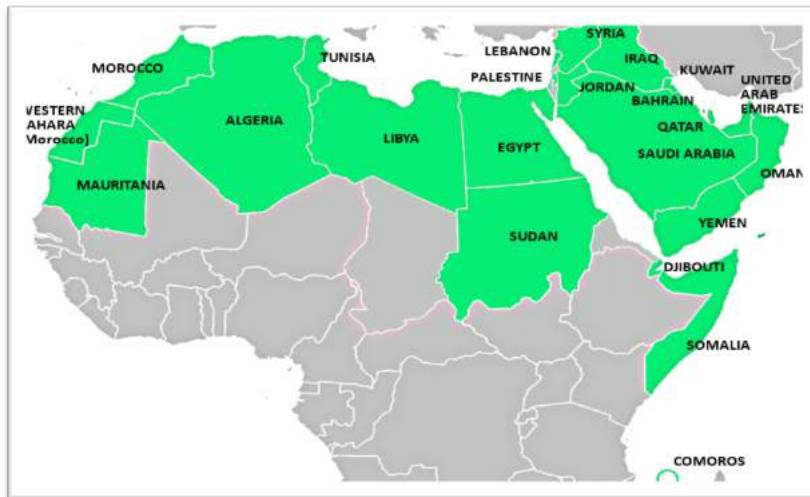
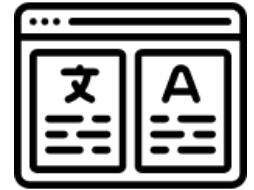




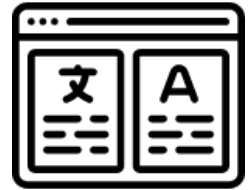
# Arabic



# Arabic



# Arabic: Determiners



1) modæres-**Ø**

teacher-**mas.sg.**

2) modæres-**æt**

teacher-**fem.sg.**

# Arabic: Determiners



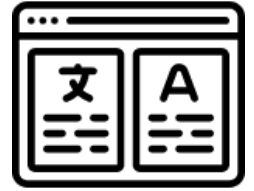
1) modæres-**∅**  
teacher-**mas.sg.**

2) modæres-**æt**  
teacher-**fem.sg.**

3) **al**-modæres-**∅**  
the-teacher-**mas.sg.**  
The male teacher

4) **al**-modæres-**æt**  
the-teacher-**fem.sg.**  
The female teacher

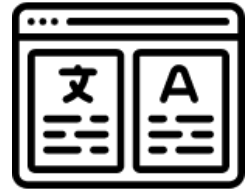
# Arabic: Determiners



3) **al-modæres-un**  
the-teacher-**mas.pl.**  
‘The male teachers’

4) **al-modæres-at**  
the-teacher-**fem.pl.**  
‘The female teachers’

# Arabic: Determiners



3) **al**-modæres-**un**  
the-teacher-**mas.pl.**  
'The male teachers'

3) **haada** modæres-**∅**  
this teacher-**mas.sg.**  
'This male teacher'

4) **al**-modæres-**at**  
the-teacher-**fem.pl.**  
'The female teachers'

4) **haada****ihi** modæres-**æt**  
this teacher-**fem.sg.**  
'This female teacher'

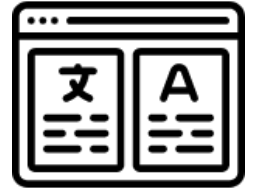
# Arabic: Determiners



1) haa?ulaa modæres- **un**  
these teacher-**mas.pl.**  
'These male teachers'

2) haa?ulaat **t** modæres-**at**  
these teacher-**fem.pl.**  
'These female teachers'

# Arabic: Determiners



- 1) haa?**ulaa** modæres- **un**  
these teacher-**mas.pl.**  
'These male teachers'

Arabic: Generalization

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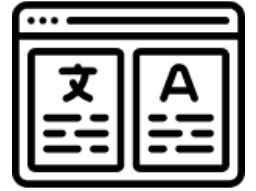
- 2) haa?**ulaat** modæres-**at**  
these teacher-**fem.pl.**  
'These female teachers'

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# Arabic: Modifiers (Adj + N)



- 1) haada zoki-Ø modæres-Ø  
this smart teacher-**mas.sg.**  
'This smart male teacher'

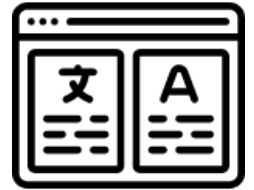


## Arabic: Modifiers (Adj + N)

1) haada zoki-~~Ø~~ modæres-~~Ø~~  
this smart teacher-**mas.sg.**  
'This smart male teacher'

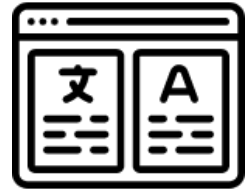
2) haadaihi zoki-**æt** modæres-**æt**  
this smart-**fem.sg.** teacher-**fem.sg.**  
'This smart female teacher'

**Arabic:** Modifiers (cardinal numbers) A + N



- 1) salas-**æt**                      modæres-**un**  
three-**fem.sg**      teacher-**mas.pl**  
'Three male teachers'

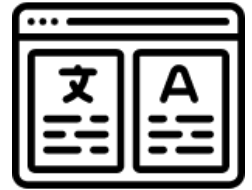
**Arabic:** Modifiers (cardinal numbers) A + N



1) salas-**æt**                      modæres-**un**  
three-**fem.sg**      teacher-**mas.pl**  
‘Three male teachers’

2) salas-**∅**                      modæres-**at**  
three-**mas.sg**      teacher-**fem.pl**  
‘Three female teachers’

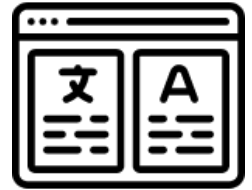
# Arabic: Modifier



- 1) salas-**æt**      zoki-**un**      modæres-**un**  
three-**fem.sg** smart-**mas.pl.** teacher-**mas.pl.**  
'Three smart male teachers'



# Arabic: Modifier



- 1) salas-**æt**      zoki-**un**      modæres-**un**  
three-**fem.sg** smart-**mas.pl.** teacher-**mas.pl.**  
‘Three smart male teachers’
- 2) salas-**∅**      zoki-**at**      modæres-**at**  
three-**mas.sg** smart-**fem.pl** teacher-**fem.pl**  
‘Three female teachers’



# Arabic: Generalization



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# Remembering your little journey



English			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.			
Adjectives agree with the head noun.			
Adjectives (cardinal numbers) agree with the head noun.			
French			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.			
Adjectives agree with the head noun.			
Adjectives (cardinal numbers) agree with the head noun.			
Arabic			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.			
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# Remembering your little journey



English			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.		✓	
Adjectives agree with the head noun.			✓
Adjectives (cardinal numbers) agree with the head noun.			✓
French			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.	✓		
Adjectives agree with the head noun.	✓		
Adjectives (cardinal numbers) agree with the head noun.			✓
Arabic			
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Determiners agree with the head noun.		✓	
Adjectives agree with the head noun.	✓		
Adjectives (cardinal numbers) agree with the head noun.			

## Wrap Up: Is Agreement a Universal Feature?



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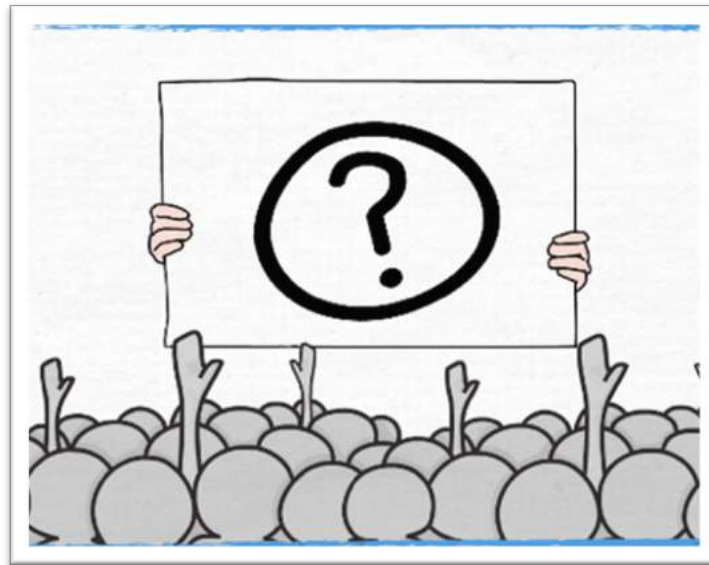
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# Q & A



**Exit Ticket**

