

# A Grammar of Standard Classical Arabic

An online book to learn the language of the Quran, Hadith, and other  
Islamic texts

The Authors

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Work in progress

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## Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The primary texts of Islām (the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth) are in Arabic. So too is much of its scholarly literature. However, there are many Muslims for whom Arabic is not a native language, yet who are familiar enough with English to study textbooks written in this language. The goal of this book is to help them learn Arabic at a beginner’s level so that, together with a study of the appropriate expository texts, they are one step closer to understanding the primary texts in their original language. We hope that this will, if Allāh wills, make them feel more connected to the primary texts and their teachings. Furthermore, they can be empowered to study the vast body of Arabic Islāmic literature.

Regarding the title of this book: the Arabic grammarians were describing *an* Arabic language, drawing upon a corpus that included transmitted texts and the dialectal speech of informants. We term the language of this corpus to be *Classical Arabic* because of its considerable volume and its agreed upon significance and eloquence. In the processing of describing and sifting through the dialectal variation of Classical Arabic, a normative variety emerged, and gained prevalence for composing and transmitting texts. It is the grammar of this *Standard Classical Arabic* that is the subject of this work.

This book is a learning or teaching grammar, as opposed to being strictly a reference grammar. Therefore, generally, topics are covered, and examples are given, in a manner that assumes an understanding of only preceding content. We have, however, generally tried to organize content coherently for convenient reference during learning.

We have also aimed to make this a self-instruction textbook so that a diligent student should, if Allāh wills, be able to study it without an instructor. The target learner is someone who has not been exposed to grammatical terminology like *inflection*, *case*, *mood*, etc. While terminology is necessary for a rigorous non-immersive learning of language, we have tried to steer away from Latin-based terms like *accusative* and *jussive*. Such terms, when first encountered by an uninitiated learner, may deter him from proceeding further. So we have in some places translated the meaning of Arabic grammar terms to English. In other places, we have used established English grammar terms where the terms are basic enough. We have even, in places, invented terms where we deemed appropriate. The drawback to this non-standard approach, however, is that the student may not be able to immediately relate the terminology he has learned in this book to established terminology in other grammar textbooks. To remedy

this to some extent, we provide a glossary which maps the grammatical terminology used in this book to other, established, Latin-based and Arabic-based counterparts.

It may also be appropriate to inform the reader that we chose to present a subset, and sometimes a simplified version, of Arabic grammar. As such, the grammar presented here may not be entirely consistent with the comprehensive and harmonious framework developed by the Arab grammarians. We chose this approach because we felt that exposing the beginner to complex grammatical details at this stage would be more of a hindrance than a help in learning the language.

This book is a currently work in progress and is produced using the [Quarto](#) authoring and publishing framework. The code and text are open-sourced and developed at [github.com/adamiturabi/arabic-tutorial-book](https://github.com/adamiturabi/arabic-tutorial-book). The typeset output is published at [adamiturabi.github.io/arabic-tutorial-book/](https://adamiturabi.github.io/arabic-tutorial-book/).

THE AUTHORS

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# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

All praises are due to Allāh. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil in our souls and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allāh guides, no one can mislead. Whomever Allāh leads astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allāh. I also bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.

May the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the Prophet Muḥammad, his family, his companions, and those who followed them with good conduct.

### 1.1. History of Arabic

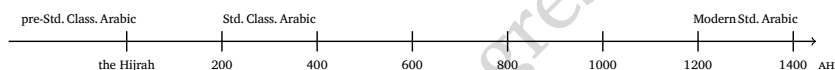
Allāh, may He be glorified and exalted, revealed the Qur’ān 1400 years ago to the Prophet Muḥammad, may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him. The language of the Qur’ān is the Arabic language, as it was understood by the Arabs at that time. The sayings and actions of the Prophet, may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him, were recorded by his companions also in this Arabic language. Also, composed in this Arabic language, was a vast body of poetry that the Arabs would consider eloquent and worth transmitting. We will call the Arabic of this pre-Islāmic and early Islāmic era as Classical Arabic. The Classical Arabic language consisted of multiple dialects that were spoken by the different tribes and in the different regions of the Arabian peninsula.

All languages change naturally over time. For example, English has changed to such a degree that the Old English language spoken 1400 years ago would be unintelligible to us today. So too did the Classical Arabic dialects begin to change. But as part of preserving His religion, Allāh preserved the Arabic language as well. This was by means of the efforts of scholars who recorded the Classical Arabic language of the time of the revelation.

In the process of preserving Arabic, one particular variety became standardized and gained prevalence as a literary language over the other dialects of the Arabic of the early-Islāmic period. This standard Arabic, in its early period after standardization, is called *Standard Classical Arabic*. The pre-Islāmic and early Islāmic Arabic dialects (of which Standard Classical Arabic is but a standardized variety) are then referred to, collectively, as pre-Standard Classical Arabic. Standard Classical Arabic was used as the language of religious scholarship, science,

and literature in the Islāmic world. As scholars developed new branches of religious and secular sciences, new terms and meanings were added to it that are termed post-classical. A few words were also borrowed from foreign languages and Arabicized, as needed by the different scientific disciplines. (Pre-Standard Classical Arabic itself had a few Arabicized foreign borrowings from neighboring languages.) These additions were, by and large, deliberate, done by scholars who were experts in their fields and also well versed in Standard Classical Arabic, and validated by subsequent generations of scholarly discourse. Besides these needed additions, the grammar and core language remained remarkably unchanged.

While Standard Arabic was thus preserved from major change and was used for literary purposes, the language that was spoken by Arabs in their day-to-day lives continued to change over time from the pre-Islāmic Arabic dialects into the modern colloquial Arabic dialects. And so today, there exist two very distinct types of Arabic: the preserved Standard Arabic which is taught at schools and is primarily a written language, and the modern colloquial Arabic dialects which Arabs learn as their mother tongue and which are primarily only spoken and not written.



In modern times, many new words and meanings have been added to Standard Arabic, often via translation from Western languages, to keep up with technological advancements and modern media. This modern development of Standard Arabic is called Modern Standard Arabic. There are also a small amount of words, meanings, and grammatical usages, which existed in Classical Arabic, but which are deemed archaic, and are therefore largely unused, in Modern Standard Arabic.

Figure 1.1 (above) depicts this historical development of Standard Arabic.

## 1.2. About this book

### 1.2.1. Scope

In this book, we will study the grammar of Standard Classical Arabic. If Allāh wills, this will help you to begin to understand the language of the Qurʾān, the Ḥadīth, and Islāmic literature.

If your goal is to learn Modern Standard Arabic, then this book may still be of help because the core language and the grammar are essentially the same. However, you may prefer to study from a resource that focuses on the modern language.

This book does not touch at all upon the modern colloquial dialects that are spoken in the Arab world today.

### 1.2.2. Current status

This book is currently a work in progress, and not yet ready for study. There is a watermark on all online published pages indicating this status. The preface and this introduction have been written prematurely as a reference for guiding principles that we can refer to during the writing process. We publish updates online while the book is still a work in progress in the hope that it will help in correcting errors.

### 1.2.3. Methodology

We will start, if Allāh wills, with the Arabic script and present, in each chapter, a new concept of Arabic grammar, together with examples. Though there is none right now, we will also give, if Allāh wills, a vocabulary list and exercises for each chapter.

In order to organize content in a manageable and referrable way, we will give a reasonably full treatment of every topic upon its first encounter. But in actuality, an exhaustive understanding of the topic may not be absolutely essential to the core understanding of grammar that a learner needs at that stage. An example of such a topic is *semi-flexible nouns* (*diptotes* in Western grammars). Although identifying such material may not be easy for the learner, you may feel free to skim over such material and refer back to it later, as needed.

Some of the sentences we present, both as examples and as chapter exercises, because of their contrived nature, may seem of dubious usefulness to a learner wanting to learn practical usage. Also, when translating examples, we usually steer toward a literal, word-for-word, translation rather than an idiomatic one. This is in order to illustrate the function of each word, and to show a correspondence between the words in the Arabic sentence and the English translation. The resulting English will then often sound awkward, and even sometimes ungrammatical. We request the reader's patience and indulgence in these and other matters.

### 1.2.4. How to study from this book

#### 1.2.4.1. Exercises

In answering the exercises, we strongly recommend that you memorize the vocabulary in full and write down the answers with pen and paper. We strongly recommend that you resist the tendency to answer the exercises only orally or mentally without writing them down, or look up the answers from the answer key before attempting to write the answer yourself, or look up words in the vocabulary list without memorizing them, or proceed to the next chapter before memorizing the vocabulary and going through the exercises. You may also find yourself having to go back a few chapters every once in a while and revising the

concepts therein. This is very normal and not a cause for any concern. It may also prove beneficial to re-do the exercises of that chapter when doing so.

#### 1.2.4.2. Vocabulary

Know that while Arabic grammar requires effort to master to a proficient degree, the real barrier to reading and understanding Arabic texts by oneself is vocabulary. Arabic is a very rich language and knowledge of a few thousand words is needed before the student can begin to read texts independently. In fact, we would not be too far off to say that grammar, at this stage, is only a tool to help you make sense of the vocabulary that you are acquiring. So strive to achieve a balance between learning grammar and acquiring vocabulary. In appendix @ref(vocabulary-and-reading), we suggest companion reading material, dictionaries, and techniques on acquiring and retaining vocabulary.

Work in progress

## Chapter 2.

### The Arabic script

#### 2.1. The Arabic alphabet

The alphabet consists of both consonants and vowels. In the English word “banana”, “a” is a vowel, and “b” and “n” are called consonants. The Arabic alphabet traditionally has 28 letters, shown in the table below.

No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
1	ا	<i>ā</i>	ألف <i>alif</i>	A vowel like in English “man”. But after these letters (خ, ر, ص, ض, غ, ق) it sounds like “awe” in English “awesome”.
2	ب	<i>b</i>	باء <i>bāʾ</i>	Equivalent to English “b” in “boy”.
3	ت	<i>t</i>	تاء <i>tāʾ</i>	Similar to English “t” in “tall” but softer. Touch the tongue against the back of the top front teeth instead of just the gum.
4	ث	<i>th</i>	ثاء <i>thāʾ</i>	Similar to to English “th” in “think” but softer. Have your lips and cheek in a wide grin. Loosely bite the tip of your tongue between your front teeth and then force air out trying to hiss “ssss”. Keep your tongue touching the top and bottom teeth and the hiss should come out like a “th” sound.
5	ج	<i>j</i>	جيم <i>jīm</i>	Equivalent to English “j” in “just”.
6	ح	<i>h</i>	حاء <i>ḥāʾ</i>	Similar to English “h” in “hat” but pronounced from the bottom of the throat. Take care there is no scraping as with خ.
7	خ	<i>kh</i>	خاء <i>khāʾ</i>	Similar to “ch” in Scottish “loch”. Try saying “kh” but with a scraping sound.
8	د	<i>d</i>	دال <i>dāl</i>	Similar to to English “d” in “dog” but softer. Just like with ت, touch the tongue against the back of the top front teeth instead of just the gum.

No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
9	ذ	<i>dh</i>	ذَال <i>dhāl</i>	Place your tongue as in ث and force air out. But this time instead of trying to hiss “ssss” try to buzz “zzzz” and again keep your tongue touching the top and bottom teeth.
10	ر	<i>r</i>	رَاء <i>rāʾ</i>	Equivalent to English “r” in “rat”.
11	ز	<i>z</i>	زَاء <i>zāʾ</i>	Equivalent to English “z” in “zoo”.
12	س	<i>s</i>	سِين <i>sīn</i>	Equivalent to English “s” in “see”.
13	ش	<i>sh</i>	شَيْن <i>shīn</i>	Equivalent to English “sh” in “show”.
14	ص	<i>ṣ</i>	صَاد <i>ṣād</i>	An emphatic س that will be described later.
15	ض	<i>ḍ</i>	ضَاد <i>ḍād</i>	An sound unique to Arabic that will be described later.
16	ط	<i>ṭ</i>	طَاء <i>ṭāʾ</i>	An emphatic ت that will be described later.
17	ظ	<i>ḍh</i>	ظَاء <i>ḍhāʾ</i>	An emphatic ذ that will be described later.
18	ع	<i>ʿ</i>	عَيْن <i>ʿayn</i>	A sound like “a” from the throat.
19	غ	<i>gh</i>	غَيْن <i>ghayn</i>	Somewhat like a “gh” sound but much softer. Try pronouncing خ but without any scraping.
20	ف	<i>f</i>	فَاء <i>fāʾ</i>	Equivalent to English “f” in “fox”.
21	ق	<i>q</i>	قَاء <i>qāf</i>	Similar to English “k” in “kite” but further back in the throat.
22	ك	<i>k</i>	كَاف <i>kāf</i>	Equivalent to English “k” in “kite”.
23	ل	<i>l</i>	لَام <i>lām</i>	Equivalent to English “l” in “light”.
24	م	<i>m</i>	مِيم <i>mīm</i>	Equivalent to English “m” in “man”.
25	ن	<i>n</i>	نُون <i>nūn</i>	Equivalent to English “n” in “nut”.
26	ه	<i>h</i>	هَاء <i>hāʾ</i>	Equivalent to English “h” in “hat”. Much softer than ح
27	و	<i>w/ū</i>	وَو <i>wāw</i>	As a consonant it is equivalent to English “w” in “water”. It is also a vowel equivalent to English “oo” in “moon”.
28	ي	<i>y/ī</i>	يَاء <i>yāʾ</i>	As a consonant it is equivalent to English “y” in “yellow”. It is also a vowel equivalent to English “ee” in “meek”.

Note that the letters و (*wāw*) and ي (*yāʾ*) are both vowels and consonants. But that alif (*alif*) is only a vowel.

The consonant corresponding to alif is ʿ. Although ʿ ought to be considered a letter in its own right, it was originally only pronounced and not written. So it is not traditionally considered part of the 28-letter script.



No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
–	ء	’	هَمْزَة hamzah	Technically called a glottal stop, it is the sound of the breath stopping in the beginning of, and between the syllables in, the utterance “oh-oh”.

### 2.1.1. Alternative order of letters

The above order of the letters in alphabetical sequence is currently used today. There is an alternative order that was more used in the past (from right to left):

ا ب ج د ه و ز ح ط ي ك ل م ن س ع ف ص ق ر ش ت ث خ ذ ض ظ غ

This alternative order is discussed more in appendix @ref(abjad-order). (TODO: add appendix for أبجد order, discuss its use in lists and numerical value.)

### 2.1.2. Pronunciation notes

Some of the sounds are similar to sounds in English but others are very different. Here we will attempt to describe the sounds but we recommend that you learn the correct pronunciation from an experienced Arabic or Qur’ān teacher. Online videos may also help in practicing the sounds.

#### 2.1.2.1. ص ṣād, ط ṭā’, and ظ ḍhā’

The letters س sīn, ت tā’, and ذ ḍhāl are pronounced with the mouth and lips in a wide grin. Now try pronouncing them, in turn, with the lips round forming a small circle. The sounds will be emphatic and will be ص ṣād, ط ṭā’, and ظ ḍhā’ respectively.

#### 2.1.2.2. ض ḍād

ض ḍād is thought to be unique to Arabic. There are two ways to pronounce it. The first is similar to an emphatic ذ. The second is almost similar to ظ. We reiterate that it is best to use audio training to help with pronouncing these sounds.

## 2.2. Writing Arabic words

### 2.2.1. Letters in different positions

Arabic is written right-to-left, unlike English and most other languages which are written left-to-right. When writing, the letters in a word are generally joined to each other, except for six out of the 28 letters, which join only to the letter preceding them but not to the letter following them. These six partially-joining letters are و, ز, ج, د, ذ, ر.

When joining the letters, letters are modified in order to join to the preceding and following letter. The fully-joining letters can be in four positions:

1. by itself (isolated),
2. in the beginning of a group of joined letters,
3. in the middle of a group of joined letters,
4. in the end of a group of joined letters.

As we just mentioned, six of the letters (و, ز, ج, د, ذ, ر) don't join to the following letter. So these letters can only occur only in the end of a group of joined letters, or isolated by themselves.

In this book we will show a "Simplified Arabic" writing style where, in each of the four positions, the letter maintains its basic shape and is usually only slightly modified to join to the previous and following letter with horizontal lines.

To explain the method of modifying the letters when joining them, we will take ب as an example and start with the isolated form:

Isolated form: ب

To modify this into the end form, we simply join a horizontal line to the right of the letter:

End form: بب

To get the middle form, we take the end form بب and cut off its tail which is at its left, and replace it with a horizontal line. We also move the dot slightly to get:

Middle form: بب

And finally, to get the beginning form, we take the middle form بب and remove the horizontal line at the right:

Beginning form: بب

Now most of the letters follow this common technique but a few of them are modified a little further in each form. These, more complicated, letters are ع, غ, ي, ك, ه, and you can study them and the rest of the letters in the table below:

No.	Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
1	ا	ـا	none	none
2	ب	ـب	ـب	بـ
3	ت	ـت	ـت	تـ
4	ث	ـث	ـث	ثـ
5	ج	ـج	ـج	جـ
6	ح	ـح	ـح	حـ
7	خ	ـخ	ـخ	خـ
8	د	ـد	none	none
9	ذ	ـذ	none	none
10	ر	ـر	none	none
11	ز	ـز	none	none
12	س	ـس	ـس	سـ
13	ش	ـش	ـش	شـ
14	ص	ـص	ـص	صـ
15	ض	ـض	ـض	ضـ
16	ط	ـط	ـط	طـ
17	ظ	ـظ	ـظ	ظـ
18	ع	ـع	ـع	عـ
19	غ	ـغ	ـغ	غـ
20	ف	ـف	ـف	فـ
21	ق	ـق	ـق	قـ
22	ك	ـك	ـك	كـ
23	ل	ـل	ـل	لـ
24	م	ـم	ـم	مـ
25	ن	ـن	ـن	نـ
26	ه	ـه	ـه	هـ
27	و	ـو	none	none
28	ي	ـي	ـي	يـ

You can see that each letter maintains a basic shape and is modified for each of the four positions.

### 2.2.2. Joining the different forms to make a word

Notice that when we modified the isolated form to get to the beginning, middle, and end forms, we added a horizontal line to each or both sides. It is this horizontal line which joins to the horizontal line of the neighboring letter.

As an example, we would like to join the following letters (starting from the right): م-ع-ش-ر into one word. The first letter is م so we modify it to its beginning form مـ. The next two letters are converted to their middle forms عـ, شـ. And the last letter ر is converted to its end form ـر. Then we join the horizontal lines together and get معشر. Usually, when we join letters like this we shorten the horizontal lines so you will generally see the word like this معشر.

In this example, we needed the beginning, middle, and end forms of the letters. Isolated forms are used in a word when there is a partially-joining letter present that won't join to the following letter. The letter after a partially-joining letter will be in its beginning form even though it is in the middle of a word. But if it too is a partially-joining letter, or it is the last letter in the word then it will take its isolated form.

Let's take a look at some examples where a group of disjoint letters are joined to form a word:

Disjoint	Joined
ذ-ل-ك	ذلك
ا-ح-م-د	احمد
ر-س-و-ل	رسول
و-ز-ي-ر	وزير
ر-ا-ز-ق	رازق

Notice that in the last example, all the letters were in the isolated form.

### 2.2.2.1. Simplified and Traditional writing styles

We have just shown how letters join to each other with a horizontal line in the Simplified Arabic writing style. Traditional Arabic writing styles are a little more complex than Simplified Arabic: some letters join almost vertically instead of horizontally. But when you get familiar with the Simplified Arabic writing style, if Allah wills, it will not be too difficult for you to read the Traditional Arabic writing style as well.

Here are some comparisons of letters joining to each other in the Simplified Arabic and Traditional Arabic writing styles.

Disjoint	Joined (simplified)	Joined (traditional)
ت-م-ر	تمر	تمر
ا-ل-ح-ج-ج	الحجج	الحجج
ا-ل-م-ا-س	الماس	الماس
ل-م-ح-ة	لمحة	لمحة
س-ح-ر	سحر	سحر
ب-ح-ي-ر-ة	بحيرة	بحيرة
ف-ي	في	في
ب-ت-ث-ب-ي-ت-ت-ي-ن	بتثيبتين	بتثيبتين

## 2.2.3. ة (closed tā')

ة is a special letter which is merged from two letters of the alphabet. It is a ت but it is written as a ة with two dots above it. ة is pronounced exactly as a ت, except when it is at the end of a sentence in which case it is pronounced as a ة as we'll explain later, if Allāh wills. ة occurs only at the end of a word so it has only an end form and an isolated form (used when the letter before it is a partially-joining letter).

Examples:

- فاطمة
- شجرة
- فتاة

We call ة *closed tā'* because it appears as if have taken ت and pressed it until it closed on itself. In contrast, ت is called *open tā'* when needed to differentiate it from ة.

## 2.2.4. Writing hamzah

We have mentioned that hamzah was a later addition to the Arabic alphabet and originally it was only sounded and not written. Hamzah can be written in a number of different ways:

1. “Seated” above (or below) a vowel letter: Hamzah can be written above the vowel letters thus: أ ؤ ئ. When written over ي, the ي will not have any dots, thus: ئ, ؤ, أ. It may also be written under an alif thus: إ. Examples: إن, فئة, سؤلك, أفعال.
2. “Unseated” after a letter. This has two sub cases:
  - a. Standalone, after a partially-joining letter or at the end of a word. Examples: عبء, توءم, تساءل.
  - b. Inline, in the middle of a word after a fully-joining letter. In this case hamzah is written above the horizontal line that joins the letters. Examples: بريئين, شيئا, خطيئة.

In all cases it is pronounced the same. There are actually a set of fairly complicated rules that determine which of the above ways to choose when writing hamzah. We present these rules in Appendix @ref(hamzarules). We recommend that for now, you memorize the spelling of each word that we present that contains a hamzah. When you are sufficiently advanced, and curious enough, you may refer to Appendix @ref(hamzarules) to learn the full set of rules.

### 2.2.5. Disambiguating letters that look similar

Some letters are very similar to each other and only differ in their dots or other slight differences. You should take care to distinguish between these letters. We will describe their similarities and differences here.

The letters ب, ت, and ث differ only in their dots and are otherwise identical in all positions. ن and ي are similar in initial and middle positions to ب, ت, and ث but differ from them and from each other in isolated and final positions. Compare all five in the table below:

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
ب	بـ	بـ	بـ
ت	تـ	تـ	تـ
ث	ثـ	ثـ	ثـ
ن	نـ	نـ	نـ
ي	يـ	يـ	يـ

These groups of letters differ too, only in their dots:

- خ, ح, and ج
- ذ and د
- ز and ر
- ش and س
- ض and ص
- ظ and ط
- غ and ع

The letters ف and ق are similar in the initial and middle positions except for the dots. But in the isolated and final positions, the tail of ق goes lower than that of ف.

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
ف	فـ	فـ	فـ
ق	قـ	قـ	قـ

Be careful also not to confuse غ and ف in their middle forms. The loop for ف is round where it is triangular and flat-topped for غ (as it is for ع). Compare their middle forms in the table below:

Isolated	Middle
غ	غـ
ف	فـ

The letters alif ا and lām ل could also be confused for each other. Their forms are shown here again for easy comparison:

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
ا	ـ	none	none
ل	ـ	ـ	ـ

### 2.2.6. Joining alif after lām

When the letter alif follows lām we would expect them to be joined like this ل+ا → لـا. But actually, they are joined in a special way

ل+ا → لا

When the combination occurs at the end of a group of joined letters, it will appear thus:

لا

Examples:

- أَلَا
- الْإِيمَان
- الصَّلَاة

## 2.3. Vowels and pronunciation marks.

### 2.3.1. Short Vowels

Arabic has six vowels. There are three short vowels which don't have letters in the alphabet. Instead they are shown with pronunciation marks:

1. *a* as the first vowel in English “manipulate”, written with an *a*-mark َ which is a small diagonal line above the letter like مَ ma.
2. *i* as in English “bit”, written with an *i*-mark ِ which is a small diagonal line under the letter like بِ bi.
3. *u* as in English “put”, written with an *u*-mark ُ which is like a tiny و wāw above the letter like فُ fu.

Examples of words with short vowels:

- فَتَحَ *fataḥa*
- عَمِلَ *ʿamila*
- قَتَلَ *qatila*

### 2.3.2. Long Vowels

There are also three long vowels which are part of the alphabet:

1. *ā* generally written with an unmarked alif ا and with the preceding letter having an *a*-mark. Example مَ mā. This vowel is mostly pronounced like the vowel in English “man”. If however, it comes after these letters ق, غ, ط, ض, ر, خ, it is pronounced like English “awe”.
2. *ī* like in English “meek” written with an unmarked ي yā’ with the preceding letter having an *i*-mark. Example في fī.
3. *ū* like in English “moon” written with an unmarked و wāw with the preceding letter having an *u*-mark. Example دُو dhū.

Examples of words with long and short vowels:

- هَارُونُ hārūnu
- كَادَا kadhā
- سَرَادِيبَ sarādība

#### 2.3.2.1. *ā* vowel written with a small alif

Sometimes the *ā* vowel is written as a small alif َ, called a “dagger alif”, instead of a regular alif ا. This is done only for a few commonly used words. Here are some examples:

- هَذَا hādḥā
- دَالِكَا dhālika

#### 2.3.2.2. *ā* vowel written with a yā’

In some other words, the *ā* vowel is written with a yā’ instead of an alif ا. When this happens, we will write the yā’ without its dots and write a dagger alif َ above it, like this عِي. Here are some examples:

- عَالِي ealā
- رَامِي ramā

### 2.3.3. Zero-vowel written with a O-mark

As we have seen above if an Arabic letter has a vowel after it it will take one of the three pronunciation marks: َ, ِ, ُ. If, however, there is no vowel after the letter we will put a zero-vowel O-mark on it ْ. This mark can generally only occur if there is a short vowel before the letter. Examples:

- كَمْ kam
- مُنْدُ mundhu
- مِنْهُمْ minhum



- مِنْهَا *minhā*

#### 2.3.4. Semi-vowels

Arabic has two short semi-vowels:

1. *aw* like in English “show”. This is written with a wāw with a o-mark on it and a short *a* vowel before it. Example لَوْ *law*.
2. *ay* like in English “bait”. This is written with a yā’ with a o-mark on it and a short *a* vowel before it. Example كَيْ *kay*. Examples with short semi-vowels:

- وَبَحَاكْ *wayḥaka*
- غَيْرُهُ *ghayruhu*
- قَوْلُهُ *qawluhu*

It also has two long semi-vowels:

1. *āw* like in English “cow”. This is written with a wāw with a o-mark on it and a long *ā* vowel before it. Example وَآوْ *wāw*.
2. *āy* like in English “bye”. This is written with a yā’ with a o-mark on it and a long *ā* vowel before it. Example شَايْ *shāy*.

These long semi-vowels are rare and may only occur at the end of a sentence.

#### 2.3.5. Doubled letters

A word may contain “doubled” letters. This is when the same letter occurs, one after the other; the first letter has a o-mark, and the second letter has a vowel. For example, in the word قَتَّتَلْ *qattala*, the letter ت is doubled. When this occurs, we actually only write the letter once and put a “doubling mark” ّ on it, like so: قَتَّلْ *qattala*. When pronouncing this word, stop at and stress the doubled letter *qattala* and make sure it does not sound like the undoubled letter in قَتَلْ *qatala*. Examples with doubled letters:

- كَبَّرْ *kabbara*
- حَدَّدْ *hadduhu*
- فَعَّالْ *faʿʿāla*
- سَكَّيْنْ *sikkīnu*. Note that the *i*-mark is below the doubling mark but above the letter ك. This is the most common way to write this, although having the *i*-mark below the letter is also sometimes done as well. (In this case, the doubling mark will still be above the letter.)
- سَفَّوْدْ *saffūdu*
- صَالَّلِيْنْ *dāllina*
- مُزَّامِلْ *muzzammilu*

### 2.3.6. Nūnation

In the next chapter, we will learn, if Allāh wills, that nouns in Arabic are sometimes pronounced with an extra ن sound at their end. This is called *nūnation*. Nūnation is indicated in writing, not by adding a the letter ن at the end of the word, but by writing the final vowel mark twice, thus:

1. ُ *un*, for example كِتَابٌ *kitābun*.
2. ً *an*, for example شَجَرَةٌ *shajaratān*.
3. ِ *in*, for example بَيْتٌ *baytin*.

The nūnated *a*-mark ً has specific spelling rules: Generally, we will generally add a silent alif after it, for example سَالِمٌ becomes سَالِمًا *sālīmān*. This is done for all words except:

1. If the word ends with a ة. In this case we don't add the silent alif. For example, غَاضِبَةٌ becomes غَاضِبَةً *ghāḍibatān*.
2. If the word ends with a *ā* vowel, whether written with an alif ا or as a yā' with dagger alif ي. In this case, the *an* mark is put on the letter before the alif ا or yā' ي and the final vowel letter becomes silent and is not pronounced. For example, مُصْطَفًى becomes مُصْطَفًى *muṣṭafān*, عَصَا becomes عَصَا *ʿaṣān*.
3. If the word ends with a hamzah. In this case, we might or might not write a silent alif, depending on the following rules:
  - a. If there is an alif before an unseated hamzah ء, then we don't add a silent alif. For example دَاءٌ becomes دَاءٌ *dāʿān*, not دَاءًا.
  - b. Otherwise, we add a silent alif after the hamzah. However, this may affect the writing of the hamzah, for example مُبْتَدَأٌ becomes مُبْتَدَأًا *mubtadaʿān*. This is discussed further in appendix @ref(hamzarules).

Here are some examples of nūnated words:

- سَعْدٌ *saʿdun*
- ضَرْبًا *ḍarban*
- قَاضٍ *qāḍin*
- سَاعَةٌ *saʿatān*
- دُعَاءٌ *duʿāʿān*
- اِمْرَأًا *imraʿān*
- شَيْئًا *shayʿān*
- سُوءًا *sūʾān*
- غَبْنٌ *ghabanun*

## 2.4. Connecting hamzah

Some words in arabic begin with a O-mark. When this occurs a connecting hamzah ʾ (written as a tiny ھ on an alif) is put before it. If this word comes in the beginning of the sentence the connecting alif is pronounced as a hamzah. Otherwise this connecting hamzah is not pronounced and the word is connected to the final vowel of the previous word in pronunciation. In this tutorial we will transcribe the connecting hamzah with a hyphen “-”. Examples of connecting hamzah:

أَفْتَحَ الْبَابَ  
ʾiftaḥi -lbāba

أَنْظُرْ  
ʾundḥur

If the previous word does not end with a vowel, then a helper vowel is added. The most common helper vowel is ِ. Example:

زَيْدُ الْكَرِيمِ  
zayduni -lkarimu

When one word ends in a long vowel and the next word begins with a connecting hamzah, the long vowel becomes a short vowel in pronunciation, but in writing the long vowel's letter is retained. For example:

أَخَذَ مِنَّا الْكِتَابَ  
ʾakhadha minna -lkitāba

ذُو الْقَرْنَيْنِ  
dhu -lqarnayni

فِي الْبَيْتِ  
fi -lbayti

## 2.5. Pronouncing the end of a sentence

When a word is at the end of a sentence and it ends with a long vowel, then the final long vowel is pronounced normally. However, when a word at the end of a sentence does not end with a long vowel, then the final letter's pronunciation mark is pronounced as a O-mark when vocalizing the sentence. If the final letter is a َ then it is pronounced as a َ ھ hā' with a O-mark.

This change in pronunciation is only vocal, it does not affect how we write the pronunciation mark. Here we give some examples of words pronounced if they were at the end of a sentence:

فَتَحْ  
fatḥ

عُقْبَاهُ  
*euqbah*

وَالِدَايَ  
*wālidāy*

وَالِدَيَّ  
*wālidayy*

If however, the final letter's pronunciation mark is a *an* mark then it is pronounced as a long-*ā* vowel. The only exception is if the final letter were *ḥā'*, in which case it is then pronounced as a *hā'* with a *o*-mark *o*. Here are examples of words with *an* marks pronounced as if they were at the end of a sentence.

مَفْعُولًا  
*mafʿūlā*

سَاجِدًا  
*sājīdā*

مَرْفُوعَةً  
*marfūʿah*

Note that the above exception is only for *o*. If a hamzah with an *an* mark occurs at the end of a word, then it too will be pronounced as if it had a long-*ā* vowel after it. Such is the case, whether or not a silent alif is written after the hamzah. Examples:

- مُبْتَدَأًا is pronounced *mubtada'ā*
- دُعَاءٌ is pronounced *duʿā'ā*

Similarly, if the word has a final *yā'* that represents the long-*ā* vowel, and the letter before has an *an* mark, it is pronounced with the long-*ā* vowel at the end of the sentence. For example:

- مُصْطَفًى is pronounced *muṣṭafā*

Except in this section, we will usually transcribe Arabic into English letters without modifying the transcription for the last word in the sentence. This is because the last vowel mark is helpful for us to learn the grammatical function of the word. But when saying the sentence out aloud you should pronounce the ending of the final word as we have just described.

For example, the sentence:

ذَهَبَ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ

will be transcribed, in the remainder of this book, as:

*dhahaba 'ila -lbayti*

but should be pronounced as

*dhahaba 'ila -lbayt*

## 2.6. Qur'ānic script

In printed volumes of the Qur'ān, the spelling words is a little different from non-Qur'ānic Standard Arabic. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this book. Here we'll just give a few examples and note that these differences are typically only found in printed volumes of the Qur'ān.

Standard Arabic	Qur'ānic Arabic
الصَّلَاةُ	الصَّلَاةُ
السَّمَاوَاتِ	السَّمَوَاتِ
يَا أَبْنُ أُمِّ	يَبْنُوْمُ

Work in progress

Work in progress

## Chapter 3.

### Nouns

#### 3.1. Introduction

A noun is a kind of word that is the name of something or someone.

Here are some examples of common nouns in Arabic:

Arabic word	Transcription	Definition
رَجُلٌ	<i>rajul</i>	man
كِتَابٌ	<i>kitāb</i>	book
بَيْتٌ	<i>bayt</i>	house
شَجَرَةٌ	<i>shajarah</i>	tree
صَبْرٌ	<i>ṣabr</i>	patience
وَقْتُ	<i>waqt</i>	time
طَعَامٌ	<i>ṭaʿām</i>	food
ابْنٌ	<i>ʾibn</i>	son

Note that the final letter in each word, above, does not have a vowel mark. This is because, the final vowel mark is actually variable, as we shall see later in this chapter.

When we discuss nouns outside of sentences we shall pronounce the *ḍ* as a *h*. Therefore, شَجَرَةٌ “tree”, in isolation, is pronounced *shajarah*, not *shajarat*.

Some nouns begin with a connecting hamzah, for example: ابْنٌ *ʾibn* “son”. When in the beginning of a sentence, the connecting hamzah will be pronounced with an *i*-mark ِ.

#### 3.2. Definiteness

When talking about nouns it is necessary to introduce a topic called *definiteness*.

A noun is *definite* when the person or thing it refers to is known. For example, if you say, “The man arrived.” then the usage of the word “the” before “man”

tells us that the man is known to us. Therefore the noun “man” is definite in this sentence.

Conversely, if we had said “A man arrived.” then the use of “a” before “man” tells us that the man is unknown to us. Therefore “man” is indefinite in this sentence.

“The” is called the *definite article* and “a” is called the *indefinite article*.

### 3.2.1. Definite nouns in Arabic

The definite article in Arabic is *ألْ* *al*. It corresponds to the English definite article “the”. In order to make a noun definite, we attach *ألْ* *al* to its beginning.

For example, the definite noun “the book” in Arabic is *الْكِتَابُ* *alkitāb*.

*ألْ* *al* begins with a connecting hamzah; the hamzah will be pronounced only in the beginning of a sentence. And when it occurs in the beginning of a sentence, the hamzah is pronounced with a َ a-mark.

#### 3.2.1.1. Sun letters and moon letters

The noun “man” in Arabic is *رَجُلٌ* *rajul*. To make this noun definite, we add *ألْ* *al* to the beginning of the word. But instead of becoming *الرَّجُلُ* *alrajul* the word becomes *الرَّجُلُ* *arrajul*. The *ل* in *ألْ* becomes silent and the *ر* gets doubled. This happens because the first letter *ر* in the word *رَجُلٌ* *rajul* is from a group of letters called “sun letters”. For all nouns beginning with sun letters, when *ألْ* *al* is put in the beginning, the *ل* in *ألْ* becomes silent and the sun letter becomes doubled.

The rest of the letters in the alphabet are called “moon letters” and for words that begin with moon letters, the *ل* in *ألْ* does not become silent and the moon letter does not become doubled. For example, *كِتَابٌ* *kitāb* “book” becomes *الْكِتَابُ* *alkitāb* “the book”.

The sun letters are *ن ط ظ ل ن ص ض ط ظ ل ن*.

The moon letters are *ء ب ج ح خ ع غ ف ق ك م ه و ي*.

The names “sun letters” and “moon letters” were given because of the Arabic words for “sun” and “moon” respectively. “The sun” in Arabic is *الشَّمْسُ* *ash-shams* which begins with *ش* which causes the *ل* in *ألْ* to be silent. “The moon” is *القَمَرُ* *alqamar* which begins with *ق* which does not cause the *ل* in *ألْ* to be silent. Thus *ش* represents the sun letters and *ق* represents the moon letters.

Here are some examples of words that begin with sun letters:

Noun	Definite noun
<i>رَجُلٌ</i> <i>rajul</i> “man”	<i>الرَّجُلُ</i> <i>arrajul</i> “the man”



Noun	Definite noun
تَاجِر <i>tājir</i> “trader”	التَّاجِر <i>attājir</i> “the trader”
لُعْبَة <i>luebah</i> “toy”	اللُّعْبَة <i>alluebah</i> “the toy”

### 3.2.1.2. The definite article ال *’al* with nouns with an initial connecting hamzah

If the definite article ال *’al* is with prefixed to nouns that have an initial connecting hamzah, then the ل shall no longer have an O-mark ُ. Instead it shall have an i-mark ِ. Example:

الْأَبْنِ  
*’ali-bn*  
 “the son”

### 3.2.2. Indefinite nouns in Arabic

Arabic has no indefinite article corresponding to the English indefinite article “a”. In order to make a noun indefinite in Arabic, it is simply written or pronounced without the definite article ال *’al*. For example, كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book”.

### 3.2.3. Differences in definiteness between Arabic and English

The articles “a” and “the” are types of words called *determiners*. Besides “a” and “the”, English has other determiners like “some”, “this”, “that”, etc. that can make a noun definite or indefinite. For example:

“This man gave that boy some food.”

In the above sentence “man” and “boy” are definite, and “food” is indefinite.

English can also have definite or indefinite nouns without determiners. The definiteness of the noun is then determined by the meaning of the sentence. Consider, for example, the sentence:

“Time is valuable.”

Here, we are not talking about some indefinite amount of time, but rather the general concept of time, which is known to us. Therefore, the noun “time” here is definite.

Consider now the sentence:

“We don’t have to leave just yet; we have time.”

Here, “time” has an indefinite meaning “[some] time”.

As opposed to this complicated situation in English, Arabic uses only the definite article ال *’al* to make common nouns definite. So when translating sentences

from English to Arabic, you must first determine whether the noun is definite or not in English, and then use *al* when the noun is definite.

Examples:

- “This man gave that boy some food.”
  - man: definite; Arabic: *الرَّجُلُ* *arrujul*
  - boy: definite; Arabic: *الغُلَامُ* *alghulām*
  - food: indefinite; Arabic: *طَعَامٌ* *ṭaʿām*
- “Time is valuable.”
  - time: definite; Arabic: *الْوَقْتُ* *alwaqt*
- “We don’t have to leave just yet; we have time.”
  - time: indefinite; Arabic: *وَقْتُ* *waqt*

### 3.3. State

Nouns in Arabic have a property called *state*. The state of a noun is dependent on the function of the noun in a sentence. The state of a noun is indicated by the noun’s ending. There are three states that a noun can be in. They are:

1. the U-state, indicated, for most nouns, by a *u* on the final letter of the noun.
2. the A-state, indicated, for most nouns, by a *a* on the final letter of the noun.
3. the I-state, indicated, for most nouns, by a *i* on the final letter of the noun.

When a noun is indefinite, then, for most nouns, it is also nūnated. Here, for example, is the noun *كِتَابٌ* *kitāb* “book” in its three states:

State	Indefinite “a book”	Definite “the book”
U-state	<i>كِتَابٌ</i> <i>kitābun</i>	<i>الْكِتَابُ</i> <i>alkitābu</i>
A-state	<i>كِتَابًا</i> <i>kitāban</i>	<i>الْكِتَابَا</i> <i>alkitāba</i>
I-state	<i>كِتَابٍ</i> <i>kitābin</i>	<i>الْكِتَابِي</i> <i>alkitābi</i>

The U-state is a noun’s normal state in a sentence, and there needs to be a reason to take the noun out of this state into another state. We will begin to use state more in the next chapter if Allāh wills, where we learn how to form sentences.

### 3.4. Grammatical gender

Some nouns designate animate beings like “man”, “woman”, “boy”, “girl”, “dog”, “cow”, etc. Other nouns designate inanimate objects like “book”, “house”, “hand”, “tree”, “city”, “food”.

In dealing with the grammatical genders of such nouns, English uses three genders:

1. The masculine gender. This is used for nouns that designate male human beings and also some male animals. The pronouns used for the masculine gender are “he”, “him”, and “his”.
2. The feminine gender. This is used for nouns that designate female human beings, and also some female animals. The pronouns used for the feminine gender are “she” and “her”.
3. The neutral gender. This is used for nouns that designate inanimate objects and animals in general. The pronoun used for the neutral gender is “it”.

In Arabic, there are only two grammatical genders: the masculine gender and the feminine gender. All nouns in Arabic are either masculine or feminine in gender. Nouns that designate male human beings are assigned the masculine grammatical gender. And nouns that designate female human beings are assigned the feminine grammatical gender. Nouns that designate animals sometimes conform to the gender of the animal. Other times, they have a fixed gender. As for nouns that designate inanimate objects, these, too, are assigned a gender. For example, كِتَاب *kitāb* “book” in Arabic is masculine. And شَجَرَة *shajarah* “tree” in Arabic is feminine. We shall discuss this in more detail below.

#### 3.4.1. Nouns that designate animate beings.

In Arabic, in terms of their form, nouns that designate animate beings are in three categories:

1. There are separate but matching nouns for the male and female animate beings.
2. There are separate and unrelated nouns for the male and female animate beings.
3. The same noun is used for both sexes.

We will discuss each of these categories below.

##### 3.4.1.1. Matching nouns for male and female animate beings

In Arabic for some nouns that designate animate beings, the nouns for both sexes match each other. Here are some examples:

## Primitive nouns

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
أَبْن <i>'ibn</i>	masc.	son
ابْنَةٌ <i>'ibnah</i>	fem.	daughter
طِفْل <i>tifl</i>	masc.	child
طِفْلة <i>tiflah</i>	fem.	(female) child
إِنْسَان <i>'insān</i>	masc.	human being
إِنْسَانَةٌ <i>'insānah</i>	fem.	(female) human being
حُرّ <i>hur</i>	masc.	free man
حُرّة <i>hurrah</i>	fem.	free woman
كَلْب <i>kalb</i>	masc.	(male) dog
كَلْبَةٌ <i>kalbah</i>	fem.	(female) dog
هَرّ <i>hirr</i>	masc.	(male) cat
هَرّة <i>hirrah</i>	fem.	(female) cat

## Derived nouns

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
مُعَلِّم <i>mueallim</i>	masc.	(male) teacher
مُعَلِّمَةٌ <i>mueallimah</i>	fem.	(female) teacher
طَالِب <i>tālib</i>	masc.	(male) student
طَالِبَةٌ <i>tālibah</i>	fem.	(female) student
صَاحِب <i>sāhib</i>	masc.	(male) companion
صَاحِبَةٌ <i>sāhibah</i>	fem.	(female) companion
صَدِيق <i>sadiq</i>	masc.	(male) friend
صَدِيقَةٌ <i>sadiqah</i>	fem.	(female) friend

In each of the words in the table above, the feminine noun is basically the same as the masculine noun but with the addition of a *ə* at the end. For example, طِفْل *tifl* is masculine, and its feminine is طِفْلة *tiflah* (fem.).

As a matter of fact, the *ə* is called a feminine marker for singular nouns. There are a couple of other, less common, feminine markers besides *ə* that we will learn them later, if Allāh wills.

Note that the vowel-mark before the *ə* is always an *a*-mark.

Note also that we have divided the nouns above into two categories:

- i. Primitive nouns
- ii. Derived nouns

Primitive nouns have a primitive meaning, without a primarily adjectival or verbal quality in the meaning, for example “human” “cat”, etc. For derived nouns, their meaning is derived from an adjectival or verbal quality. For example, a

“teacher” is someone who teaches. A “friend” is someone who is friendly. And so on.

For derived nouns, the formation of the feminine noun by adding a feminine marker (like ة) to the masculine noun is normal and expected. Whereas, for primitive nouns, the fact that the feminine and masculine nouns match each other and differ only by the feminine marker ة is something that, although somewhat common, is more of a coincidence.

Another noteworthy point is that, for many primitive nouns, sometimes only one of the masculine/feminine pair may be used to refer to beings of either sex. What we mean by this is that, for example, كَلْب *kalb*, while remaining a masculine noun, can be used to refer to both a male dog and a female dog, especially if the animal’s physical gender is not obvious or particularly important. And كَلْبَة *kalbah* (fem.) “a female dog” is typically only used when it is needed to specify the gender of the animal. Conversely, هِرَّة *hirrah* “a (female) cat” may be used to refer to cat of either physical gender, especially if it is not obvious whether it is a male or female cat.

This preference of the noun of one gender to refer to beings of either physical gender is case-by-case. For example, طِفْل *ṭifl* (masc.) is commonly used to say “a child”, regardless of whether the child is a boy or a girl. But طِفْلَة *ṭiflah*, although not uncommon, is used specifically for “a female child”.

As another example, the word إِنْسَانَة *insānah* (fem.) “a female human being” is rarely used at all. Instead, the word إِنْسَان *insān*, while remaining a masculine noun, is almost always used to refer to “a human being” in general, regardless of actual gender.

On the other hand, ابْن *ibn* “son” and ابْنَة *ibnah* “daughter” are only ever used for their respective gender. So ابْن *ibn* (masc.) “a son” is never used to mean “a daughter”. And ابْنَة *ibnah* (fem.) “a daughter” is never used to mean “a son”.

As for derived nouns, they are typically only ever used for their respective gender. So, for example, مُعَلِّم *muʿallim* (masc.) is only used for “a (male) teacher”. And مُعَلِّمَة *muʿallimah* (fem.) is only used for “a (female) teacher”.

#### 3.4.1.2. Unrelated nouns for male and female animate beings

For other nouns that designate animate beings, the nouns for the male and female sexes are completely unrelated. Here are some examples:

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
أَب <i>ab</i>	masc.	father
أُمُّ <i>umm</i>	fem.	mother
غُلَام <i>ghulām</i>	masc.	boy
جَارِيَة <i>jāriyah</i>	fem.	girl
عَبْد <i>ʿabd</i>	masc.	male slave

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
أَمَةٌ <i>amah</i>	fem.	female slave
أَسَدٌ <i>asad</i>	masc.	lion
لَبْوَةٌ <i>labwah</i>	fem.	lioness
ثَوْرٌ <i>thawr</i>	masc.	bull
بَقَرَةٌ <i>baqarah</i>	fem.	cow

Even in these nouns you can see that the feminine noun usually ends with a ة feminine marker. There are only a few commonly used feminine nouns that don't end with a feminine marker like ة. اُمٌّ *umm* “mother” is one of these exceptions.

#### 3.4.1.3. Using the same noun for both sexes

There are other nouns for animate beings where the same word is used for both sexes. The word itself will still be either grammatically masculine or feminine. Here are some examples:

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
شَخْصٌ <i>shakhṣ</i>	masc.	person
نَفْسٌ <i>nafs</i>	fem.	self
عَدُوٌّ <i>aduw</i>	masc.	enemy
حَيَوَانٌ <i>hayawān</i>	masc.	animal
طَائِرٌ <i>ṭā'ir</i>	masc.	bird
قِرْدٌ <i>qird</i>	masc.	monkey
حَمَامَةٌ <i>hamāmah</i>	fem.	dove
نَمْلَةٌ <i>namlah</i>	fem.	ant

So, for example, قِرْدٌ *qird* “monkey” is grammatically masculine but it will be used for both a male and a female monkey. Similarly, شَخْصٌ *shakhṣ* is a masculine noun meaning “person”. While remaining grammatically masculine, it can be used to refer to persons of male or female persons. While, نَفْسٌ *nafs* is a feminine noun meaning “self”. While remaining grammatically feminine, it can be used to refer to persons of male or female selves

Note also that نَفْسٌ *nafs* “self” is a feminine noun but it does not end in a ة. It is one of the small number of feminine nouns that don't have a female marker, like اُمٌّ *umm* (fem.) “mother”.

## 3.4.2. Nouns that designate inanimate objects

As mentioned earlier, nouns that designate inanimate objects are assigned a fixed grammatical gender. There is usually no discernable reason why some are assigned a masculine gender while others are assigned a feminine gender.

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
كِتَاب <i>kitāb</i>	masc.	book
بَيْت <i>bayt</i>	masc.	house
قَلَم <i>qalam</i>	masc.	pen
طَعَام <i>ṭaʿām</i>	masc.	food
مَاء <i>māʾ</i>	masc.	water
مَدْرَسَة <i>madrasah</i>	fem.	school
مَدِينَة <i>madīnah</i>	fem.	city
غُرْفَة <i>ghurfah</i>	fem.	room
شَجَرَة <i>shajarah</i>	fem.	tree
شَمْس <i>shams</i>	fem.	sun
قَمَر <i>qamar</i>	masc.	moon
عِلْم <i>ʿilm</i>	masc.	knowledge
قُوَّة <i>quwwah</i>	fem.	strength
حَيَاة <i>ḥayāh</i>	fem.	life
مَوْت <i>mawt</i>	masc.	death

In these nouns as well, we note that feminine nouns usually end with the feminine marker ة. But here too, we find another exception: شَمْس *shams* “sun” which is feminine but does not end with a feminine marker. These exceptions are not very many and, if Allāh wills, we will not find it hard to memorize them.

There is a sub-group of nouns that designate inanimate objects, but can also be used to refer to animate beings. Here are a couple of examples:

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
رَهْبِيَّة <i>rahīnah</i>	fem.	pledge
عَضْو <i>ʿuḍw</i>	masc.	member

رَهْبِيَّة *rahīnah* is a feminine noun meaning “pledge”. For inanimate objects it refers to something that is held as a security or a collateral. With its animate meaning, it is used to refer to a human hostage.

Similarly, عَضْو *ʿuḍw* is a masculine noun meaning “member”. For inanimate objects it refers to a limb which is the member of a body. With its animate meaning it refers to a person who is a member of a professional organization.

Just like we saw for the nouns in section @using-the-same-noun-for-both-sexes, such nouns adhere to their fixed grammatical gender when used for either male or female persons.

### 3.4.3. Nouns with mismarked gender

We saw that there are some nouns that are feminine, but do not end with with a feminine marker like ة. These were:

- أُمُّ *umm* (fem.) “mother”
- نَفْسٌ *nafs* (fem.) “self”
- شَمْسٌ *shams* (fem.) “sun”

There are a few more nouns that are like this. One special category among them is body parts. Many prominent body parts that come in pairs or more, are grammatically feminine, whether or not they end with a feminine marker like ة. Here are some examples:

- يَدٌ *yad* (fem.) “hand” (sometimes “an arm”)
- عَيْنٌ *ayn* (fem.) “eye”
- أُذُنٌ *udhun* (fem.) “ear”
- قَدَمٌ *qadam* (fem.) “foot”
- رِجْلٌ *rijl* (fem.) “leg” (sometimes “foot”)
- إِبْهَامٌ *ibhām* (fem.) “thumb”
- إِصْبَعٌ *ishbaʿ* (fem.) “finger, toe”
- سِنٌّ *sinn* (fem.) “tooth”
- رُكْبَةٌ *rukbah* (fem.) “knee”

There are exceptions, however. The following body parts come in pairs yet are masculine.

- مَنخَرٌ *manḵhar* (masc.) “nostril”
- مِرْفَقٌ *mirfaq* (masc.) “elbow”

There are other such exceptions as well.

Body parts that don't come in pairs are typically more regular in their gender: they are feminine if they end in a feminine marker like ة, and masculine if they don't. Examples:

- رَأْسٌ *ra's* (masc.) “head”
- أَنْفٌ *anf* (masc.) “nose”
- بَطْنٌ *batn* (masc.) “belly”
- لِحْيَةٌ *lihyah* (fem.) “beard”

Conversely, nouns that end with a feminine marker like ة, yet are masculine are very rare. Some of the more common of them are:

- خَلِيفَةٌ *khalifah* (masc.) “caliph”
- عَلَامَةٌ *callamah* (masc.) “great scholar”



- دَاعِيَّة *dāʿiyah* (masc.) “great preacher”

There are also a few words which can be optionally assigned a masculine or feminine gender. Among these are:

- سُوق *sūq* (masc. or fem.) “market”
- طَرِيق *ṭarīq* (masc. or fem.) “path”

A good dictionary should mention the gender of all these exceptional words. In addition, in appendix @ref(unmarked-fem-nouns) as well, we have a compiled a list of feminine nouns that don’t end with a feminine marker. (TODO: get from Hava: pg. xi (fem) and xii (admitting either gender).)

### 3.5. Exercises

In the following English sentences, determine whether the underlined nouns will be translated with definite or indefinite nouns in Arabic.

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## Chapter 4.

### Subject-information sentences

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter we will learn about a class of sentences called *subject-information sentences*. Subject-information sentences consist of two parts:

- i. The *subject*. This is the topic of the sentence.
- ii. The *information*. This gives us some information about the subject.

#### 4.2. Forming subject-information sentences

Here is a subject-information sentence:

“The building is a house.”

The diagram shows the sentence "The building is a house." with a horizontal line underneath. Below the line, there are two curly braces. The first brace is under "The building" and has the word "subject" written vertically below it. The second brace is under "is a house" and has the word "information" written vertically below it.

The subject of the sentence is “the building”. This means that the sentence is about “the building”.

The information is “a house”. This means that the information that the sentence is giving us about the subject is that it is “a house”.

Let’s try to form this sentence in Arabic.

First we assemble the individual parts:

- i. “The building” in Arabic is أَلْبَيْتَاءُ *’albinā’* (masc.).
- ii. “A house” is بَيْتٌ *bayt* (masc.).

Next we put them both in the u-state. For subject-information sentences, both the subject and the information shall be in the u-state. Remember that the u-state is formed by putting a nūnated *u*-mark ُ at the end of an indefinite noun, and a *u*-mark ِ at the end of a definite noun. Here are the two nouns in the u-state:

- i. أَلْبَيْتَاءُ ُ *’albinā’u* (masc.) “the building” (u-state)

- ii. *baytun* (masc.) “a house” (u-state)

In order to form this sentence in Arabic, we put the subject first and then the information. So we get:

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} \text{information} \\ \text{subject} \end{array} \right\} \text{الْبَيْتُ بَيْتٌ.}$$

*‘albaytu binā’.*

“The building is a house.”

But wait! Where is the Arabic word for “is”? It turns out that Arabic does not usually express any word for “is”. Instead, the meaning of this word is implied.

Also, note that the final vowel mark at the end of the sentence is written but not pronounced. So we will write *بَيْتٌ* but say *bayt*, not *baytun*. This is in accordance with what we learned in section @ref(pronouncing-the-end-of-a-sentence).

Now let’s try reversing this sentence, and try making the sentence:

“The house is a building.”

We follow the same procedure by assembling the individual parts of the sentence and putting them in the u-state:

- i. The subject: *‘albaytu* (masc.) “the house” (u-state)
- ii. The information: *binā’un* (masc.) “a building” (u-state)

And then we put them together, first the subject and then the information:

$$\text{الْبَيْتُ بَيْتٌ.}$$

“The house is a building.”

and there we have our sentence.

### 4.3. Matching the gender between the subject and the information

In the sentences above, both the subject and the information were masculine nouns. Now let’s try forming a sentence where the subject and the information have different genders. Let’s try saying:

“The building is a school.”

- i. The subject: *‘albinā’u* (masc.) “the building” (u-state)
- ii. The information: *madrasatun* (fem.) “a school” (u-state)

In the same manner as before, we form the sentence by first writing the subject and then the information:

اَلْبَيْنَاءُ مَدْرَسَةٌ.

ʾalbināʾu madrasah.

“The building is a school.”

We can also reverse this sentence:

اَلْمَدْرَسَةُ بَيْنَاءٌ.

ʾalmadrasatu bināʾ.

“The school is a building.”

So we see that it is quite normal to have a sentence where the gender of the subject does not match the gender of the information. This is because the words we have dealt with so far denote animate objects. If either the subject or the information denote animate beings, then in this case the subject and the information often do match each other in gender. For example, let's try to form the sentence:

“The mother is a teacher.”

Here are the individual words that we will use to form the sentence:

- i. The subject: “the mother”: اَلْأُمُّ ʾalʾummu (fem.) (u-state).
- ii. The information: “a teacher”. We have two words for “a teacher” in Arabic:
  - مُعَلِّمٌ *muʿallim* (masc.) “a (male) teacher”
  - مُعَلِّمَةٌ *muʿallimah* (fem.) “a (female) teacher”.

Obviously, مُعَلِّمَةٌ *muʿallimah* would apply here so we put it in the u-state: مُعَلِّمَةٌ *muʿallimatu* (u-state).

Now we can assemble the sentence:

اَلْأُمُّ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.

ʾalʾummu muʿallimah.

“The mother is a teacher.”

In the reverse sentence “The teacher is a mother.”, we again use the feminine noun مُعَلِّمَةٌ *muʿallimah* (fem.) “a (female) teacher”, which is now the subject of the sentence, to match the feminine noun in the information اَلْأُمُّ *ʾalumm* (fem.) “a mother”. So we get:

اَلْمُعَلِّمَةُ أُمٌّ.

ʾalmuʿallimatu ʾumm.

“The teacher<sub>f</sub> is a mother.”

Here is another example:

اَلرَّجُلُ أَبٌ.

ʾarrujulu ʾab.

“The man is a father.”

Now, let's try a sentence where we are still dealing with animate beings but the nouns mismatches in grammatical gender.

الْأُمُّ شَخْصٌ.

*ʾalʾummu šhakḥṣ.*

"The mother is a person."

الشَّخْصُ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.

*ʾashšhakḥṣu muʿallimah.*

"The person is a (female) teacher."

الْمُعَلِّمَةُ شَخْصٌ.

*ʾalmuʿallimatu šhakḥṣ.*

"The (female) teacher is a person."

In the above examples, the grammatical genders mismatch between the subject and the information. But this is because we are matching with the physical gender of the person represented by the masculine noun *شَخْصٌ* *šhakḥṣ* "a person", not its grammatical gender.

The same effect is seen when using the word *حَيَوَانٌ* *ḥayawān* which is a masculine noun meaning "an animal". It can be applied to both male and female animals. So we can say:

الْحَيَوَانُ هِرٌّ.

*ʾalḥayawānu hirr.*

"The animal is a (male) cat."

and

الْحَيَوَانُ هِرَّةٌ.

*ʾalḥayawānu hirrah.*

"The animal is a (female) cat."

#### 4.4. Detached pronouns

Pronouns, in Arabic, are special nouns that can be used in place of other nouns when it is known who is being referred to. This means that they can replace definite nouns only. Pronouns in English include words like "he", "she", "it", "you", "I", etc.

In order to explain the usage of pronouns, we will first show a sentence with a noun subject:

"The man is a teacher."

Now we you can replace the definite subject noun "the man" with the pronoun "he":

"He is a teacher."

In Arabic there are a few different kinds of pronouns. Here we will learn *detached pronouns*. They are called detached pronouns because they are detached from other words. There are another set of pronouns called *attached pronouns* that we will learn later, if Allāh wills.

#### 4.4.1. Participants

When talking about pronouns, it is beneficial to make use of a concept of grammar called *participants*.

In any kind of speech there can be up to three types of *participants* involved. A participant may be singular, i.e. consist of one individual, or plural, i.e., consist of more than one individual.

The three participants in speech are:

1. The *speaker-participant*. This is the participant who is speaking. When the speaker-participant refers to himself or herself (or themselves if plural) in English, then he/she/they use the pronouns “I”, “me”, “we”, and “us”.
2. The *addressee-participant*. This is the participant whom the speaker-participant is directly speaking to. When the speaker-participant refers to the addressee-participant in English, he uses the “you” pronoun.
3. The *absentee-participant*. This is the participant who is not being directly spoken to. Their only participation in the speech is that they are being referred to. When the speaker-participant refers to the absentee-participant in English, he uses the pronouns “he”, “him”, “she”, “her”, “it”, “they”, and “them”.

In this chapter we will learn the Arabic pronouns for the singular participants.

#### 4.4.2. Detached pronouns for the singular absentee-participant

Here are the Arabic detached pronouns for the singular absentee-participant:

- singular masculine absentee-participant: هُوَ *huwa* “he”.
- singular feminine absentee-participant: هِيَ *hiya* “she”.

Here are some examples of pair of sentences, each first with a noun, and then with a pronoun in place of the noun:

- الرَّجُلُ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
'*arrajulu muʿallim*.  
“The man is a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”
- هُوَ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
*huwa muʿallim*.  
“He is a (male) teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

- الْجَارِيَةُ طَالِبَةٌ.  
'*aljāriyatu ṭalibah.*  
"The girl is a student<sub>f</sub>."
- هِيَ طَالِبَةٌ.  
*hiya ṭalibah.*  
"She is a student<sub>f</sub>."
- الْبَيْتُ بِنَاءٌ.  
'*albaytu binā'.*  
"The house is a building."
- هُوَ بِنَاءٌ.  
*huwa binā'.*  
"It is a building."

Note that Arabic uses the pronoun هُوَ *huwa* "he" to refer to the inanimate object "the house". This is because, as we know, all nouns in Arabic are either masculine or feminine. In translating the sentence to English we will employ the neutral pronoun "it" to make the sentence sound natural.

- الْبِنَاءُ مَدْرَسَةٌ.  
'*albinā'u madrasah.*  
"The building is a school."
- هُوَ مَدْرَسَةٌ. *huwa madrasah.*  
or  
• هِيَ مَدْرَسَةٌ. *hiya madrasah.*  
"It is a school."

Note that either هُوَ *huwa* "he" or هِيَ *hiya* "she" can be used in the above sentence because the gender of the subject الْبِنَاءُ '*albinā'* (masc.) "the building" mismatches the gender of the information مَدْرَسَةٌ *madrasah* (fem.) "a school."

In such cases where the genders of the subject and the information do not match, then, generally speaking, the pronoun for either gender could be employed with the following guideline:

Prefer to match the gender of the subject pronoun with the gender of the information, unless the noun being replaced with a pronoun is an animate being, in which case prefer to use the gender of the animate being.

So in the above sentence we will prefer to use هِيَ مَدْرَسَةٌ *hiya madrasah.* because the information مَدْرَسَةٌ *madrasah* "a school" is feminine.

- Here is an example with an animate being as the subject:

• الْجَارِيَةُ إِنْسَانٌ.  
'*aljāriyatu insān.*  
"The girl is a human."



هِيَ إِنْسَانٌ.  
*hiya insān.*

“She is a human.”

Here, if we replace the noun الْجَارِيَّة *al-jāriyah* “the girl” with a pronoun, we will prefer to use هِيَ *hiya* “she”, because the girl is an animate being, even though the information إِنْسَانٌ *insānun* “a human” is masculine.

#### 4.4.3. Detached pronouns for the singular addressee-participant and speaker-participant

Here are the pronouns for the singular addressee-participant and speaker-participant:

- singular masculine addressee-participant: أَنْتَ *anta* “you<sub>m</sub>”.
- singular feminine addressee-participant: أَنْتِ *anti* “you<sub>f</sub>”.
- singular speaker-participant: أَنَا *ana* “I”.

Note that the addressee-participant pronoun “you” has separate pronouns for the masculine and the feminine while the speaker-participant pronoun “I” has the same pronoun for both genders. Examples with these pronouns:

- أَنْتَ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
*anta muʿallim.*  
 “You<sub>m</sub> are a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”
- أَنْتِ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.  
*anti muʿallimah.*  
 “You<sub>f</sub> are a teacher<sub>f</sub>.”
- أَنَا مُعَلِّمٌ.  
*ana muʿallim.*  
 “I am a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”
- أَنَا مُعَلِّمَةٌ.  
*ana muʿallimah.*  
 “I am a teacher<sub>f</sub>.”

#### 4.4.4. Definiteness of pronouns

We stated, and saw, that pronouns can replace definite nouns. This means that pronouns themselves are definite nouns (even though they are not prefixed by ال *al* “the”).

This fact will be useful in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

#### 4.4.5. Rigidity of pronouns

Remember in section @ref(flexibility-of-nouns), we talked about the flexibility of nouns. We said that nouns whose endings change with the noun's state are called flexible nouns. Most nouns fall into this category.

Pronouns, however, are nouns whose endings don't change with their state. Therefore they fall into the category of *rigid* nouns.

#### 4.5. A definite noun as the information

In all the examples so far, the information has been an indefinite noun: “a building”, “a teacher”, “a cat”, etc. It is also possible for the information to be a definite noun:

الرَّجُلُ الْمُعَلِّمُ.

ʾarrajulu -lmueallim.

“The man is the teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

The above sentence, although correct, is ambiguous. It can also be interpreted as a noun-phrase, meaning “the teacher-man”, instead of the complete sentence “The man is the teacher<sub>m</sub>.” Therefore, in order to disambiguate and make it clear that we mean the complete sentence, a *disambiguating pronoun* is usually (but not always) inserted between the subject and the information. Disambiguating pronouns are detached pronouns that match the subject of the sentence in gender. With a disambiguating pronoun, the sentence above becomes:

الرَّجُلُ هُوَ الْمُعَلِّمُ.

ʾarrajulu huwa -lmueallim.

“The man is the teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

The disambiguating pronoun here is هُوَ *huwa* and is not translated. Here are some more examples of sentences with definite informations and disambiguating pronouns.

الْبَيْتُ هُوَ الْبِنَاءُ.

ʾalbaytu -lbināʾu.

“The house is the building.”

الْحَيَوَانُ هِيَ الْهَيْرَةُ.

ʾalhayawānu hiya -lhirrātu.

“The animal is the cat.”

#### 4.6. An indefinite noun as the subject

In all the sentences we have seen so far, the subject has always been a definite noun. This is usually the case. A subject needs a certain amount of *weight* in order to be the first word in a sentence. And being definite gives it this needed

weight. That is: “the man” is grammatically *heavier* than “a man”. So it is easier to start a sentence with “the man”.

So can we even have a sentence that has an indefinite subject? For example:

- A house is a building.
- A man is the teacher.

Yes, it is possible, but sentences where the subject is an indefinite noun are not as straightforward to express in Arabic. We will explore some ways of expressing them later if Allāh wills.

#### 4.7. و wa- “and”, فَ fa- “so”/“and then”, and اَوْ ‘aw “or”

##### 4.7.1. و wa- “and”

Arabic uses the particle و wa to mean “and”. Being a one-letter particle, it is joined to the word after it without any space between it and the next word.

وَمَدْرَسَةٌ  
wamadrasatun  
“and a school”

و wa meaning “and” does not change the state of the noun following it. Examples:

الْبِنَاءُ مَسْجِدٌ وَمَدْرَسَةٌ.  
‘albinā’u masjidun wamadrasah.  
“The building is a mosque and a school.”

If there are more than two words, then in English, only the final word usually has “and” and the rest are separated by commas in writing. In Arabic, however, each must have و and commas are not typically used.

الْبِنَاءُ مَسْجِدٌ وَمَدْرَسَةٌ وَمَكْتَبَةٌ.  
‘albinā’u baytun wamadrasatun wamaktabah  
“The building is a mosque, a school, and a library.”

We can also use و to begin and connect sentences. The following example is technically two sentences, both beginning with و:

وَالرَّجُلُ إِنْسَانٌ وَالْكَلْبُ حَيَوَانٌ  
warrujulu ‘inṣānun wa-lkalbu ḥayawānun  
“And the man is a human and the dog is an animal.”

Unlike as in English, this is not considered poor style. When translating such sentences to English, the first و is often left out, thus: “The man is a human and the dog is an animal.”

## 4.7.2. فَ fa- “so”/“and then”

The word فَ fa- “so”/“and then” is comparable to وَ wa- “and”. فَ fa- “so”/“and then” gives a meaning of ordering, consequence, and subsequence that is missing in وَ wa- “and”. For example,

الْبِنَاءُ مَسْجِدٌ فَمَدْرَسَةٌ فَمَكْتَبَةٌ.

*’albinā’u baytun famadrasatun famaktabah*

“The building is a mosque, and then a school, and then a library.”

فَ fa- “so”/“and then”, too, is used to begin and connect sentences. Example,

فَالرَّجُلُ إِنْسَانٌ وَالْكَلْبُ حَيَوَانٌ

*farrujulu ’inṣānun wa-lkalbu ḥayawānun*

“So the man is a human and the dog is an animal.”

Work in progress

## Chapter 5.

### Prepositions

#### 5.1. Introduction

Prepositions are words like “in”, “on”, “from”, etc. They are placed directly before a noun, for example: “in a house”. The preposition “in” is placed directly before the noun “a house”.

In Arabic prepositions, when placed before a noun, put it in the i-state. For example the preposition في *fī* means “in”. We can put it before the noun بَيْت *bayt* “a house”:

فِي بَيْتٍ  
*fī baytin*  
“in a house”

Note how the noun بَيْت *baytin* “a house” is in the i-state because of the preposition في *fī* “in” before it. The i-state is indicated by the nūnated *i*-mark ِ on the final letter of بَيْت.

Arabic has two types of prepositions: *true* prepositions and *pseudo*-prepositions.

#### 5.2. True prepositions

True prepositions are *particles*. Particles are a class of words, like nouns and verbs. Particles don’t have the properties of nouns. Thus, they cannot be definite or indefinite. They cannot be preceded by ال *al* nor may they be nūnated. And they don’t have state (u-state, a-state, i-state).

Here is a list of the more common true prepositions:

Preposition	Meaning
بِ <i>bi</i>	with, by, next to
لِ <i>li</i>	for, to
فِي <i>fī</i>	in
عَلَى <i>ʿalā</i>	on
إِلَى <i>ʾilā</i>	to, toward
مِنْ <i>min</i>	from

Preposition	Meaning
عَنْ <i>ʿan</i>	from, about
كَ <i>ka</i>	like

## Notes:

- Prepositions that are a single letter (like بِ *bi*, لِ *li*, كَ *ka*) are joined to the following noun in writing. Example:

بِقَلَمٍ  
*biqalamin*  
“with a pen”

لِرَجُلٍ  
*lirajulin*  
“for a man”

كَابْنٍ  
*ka-bnin*  
“like a son”

- When a single letter preposition comes before a definite noun with اً *al*, the preposition is generally joined to the alif in the اً *al*. The alif is now not pronounced (because as we know it has a connecting hamzah). Example:

بِالْقَلَمِ  
*bi-lqalami*  
“with the pen”

If the noun begins with a connecting hamzah then the لِ *li* in اً *al* gets an *i*-mark ِ instead of its usual *o*-mark ُ. We described this in section @ref(the-definite-article-with-nouns-with-an-initial-connecting-hamzah). Example:

كَالِابْنِ  
*ka-li-bni*  
“like the son”

- The only exception is the preposition لِ *li*. When joined to a definite noun with اً *al*, the alif in اً *al* is dropped and we write the two *lāms* together. Example:

لِلرَّجُلِ  
*li-rrajuli*  
“for the man”

لِلْجَارِيَةِ  
*li-ljāriyati*  
“for the girl”

لِلْأَبْنِ  
*li-li-bni*  
 “for the son”

However, in this case, if the noun too starts with a *lām*, then we drop the entire *أل al* (in writing, not in meaning). This is to avoid having three *lāms* joined to each other. Example:

اَللُّعْبَةُ  
*ʿalluʿbatu*  
 “the toy”

becomes

لِلُّعْبَةِ  
*li-lluʿbati*  
 “for the toy”

not

× لِلْعَبَةِ

This is also true for the phrase:

لِلَّهِ  
*lillāhi*  
 “for Allāh”

which is formed from *ل + إِلَّهِ*

- The prepositions *عَلَى ʿalā* “on” and *إِلَى ʿilā* “to” have a long-*ā* vowel at the end but it is written with a dotless *yā* ى instead of an alif. (We have already learned that some words are written this way in section @ref(a-vowel-written-with-a-ya).)
- Prepositions that are composed of multiple letters are not joined to the following noun. Example:

إِلَى مَدْرَسَةٍ  
*ʿilā madrasatin*  
 “to a school”

- If a preposition ends with a long vowel, then, as usual, it get shortened to a short vowel when it is followed by a word which begins with a connecting hamzah. Examples:

فِي الْبَيْتِ  
*fī -l-bayti*  
 “in the house”

إِلَى ابْنِ  
*ʿila -bnin*  
 “to a son”

- If a preposition ends with a o-mark َ and it is followed by a word that begins with a connecting hamzah, then the o-mark is changed to a short vowel according to the following rules:

- The ending of the preposition عَنْ *ean* gets an *i*-mark and becomes عَنِ *eani*. Examples:

عَنِ الرَّجُلِ  
*eani -rrajuli*  
“from the man”

عَنِ ابْنِ  
*eani -bnin*  
“from the son”

- The ending of the preposition مِنْ *min* gets an *a*-mark if followed by the ال *al* of a definite noun. Otherwise it gets an *i*-mark if followed by any other connecting hamzah. Examples:

مِنَ الرَّجُلِ  
*mina -rrajuli*  
“from the man”

مِنْ ابْنِ  
*mini -bnin*  
“from a son”

### 5.3. Pseudo-prepositions

Pseudo-prepositions are actually nouns but they are used as prepositions. The above rules of writing and pronunciation apply to them as well.

Here is a list of some common pseudo-prepositions:

Preposition	Transcription	Meaning
عِنْدَ	<i>inda</i>	at
لَدَى	<i>ladā</i>	at
لَدُنْ	<i>ladun</i>	at
مَعَ	<i>maea</i>	together with
بَيْنَ	<i>bayna</i>	between, among

There are three different prepositions above that we have translated as “at”. لَدُنْ is relatively rarer compared to the others. Otherwise, they are largely interchangeable but there are some differences in meaning that we will explain later, if Allāh wills.

Here are some examples using pseudo-prepositions:



مَعَ الْغُلَامِ  
maʿa -lghulāmi  
“with the boy”

عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ  
ʿinda -lbayti  
“at the house”

لَدَى الْبَابِ  
lada -lbābi  
“at the door”

بَيْنَ النَّاسِ  
bayna -nnāsi  
“among the people”

## 5.4. Attached pronouns

We have already learned detached pronouns هُوَ, هِيَ, and أَنَا in section @ref(detached-pronouns). Detached pronouns are the equivalent of “he”, “she”, and “I”, etc. They are used in place of nouns that are in the u-state.

Now we will learn about *attached pronouns*. Attached pronouns are, more or less, the equivalent of “him”, “her”, and “me”, etc. They are used in place of nouns that are in the a-state and the i-state. One place where attached pronouns are used is when they replace the noun directly following a preposition.

The singular attached pronouns are listed below. The detached pronouns are included as well for easy comparison.

Participant	Detached pronoun	Attached pronoun
Masc. absentee	هُوَ <i>huwa</i> “him”	هُ - <i>hu</i> “him”
Fem. absentee	هِيَ <i>hiya</i> “her”	هَا - <i>hā</i> “her”
Masc. addressee	أَنْتَ <i>ʾanta</i> “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”	كَ - <i>ka</i> “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	أَنْتِ <i>ʾanti</i> “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”	كِ - <i>ki</i> “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”
Speaker	أَنَا <i>ʾana</i> “I”	يَ “me”

### 5.4.1. Attached pronouns with prepositions

As mentioned above, one place the attached pronouns are used are after prepositions. Here are some notes regarding how they attach to prepositions:

1. Generally, these pronouns attach to the last letter of the preposition before it. Examples:

- مِنْكَ *minka* “from you”
  - مَعَهُ *maʿahu* “with him”
  - عَنْهَا *ʿanhā* “from her”
2. The *ā* ending of prepositions become *ay* when attaching an attached pronoun. Examples:
- إِلَيْهَا *ʾilayhā* “to her”
  - عَلَيْكَ *ʿalayka* “on you<sub>m</sub>”
3. The pronoun *hu* “him” becomes *hi* when it is preceded by the vowels *i*, *ī*, or the semi-vowel *ay*. So we get
- بِهِ *bihi* “with him”
  - فِيهِ *fīhi* “in him”
  - إِلَيْهِ *ʾilayhi* “to him”
4. The attached pronoun for the speaker deserves special attention. The pronoun itself is the letter *y*. But it has two variants:
- i. *y* - *i*
  - ii. *y* - *iya*

Generally, both of these variants cause the final letter of the word before them, if a consonant, to have an *i*-mark *ī*, regardless of the whether or not that letter originally had an *i*-mark. Examples:

- لِي *lī* and لِيَا *liya* “for me”
- بِي *bī* and بِيَا *biya* “with/by me”
- مَعِي *maʿī* and مَعِيَا *maʿiya* “together with me”
- عِنْدِي *ʿindī* and عِنْدِيَا *ʿindiya* “at me”

Between these two, variants, *y* - *i* is more commonly used generally, except in the cases described in the next point, below:

5. For any word that ends with a long vowel (*-ā*, *-ī*, or *-ū*) or a semi-vowel (*-ay* or *-aw*), the variant *y* - *i* for the speaker attached pronoun is not used. Instead, only the variant *y* - *ya* may be used with such words.

Prepositions that fall under this category are فِي *fī*, عَلَى *ʿalā*, إِلَى *ʾilā*, and لَدَى *ladā*. Furthermore, the *-ā* ending in these will become *ay* instead when attaching the pronoun.

In addition, the pronoun *y* - *ya* will not cause the final letter of word before it to have an *i*-mark because it does that only to consonants, not to vowels or semivowels.

So we get:

- فِي + ي = فِيَّ *fiyya* “in me”
- إِلَى + ي = إِلَيَّ *ʾilayya* “to me”
- عَلَى + ي = عَلَيَّ *ʿalayya* “on me”

- لَدَيَّ = لَدَيَّ + يَ *ladayya* “at me”.

6. The preposition كَ *ka* “like” is not used with any attached pronoun. So, for example, we don’t say:

- كَهُ × *kahu* for “like him.”

Instead, we will learn another method to express this meaning in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

7. The word “between”, because of its meaning, is typically used with two or more individuals. For example, “between us”, “between you and him”, etc. In Arabic, when the pseudo-preposition بَيْنَ *bayna* is used with a singular attached pronoun, it is repeated. For example,

- بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ *baynī wabaynaka* “between me and you”

## 5.5. Translating prepositions

For each preposition that we have listed above, we have also given its meaning. For example,

- فِي *fī* “in”
- بِ *bi* “with”, “by”, “next to”

These meanings are not always fixed. And there is some degree of overlap in meanings as well. For example, in order to say “in the city” we will usually say فِي الْمَدِينَةِ *fī -lmadīnati* but sometimes we can also say بِالْمَدِينَةِ *bi -lmadīnati* with the same meaning. As you keep learning, practicing, and reading Arabic, you will learn how to choose which preposition to use, if Allah wills.

Similarly, sometimes we have two or more prepositions with almost the same meaning. For example,

- مِنْ *min* “from”
- عَنْ *ʿan* “from”, “about”

Knowing when to use one or the other will also take practice.

## 5.6. Sentences and phrases with prepositions

We have seen how a noun can be used after a preposition to get a prepositional phrase, for example:

فِي الْبَيْتِ  
*fī -lbayti*  
“in the house”

We can put an indefinite noun in front of this structure:

رَجُلٌ فِي الْبَيْتِ  
*rajulun fi -lbayti*  
 “a man in the house”

This is a phrase and not a complete sentence. Note that the preposition *fi* “in” only puts the noun after it (الْبَيْتِ *’albayti* “the house”) in the i-state. It has no effect on the state of the noun before it (رَجُلٌ *rajulun* “a man”). In this case, it is in the u-state.

Instead of an indefinite noun, we can also put a definite noun in front of the prepositional phrase. Now the resulting structure can, in general, have two meanings: (i) a complete sentence, and (ii) an incomplete sentence. For example,

الرَّجُلُ فِي الْبَيْتِ  
*’arrujulu fi -lbayti*  
 (i) “The man is in the house.”  
 (ii) “The man in the house”

Usually, it will be clear from the context which of the two meanings is valid. For example, the second meaning, “The man in the house”, can be part of a complete sentence:

الرَّجُلُ فِي الْبَيْتِ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
*’arrujulu fi -lbayti muallim.*  
 “The man in the house is a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

## 5.7. Sentences with an indefinite subject

We said, in section @ref(an-indefinite-noun-as-the-subject), that the subject of a sentence is usually a definite noun. Now, we shall explore one way of allowing a sentence with an indefinite subject.

We have seen that if an indefinite noun is placed in front of a prepositional phrase, we get an incomplete sentence. For example,

رَجُلٌ فِي الْبَيْتِ  
*rajulun fi -lbayti*  
 “a man in the house”

Now we will see how to make the complete sentence (with an indefinite subject):

“A man is in the house.”

In order to express this sentence, we put the prepositional phrase first, and place the indefinite subject after it:

فِي الْبَيْتِ رَجُلٌ.  
*fi -lbayti rajul.*  
 “In the house is a man.” = “A man is in the house.”

In English, it may sometimes be more convenient to translate this type of sentence using the expression “there is”:

“There is a man in the house.”

## 5.8. Prepositions with multiple nouns/pronouns

In English, we can use a preposition with multiple nouns separated by “and”, thus:

“The boy went to the school and the house.”

A similar meaning can be achieved by repeating the preposition before each noun:

“The boy went to the school and to the house.”

In Arabic as well, if there are multiple nouns associated with a preposition then you may choose to repeat the preposition or not. Examples:

إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ وَإِلَى الْبَيْتِ  
*‘ila -lbayti walmadrasati*  
 “to the school to and the house”

إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ وَالْبَيْتِ  
*‘ila -lbayti walmadrasati*  
 “to the school and the house”

Note that when you don’t repeat the preposition, the second noun is still in the i-state.

In English, you have a similar option when you use pronouns instead of nouns. All of the following should be acceptable:

“to the boy and me”  
 “to the boy and to me”  
 “to him and me”  
 “to him and to me”

In Arabic, however, if one or more pronouns is used then the prepositions must be repeated. Examples:

إِلَيَّ وَإِلَى الْغُلَامِ  
*‘ilayya wa’ila -lghulāmi*  
 “to me and to the boy”

إِلَيَّ وَإِلَيْهِ  
*‘ilayya wa’ilayhi*  
 “to me and to him”

### 5.9. To have something

English uses the verb “have” or “has” to express that someone Arabic does not have a verb for “have” or “has”. In order to express sentences like

“I have a book.”

“The boy has a father.”

Arabic uses prepositions like

- لِ *li* “for”
- عِنْدَ *inda* “at”
- لَدَى *ladā* “at”
- مَعَ *maʿa* “together with”

Here are some examples:

لِلْغُلَامِ أَبٌ.

*li -lghulāmi 'ab.*

“The boy has a father.” (literally: “For the boy is a father.”)

عِنْدَ الرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.

*inda -rrajuli kitāb.*

“The man has a book.” (literally: “At the man is a book.”)

مَعَ الْجَارِيَةِ لُعْبَةٌ.

*maʿa -ljāriyati luʿbah.*

“The girl has a toy.” (literally: “With the girl is a toy.”)

Here are some notes that can help you choose which preposition to use to express “has” or “have”:

- لِ *li* “for” is used to express personal relationships, like “I have a friend”, “I have a son”, etc. It is also used when you wish to imply that you own the object. For example, the sentence

لِلرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.

*li -rrajuli kitāb.*

implies that the man owns a book. But it is possible that he has lent it to someone else so he does not actually have it on his person or at his house, etc.

- عِنْدَ *inda* “at” is used to express that the person has the object in his possession, but not necessarily that he has it with him right now. For example the sentence

عِنْدَ الرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.

*inda -rrajuli kitāb.*

implies that the man has a book in his possession. But it is possible that it may not be with him right now. It may be at his house or elsewhere.

- لَدَى *ladā* “at” is used to express that the person has the object in his possession and that he has it with him right now. For example the sentence

لَدَى الرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.  
*lada -rrajuli kitāb.*

implies that the man has a book in his possession and that he has it with him right now.

- مَعَ *maʿa* “together with” is used to express that the person has the object with him right now. But it doesn’t necessarily imply ownership. For example, the sentence

مَعَ الرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.  
*maʿa -rrajuli kitāb.*

means that the man has a book with him right now. But it is possible that he does not own it and that someone else has lent it to him.

There is some degree of overlap in meaning and you will get a feeling of which preposition is more appropriate in which circumstance as you progress in your learning, if Allah wills. For now, if you find that the object can be used with all of these prepositions, you might go with عِنْدَ *ʿinda* as it is the more commonly used.

Work in progress



## Chapter 6.

### Completed-action verbs

#### 6.1. Introduction

Verbs are action words. Verbs can be either *completed-action* verbs where the action of the verb has been completed, e.g., “The boy went.” or *incomplete-action* verbs where the action of the verb is on-going or not yet completed, e.g., “The boy goes.” In this chapter we will study *completed-action* verbs.

#### 6.2. Arabic word roots

We take this opportunity to learn about Arabic roots. Native Arabic words, both nouns and verbs, are generally derived from roots. Most roots are comprised of three letters. A smaller number are comprised of four or more letters.

Words are derived from their roots according to patterns. In traditional Arabic grammar studies, the root *فعل* is used as a paradigm for three-letter roots to showcase word and meaning patterns.

So for example, the word *بَيْت* *bayt* “a house” is derived from the root *بيت*. Using the paradigm root *فعل*, we can see that the pattern of the word *بَيْت* *bayt* is *فَعْل* *fael*. The *أمر* *amr* “a matter” is derived from the root *امر*. Its pattern is also *فَعْل* *fael*.

Similarly, the word *مَكْتَب* *maktab* “a library” is derived from the root *كتب*. And *مَلْعَب* *maleab* “a playground” is derived from the root *لعب*. Using the paradigm root *فعل*, we can see that the pattern of both these words is *مَفْعَل* *mafeal*. Here, the letter *م* *m* is an extraneous letter added to form the words and is not part of their roots.

Not only nouns, but verbs, too, are derived from roots. All verbs are derived from their roots in a fixed set of patterns called *forms* which are numbered 1 onward. For example, the completed-action form 2 verb pattern is *فَعَّلَ* *faʿʿala* and the completed-action form 3 verb pattern is *فَاعَلَ* *fāʿala*. There are approximately 9-10 forms that are in common usage. In addition, there are a few higher order forms (11 onward) that are less common. In this chapter will study the completed-action form 1 verb only.

### 6.3. The form 1 completed-action verb

Here are some examples of completed-action form 1 verbs in Arabic:

Root	Completed-action form 1 verb	Meaning
فعل	فَعَلَ <i>faʿala</i>	“did”
ذهب	ذَهَبَ <i>d̥hahaba</i>	“went”
كتب	كَتَبَ <i>kataba</i>	“wrote”
قرأ	قَرَأَ <i>qaraʾa</i>	“read”
جلس	جَلَسَ <i>jalasa</i>	“sat”
سأل	سَأَلَ <i>saʾala</i>	“questioned”
سكت	سَكَتَ <i>sakata</i>	“became quiet”
جعل	جَعَلَ <i>jaʿala</i>	“made”
علم	عَلِمَ <i>ʿalima</i>	“knew”
عمل	عَمِلَ <i>ʿamila</i>	“worked”
كبر	كَبُرَ <i>kabura</i>	“grew”

Note that فعل, in addition to being used as a paradigm root, also has a verb in its own right: فَعَلَ *faʿala* “did”.

Note, also, that the completed-action form 1 verb consists only of the three letters of the root. The first and the final letter always have an *a*-mark while the middle letter’s vowel is variable. It may have an *a*-mark, *i*-mark, or an *u*-mark, depending on the verb. Using the paradigm root فعل, we can say that the form 1 verb occurs in the patterns فَعَلَ, فَعِلَ, and فُعِلَ.

A good dictionary will tell us the middle vowel mark of a particular verb. However, as a trend, the *a*-mark is the most common for the middle vowel mark, followed by the *i*-mark, while the *u*-mark is the least common.

Interestingly, there can exist multiple verbs from the same root, each with its own distinct meaning, that differ only in the vowel mark on the middle letter. An example of two such verbs is:

- حَسَبَ *hasaba* “calculated”
- حَسِبَ *hasiba* “deemed”

You can see above how the verb كَتَبَ *kataba* “wrote” is derived from the root كتب. We have already, by the way, learned another word derived from this root: the noun كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book”, which is on the pattern فِعَال *fiʿāl*. Note how both the verb and the noun derived from this root have a meaning that is common and has to do with writing or of something written. In a similar manner, you will often see that words derived from the same root generally share some common meaning, although this common meaning may not always be obvious or straightforward.

## 6.4. Verbal sentences

We have already learned of subject-information sentences. Here we will learn of a new type of sentence called a *verbal sentence*. A verbal sentence is one that begins with a verb.

When a verb is in a sentence, it requires a doer. The doer is a noun which represents the person who does the action of the verb. For example, in the sentence “The boy went.”, the noun “the boy” is the doer of the verb.

### 6.4.1. Verbs with a masculine doer noun

Consider the sentence:

“The boy went.”

In order to express this sentence in Arabic, we will say:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ.  
*dhahaba -lghulam.*  
 “The boy went.”

ذَهَبَ *dhahaba* “went” is the verb and الْغُلَامُ *alghulam* “the boy” is the doer. Note how the doer is in the u-state. Also note that in English the doer comes before the verb whereas in Arabic the doer comes after the verb in sentence word order. We can state this as a rule of Arabic grammar:

**In Arabic, every verb in a sentence shall have a doer noun. The doer noun shall be in the u-state and shall come after the verb in sentence word order.**

In the above example the doer noun was definite, but a doer may be indefinite too. Example:

ذَهَبَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى السُّوقِ.  
*dhahaba rajulun 'ila -ssuq.*  
 “A man went to the market.”

In the above sentence, the doer noun رَجُلٌ *rajulun* is indefinite.

### 6.4.2. Verbs with a feminine doer noun

Now consider the sentence:

“A girl went.”

In order to express this sentence in Arabic, we will say:

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ.  
*dhahabat jariyah.*  
 “A girl went.”

Note that we have modified the verb by adding on the letter **ث** at the end. This **ث** is used when the doer is a feminine noun. It is called the **ث** of femininity.

If the word following the noun begins with a connecting hamzah then we add a helper vowel to the **ث** and it becomes **ت**. Examples:

جَلَسَتْ الْهَرَّةُ عَلَى الْكُرْسِيِّ.  
*jālasati -lhirratu ʿala -lkursiyyi.*  
 “The cat<sub>f</sub> sat on the chair.”

لَعَبَتْ الطِّفْلَةُ فِي الْبَيْتِ.  
*laʿibati -ṭṭiflatu fi -lbayt.*  
 “The child<sub>f</sub> played in the house.”

## 6.5. Verbs with doees

### 6.5.1. Direct doees

Consider the sentence:

“The man wrote a book.”

In this sentence, “wrote” is the verb, “the man” is the doer, and “a book” is what we shall call the *doee*. In fact, it is what we shall call a *direct doee* because the verb directly takes the doee without an intervening preposition. A doee is the noun to whom the action of the verb is done.

In Arabic, we will express the sentence “The man wrote a book.” by saying:

كَتَبَ الرَّجُلُ كِتَابًا.  
*kataba -rrajulu kitābā.*  
 “The man wrote a book.”

Note how in Arabic the doee **كِتَابًا** *kitāban* “a book” is in the a-state. This is because, in Arabic, verbs shall cause a direct doee to be in the a-state. This is true whether the direct doee is definite or indefinite. Here is another example:

سَأَلَتِ الْأُمُّ الْجَارِيَةَ.  
*saʿalati -lʾummu -ljāriyah.*  
 “The mother questioned the girl.”

Note again how **الْجَارِيَةَ** *aljāriyata* “the girl” is in the a-state because it is a direct doee.

## 6.5.2. Multiple direct does

Some verbs can take more than one direct doer. In this case, all direct does shall be in the a-state. For example,

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الرَّجُلَ مُسْلِمًا.

*jaʿala -llāhu -rrajula muslimā.*

“Allāh made the man a Muslim.”

In this sentence both الرَّجُلُ *arrajula* “the man” and مُسْلِمًا *musliman* “a Muslim” are direct does of the verb جَعَلَ *jaʿala* and therefore both are placed in the a-state.

## 6.5.3. Indirect does

Instead of, or in addition to, direct does, some verbs take an *indirect doer*. An indirect doer is one before which there is a preposition. For example, in English we might say:

“The man looked at the moon.”

In this sentence, “the moon” is an indirect doer because it is preceded by the preposition “at”. Similarly, in Arabic, we will say:

نَظَرَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى الْقَمَرِ.

*naḏhara -rrajulu ʾila -lqamar.*

“The man looked at the moon.”

In this sentence الْقَمَرُ *alqamari* “the moon” is an indirect doer of the verb نَظَرَ *naḏhara* “looked” because it is preceded by the preposition إِلَى *ʾilā* “to”. The preposition, as usual, causes the word after it (the indirect doer الْقَمَرُ *alqamari*) to be in the i-state, as opposed to the a-state of the direct doer.

Note also, that the verb “looked” in English used the preposition “at” whereas the Arabic verb نَظَرَ *naḏhara* used the preposition إِلَى *ʾilā* “to” for the same meaning. This is very common and you should not expect Arabic to use exact counterparts of the prepositions used in English. In fact, everytime you learn a new verb, you should also learn the prepositions that go with it.

It is also possible for the same verb to take different prepositions with possibly different meanings. So, for example, we can say:

نَظَرَ الرَّجُلُ فِي الْأَمْرِ.

*naḏhara -rrajulu fi -lʾamri.*

“The man looked into the matter.”

It may also be possible for the same verb to take a direct doer. So we could also say:

نَظَرَ الرَّجُلُ الْمَكْتُوبَ فِي الْكِتَابِ.

*naḡhara -rrajulu -lmaktūba fi -lkitābi.*

“The man viewed what was written in the book.”

A good dictionary will tell us which prepositions are used with indirect doees with a given verb and also whether it takes a direct doee.

Some verbs take a direct doee and another indirect doee, both at the same time. For example,

سَأَلَ الْغُلَامُ الْمُعَلِّمَةَ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

*saʿala -lghulāmu -lmueallimata ʿan ʿamr.*

“The boy asked the teacher<sub>f</sub> about a matter.”

المُعَلِّمَةُ *ʿalmueallimata* “the teacher<sub>f</sub>” is the direct doee, and therefore it is in the a-state. *ʿamrin* “a matter” is an indirect doee, and so it is in the i-state. The preposition عَنْ *ʿan* is translated, here, as “about”.

It is also possible that an English verb may take a direct doee, while the corresponding Arabic verb may only take an indirect doee. The reverse is also quite possible. For example,

عَفَرَ اللَّهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِ.

*ghafara -llāhu lilmuslimi.*

“Allāh forgave the Muslim.”

The verb “forgave” in English takes a direct doee for the person who is forgiven. In Arabic, however, the corresponding verb عَفَرَ *ghafara* “forgave” takes the forgiven person as an indirect doee, using the preposition لِ *li*.

## 6.6. Verbs with doer pronouns

We have learned that a pronoun is a special kind of noun that can be used to replace a definite noun. And we have already learned two category of pronouns in Arabic:

- i. Detached pronouns, like هُوَ, هِيَ, etc.
- ii. Attached pronouns, like هُوَ, هِيَ, etc.

Now we would like to replace the doer noun of a verb with a pronoun. For example, instead of saying:

“The man went.”

we would like to say:

“He went.”

For this we will have to learn a third category of pronoun pronouns called *doer pronouns* for completed-action verbs. Doer pronouns are of two types: (i) expressed and (ii) implied.

Here we list the singular doer pronouns in Arabic.

Singular participant	Doer pronoun
Masc. absentee (“he”)	implied
Fem. absentee (“she”)	implied
Masc. addressee (“you <sub>1,m</sub> ”)	تَ - <i>ta</i>
Fem. addressee (“you <sub>1,f</sub> ”)	تِ - <i>ti</i>
Speaker (“I”)	تُ - <i>tu</i>

We will now give an explanation of the above doer pronouns.

### 6.6.1. Doer pronouns for the singular absentee-participant (“he”/“she”)

The doer pronouns of the absentee-participant are the equivalent of “he” and “she”. For example, let’s try to replace the doer-noun “the man” in the sentence: “The man went.”

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ.  
*dhahaba -rrajul.*  
“The man went.”

When we replace the doer noun الرَّجُلُ *’arrujul* “the man” with the doer pronoun “he”, we get:

ذَهَبَ.  
*dhahab.*  
“[He] went.”

As you can see, all we did was omit the doer-noun الرَّجُلُ *’arrujul*, and we didn’t add any word to replace it as the doer pronoun. This is because the doer pronoun for “he” is implied and automatically comes into place when we omit the doer noun.

The doer pronoun for “she” is similarly implied. For example, if we replace the doer noun in the sentence:

قَرَأَتِ الْبَارِيَّةُ كِتَابًا.  
*qara’ati -ljāriyatu kitābā.*  
“The girl read a book.”

we get:

قَرَأَتْ كِتَابًا.  
*qara’at kitābā.*  
“[She] read a book.”

## 6.6.1.1. Explanation of implied pronouns

Why do we have to go to all the trouble of saying that the doer-pronouns of the singular absentee-participants “he” and “she” are implied? Why can’t we simply say that there are no doer-pronouns for the singular absentee-participants?

The reason is that we need to be able to state, as a rule of grammar, that every verb needs to have its own doer, whether expressed or implied. Later, if Allāh wills, when we study verbs with dual and plural doers we will see that this will make a difference in the formation of the verb.

6.6.2. Doer pronouns for the singular addressee (“you<sub>1</sub>”) and speaker (“I”) participants

It is only the doer pronouns for the singular absentee participant that are implied for completed-action verbs. The doer pronouns for the singular addressee and speaker participants are expressed. The expressed doer pronouns are attached to the verb.

Here we show how the expressed doer pronouns are attached to the verb using the root paradigm *فعل*. The middle root letter (ع) has an *a*-vowel َ here but this vowel will vary for other verbs.

Singular participant	Doer pronoun	Doer pronoun with verb
Addressee “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”	تَ - <i>ta</i>	فَعَلْتَ <i>faʿalta</i>
Addressee “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”	تِ - <i>ti</i>	فَعَلْتِ <i>faʿalti</i>
Speaker “I”	تُ - <i>tu</i>	فَعَلْتُ <i>faʿaltu</i>

Note also how the expressed singular doer pronouns modify the verb by replacing the *a*-mark َ on its final letter by a *o*-mark ُ.

Furthermore, note how the doer pronoun for the addressed person “you” is differentiated for masculine and feminine doers whereas the doer pronoun for the speaking person “I” is the same for both genders.

Here are some examples of sentences with expressed doer pronouns:

كَتَبْتَ كِتَابًا.

*katabta kitābā.*

“You<sub>m</sub> wrote a book.”

ذَهَبْتُ.

*dhahabt.*

“I went.”

The above sentence ends with the doer pronoun, so the vowel-mark on the doer pronoun is not pronounced (*dhahabt*). So, how would we know which doer



pronoun it is? That is, does the sentence say “I went.” or “You<sub>m</sub> went.” or “You<sub>f</sub> went.”? The answer is that the sentence by itself is ambiguous and context would tell us which of the three options is intended.

Take care to note that the singular doer pronouns modify the final letter of the basic verb, whereas the *ṭ* of femininity does not. So make sure you see the difference in the following two sentences:

قَرَأْتَ الْكِتَابَ.

*qara'ti -lkitāb.*

“You<sub>f</sub> read the book.”

قَرَأَتِ الْكِتَابَ.

*qara'ati -lkitāb.*

“She read the book.”

### 6.6.3. Assimilation of the doer pronoun

If the final letter of the root of a verb is *ṭ*, then it gets assimilated with the *ṭ* which is the doer pronoun and only one *ṭ*, representing both, is written. Consider the verb:

سَكَتَ سَكَّتَ *sakata* “became quiet”

When we add a expressed doer pronoun to this verb, we get:

سَكَّتُ

*sakattu*

“I became quiet”

سَكَّتَ

*sakatta*

“You<sub>i,m</sub> became quiet”

سَكَّتِ

*sakatti*

“You<sub>i,f</sub> became quiet”

Assimilation is treated in more detail in chapter/appendix TODO.

## 6.7. Verbs with *doee* pronouns

Just like doer nouns may be replaced with doer pronouns, so, too, may *doee* nouns be replaced with *doee pronouns*. *Doee* pronouns are also attached to the end of the verb but they don't modify the vowel on the final letter of the verb. The *doee* pronouns are the same attached pronouns that are also used with prepositions:

Singular participant	Doee pronoun
Masc. absentee	هُ -hu “him”
Fem. absentee	هَا -hā “her”
Masc. addressee	كَ -ka “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	كِ -ki “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”
Speaker	يَ “me”

Here are some notes regarding their usage:

- Doee pronouns shall always be attached to the verb. So if there is a doer noun then it shall be placed after the attached doee pronoun. For example:

سَأَلَهُ الْغُلَامُ.

sa'alahu -lghulām.

“The boy asked him.”

- If however, the doer is also a pronoun, then it shall be attached first to the verb and then the doee pronoun shall be attached to the doer pronoun. For example,

سَأَلْتُكَ.

sa'altuk.

“I asked you<sub>f</sub>.”

- If the doer pronoun is implied, then the doee pronoun shall be attached to the verb again directly with only a possible ث of femininity intervening. For example:

سَأَلَهَا.

sa'alahā.

“He asked her.”

سَأَلْتُكَ.

sa'alatk.

“She asked you<sub>m</sub>.”

- If the doee pronoun هُ -hu “him” is preceded by the vowels i, ī, or ay then it shall instead become هِ hi with no change in meaning. (We've already learned this rule.) For example,

سَأَلْتِهِ.

sa'altih

“You<sub>f</sub> asked him.”

- An intervening ن is always used between the verb and the speaker-participant doee pronoun variants يَ -i and يَا -iya. Remember that these pronouns force any consonant before it to have a i-mark ِ. Therefore, the combination will be written as نِي -nī and نِيَا -niya respectively. For example:

سَأَلَنِي رَجُلٌ.

sa'alani rajul.

"A man asked me."

سَأَلَنِي الرَّجُلُ.

sa'alaniya -rrajul.

"The man asked me."

If there is an expressed doer pronoun, the intervening ن shall come after it so that the ن is always connected to the doee pronoun. For example,

سَأَلْتَنِي.

sa'altani

"You<sub>m</sub> asked me."

By the way, we have already seen this intervening ن before when it was used with some prepositions, e.g. مِنِّي minni, عَنِّي annī, and لَدُنِّي ladunni

The variant يَ -i is, in general, more commonly used. However, when the noun following it begins with a connecting hamzah then the variant يَ -ya is preferred. That is why we used the variant يَ -ya when it was followed by a connecting hamzah (سَأَلَنِي الرَّجُلُ), and the variant يَ -i when it was not followed by a connecting hamzah (سَأَلَنِي رَجُلٌ). But this preference is not mandatory. So it is allowed for يَ -i to be used when followed by a connecting hamzah. When this happens, the long vowel -i will be shortened to -i in connecting it to the next word, although the يَ is retained in writing. For example,

سَأَلَنِي الرَّجُلُ.

sa'alani -rrajul.

"The man asked me."

## 6.8. Multiple verbs for one doer

In this section we will use the verbs:

Root	Completed-action form 1 verb	Meaning
دخل	دَخَلَ <i>dakhala</i>	"entered"
خرج	خَرَجَ <i>kharaja</i>	"exited"
أكل	أَكَلَ <i>akala</i>	"ate"
شرب	شَرَبَ <i>shariba</i>	"drank"

Consider, now, the sentence:

"I entered the room, ate, drank, and exited."

The doer in this sentence is the pronoun "I". This same doer is doing the action of multiple verbs: "entered", "ate", "drank", and "exited". When we try to express

this sentence in Arabic we must remember that every verb shall have its own doer, and that the doer shall occur after it in sentence word order. So we will say:

دَخَلْتُ الْغُرْفَةَ فَأَكَلْتُ فَشَرِبْتُ فَخَرَجْتُ.

*dakhaltu -lghurfata fa'akaltu fasharibtu fakharajt.*

"I entered the room and then I ate and then I drank and then I exited."

Note also, that we need to replace the commas by connecting particles like *wa*- "and", or *fa*- "so"/"and then", etc. We chose *fa*- which implies consequence or subsequence between the individual events.

Let's now try this sentence with a doer noun instead of a doer pronoun:

"The girl entered the room, ate, drank, and exited."

Here is our translation:

دَخَلَتِ الْجَارِيَةُ الْغُرْفَةَ فَأَكَلَتْ فَشَرِبَتْ فَخَرَجَتْ.

*dakhalati -ljariyatu -lghurfata fa'akalat fasharibat fakharajat.*

"The girl entered the room and then she ate and then she drank and then she exited."

Each verb again has its own doer, which is coming after the verb in sentence word order. The doer of the first verb دَخَلَ *dakhala* "entered" is the noun الْجَارِيَةُ *al-jariyatu* "the girl". The subsequent verbs all have doers too but they are the implied doer pronouns for the singular feminine absentee participant. That is why we don't write them. Note also that every verb has the *th* of femininity attached to it to indicate its singular feminine absentee doer.

## 6.9. Order of words in a sentence

### 6.9.1. Changing the order of words for emphasis

In Arabic, the doer always follows the verb. So the normal order of a sentence is verb-doe-doe. For example,

كَتَبَ الرَّجُلُ كِتَابًا.

*kataba -rrajulu kitābā.*

"The man wrote a book."

However, we will often come across sentences like:

الرَّجُلُ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا.

*'arrajulu kataba kitābā.*

It may appear as if الرَّجُلُ *arrajulu* is the doer and it is coming before the verb كَتَبَ *kataba*. But actually, this is not the case. As a matter of fact, this sentence is basically a subject-information sentence.

Here *اَلرَّجُلُ arrajulu* “the man” is the subject of the sentence, and *كَتَبَ كِتَابًا kataba kitāban* “he wrote a book”, itself a verbal sentence with an implied doer pronoun, is the information about the subject. So the translation of the sentence is technically:

“The man, he wrote a book.”

However, this can be an awkward translation so we will usually translate it as “The man wrote a book.”

The question arises: if both sentences above have the same translation, then why would we say *اَلرَّجُلُ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا arrajulu kataba kitāban* instead of the more normal *كَتَبَ اَلرَّجُلُ كِتَابًا kataba -rrajulu kitāban*? The answer is that this change in the sentence’s word order is done in order to give more emphasis to the doer, as if to say:

“*The man* wrote a book.”

So in Arabic, the order of words is generally more flexible than in English and this is often used to give emphasis to certain words.

### 6.9.2. Verbs pull definite nouns towards them

When a verb has a doer noun and a doee noun, the normal order of words in a sentence is: verb, doer noun, doee noun. For example,

كَتَبَ اَلرَّجُلُ اَلْكِتَابَ.  
*kataba -rrajulu -lkitāba.*

“The man wrote the book.”

There is a tendency, in Arabic, for verbs to *pull* definite nouns towards them. This means that if there are any indefinite nouns, they have a tendency to get pushed farther away. So, for example, if a verb’s doer is an indefinite noun and the doee is a definite noun, the doee will often (but not always) precede the doer. For example,

كَتَبَ اَلْكِتَابَ رَجُلٌ.  
*kataba -lkitāba rajul.*

“A man wrote the book.”

The vowel-marks at the end of the nouns, and context, will tell us which is the doer and which is the doee. In this particular example, it was optional, and not mandatory to make the definite doee precede the doer in sentence word order. So we could have also said, instead:

كَتَبَ رَجُلٌ اَلْكِتَابَ.  
*kataba rajuluni -lkitāb.*

“A man wrote the book.”

Now let’s take a look at sentences with pronouns. Remember that pronouns are a category of nouns, and also (from section @ref(definiteness-of-pronouns)) that they are definite nouns. In fact they are stronger in definiteness than words

that are made definite using ال. This because if when we say “The man wrote the book.” instead of “A man wrote the book.”, we assume that everyone knows which man we are referring to. Now if we replace “the man” with the pronoun “he”: “He wrote the book.”, then this assumption becomes stronger. “He” is, in a sense, more definite than “the man.”

So now, when the direct doer noun الْكِتَابُ *’alkitāba* “the book” is replaced with the pronoun “it”, the doer pronoun must be attached to the verb, and then the doer noun follows the doer pronoun:

كَتَبَهُ الرَّجُلُ.

*katabahu -rrajulu.*

“The man wrote it.”

This can be seen as a mandatory case of the verb pulling the definite noun toward it.

Now, consider a sentence with an indirect doer. Again, the normal order of words in a sentence is verb, doer noun, preposition, doer noun. For example,

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ.

*ḍahaba -lghulāmu ’ila -lmdrasah.*

“The boy went to the school.”

Now, if we replace the indirect doer noun الْمَدْرَسَةُ *’almdrasati* “the school” with the pronoun “it”, the indirect doer pronoun هَا *-hā* “it” is attached, not to the verb, but to the preposition إِلَى *’ilā* thus: إِلَيْهَا *’ilayhā* “to it”. So it possible to preserve the original order of words in the sentence:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَيْهَا.

*ḍahaba -lghulāmu ’ilayhā.*

“The boy went to it.”

While the above sentence is correct, it is in fact more common to place the preposition and doer pronoun إِلَيْهَا *’ilayhā* “to it” right after the verb, and before the doer noun, thus:

ذَهَبَ إِلَيْهَا الْغُلَامُ.

*ḍahaba ’ilayha -lghulāmu.*

“The boy went to it.”

This is because the pronoun هَا *-hā* “it” is stronger in definiteness than الْغُلَامُ *’alghulām* “the boy”. So the verb has a stronger pull towards it.

This ordering of words due to the attractive pull of the verb is largely learned by experience. The more you read Arabic, the better feel you will get for it, if Allāh wills.

## 6.10. Negating completed-action verbs

In order to negate a completed-action verb, the particle **مَا** *mā* is placed before it. This gives the meaning of the action of the verb did not get, or has not got, done. So for example:

مَا ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ.

*mā dhahaba -rrajulu.*

“The man did not go.” or,

“The man has not gone.”

## 6.11. The particle **قَدْ** *qad*

The particle **قَدْ** *qad*, when placed before a completed-action verb emphasizes that the action of the verb has already or definitely occurred.

قَدْ ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ.

*qad dhahaba -rrajulu.*

“The man has already gone.” or,

“The man did go.”

## 6.12. Separating doee pronouns from the verb

FIXME: move to imperfect verb chapter

We have mentioned that doee pronouns are attached to the verb. Sometimes there is a need to separate the doee pronoun from the verb. When separating the doee pronoun from the verb, it is instead attached to the prefix **يَا** *‘iyyā*. So then we get the following doee pronouns:

Person	Doe pronoun
Absent person (masc.) “him”	يَاهُ <i>‘iyyāhu</i>
Absent person (fem.) “her”	يَاهَا <i>‘iyyāhā</i>
Addressed person (masc.) “you <sub>masc.</sub> ”	يَاكَ <i>‘iyyāka</i>
Addressed person (fem.) “you <sub>fem.</sub> ”	يَاكِ <i>‘iyyāki</i>
Speaking person (masc. and fem.) “me”	يَايَ <i>‘iyyāya</i>

Note that for the speaking person “me”, there is no intervening **ن** between the prefix **يَا** *‘iyyā* and the doee pronoun. Note also that only **يَا** *-ya* is allowed to be attached to the prefix **يَا** *‘iyyā*. This is because **يَا** *-i* is not permitted to be used with words that end in a long vowel (*-ā*, *-ī*, or *-ū*) or a semi-vowel (*-ay* or *-aw*). And the prefix **يَا** *‘iyyā* ends with the long-vowel *ā*.

But we may ask why is there a need to separate the doee pronoun from the verb? This can occur for a couple of reasons:

- i. If there are multiple doee pronouns, only one of them can be attached to the verb. Example,

صَرَبَتْني وَإِيَّاهُ.  
*ḍarabatnī wa 'iyyāhu.*  
 “She hit me and him.”

- ii. If the doee is placed before the verb for emphasis. Example,

إِيَّايَ صَرَبَتْ.  
*'iyyāya ḍarabat.*  
 “She hit *me*.”

### 6.13. TODO

1. Multiple verb doers: Copy over from sound plurals and rework.
2. جواز تأنيث الفعل ووجوبه

Work in progress



## Chapter 7.

### Adjectival nouns and descriptive noun phrases

#### 7.1. Introduction

So far we have studied common nouns like رَجُلٌ *rajul* “a man” and بَيْتٌ *bayt* “a house”.

In this chapter we will study *adjectival nouns*. Adjectival nouns are a class of nouns that don’t denote objects. Rather they describe some quality of an object.

#### 7.2. Adjectives in English

In English we usually use adjectives to describe nouns. For example, the word “big” is an adjective. It can be used in a couple of different ways:

1. It can be used to describe a noun in an descriptive noun-phrase. For example:

“a big car”

2. The adjective “big” can also be used as the information of a sentence, describing the subject noun. For example:

“The car is big.”

But the adjective “big” cannot be used by itself as a noun, for example, as the subject of a sentence. So we can’t say:

× “The big is fast.”

We would have to say something like:

“The big car is fast.”

instead.

### 7.3. Terminology: the *describer* and the *describee*

We take this opportunity to introduce some grammatical terminology. The descriptive noun-phrase “a big car” consists of two parts:

- i. The adjective “big”. It is describing the car. We will call it the *describer* in the noun-phrase.
- ii. The common noun “a car”: It is being described by the describer. We will call it the *describee*.

a big car  
 {        {  
 describer    describee

We will reserve this terminology of *describer* and *describee* only for the noun and adjective in an descriptive noun-phrase. So we won't use this terminology for the sentence: “The car is big.”

Instead, here we will continue to use the existing terminology of *subject* and *information*. The definite noun “the car” is the subject of this sentence, and the adjective “big” is the information.

The car is big.  
 {        {  
 subject    information

### 7.4. Adjectival nouns in English

Consider the English word “antique”. It is what we will call a *adjectival noun*.

It can be used just like an adjective to describe a noun as part of a noun-phrase. For example:

“The antique table is expensive.”

In the above sentence the adjective “antique” is a describer and is describing the noun “table”.

It can also be used as the information of a sentence, just like an adjective. For example:

“The table is antique.”

But what makes it different from a normal adjective is that it can also be used by itself as a noun. For example:

“The antique is expensive.”

Here “the antique” could refer to any entity that can be described by the quality of being old and valuable. The adjectival noun does not require any other noun in this sentence and can stand on its own as the subject of the sentence.

Adjectival nouns are rare in English. Instead, adjectives are usually used when we want to describe a noun.

## 7.5. Adjectival nouns in Arabic and genderizability

Arabic does not have adjectives. It only has adjectival nouns.

The word صَغِير *ṣaghīr* is an example of an indefinite adjectival noun in Arabic. It describes the quality of being “small” or “little”. It can be used to denote any person, animal, or things that can be described as being small. Technically we could translate it as “a little one<sub>m</sub>” or “a small one<sub>m</sub>”.

Being a noun صَغِير *ṣaghīr*, like all other nouns in Arabic, will have a grammatical gender. Since it does not end with a feminine marker like ة, we can state that صَغِير *ṣaghīr* is a masculine noun.

Adjectival nouns, typically, are genderizable. This means that we can feminize صَغِير *ṣaghīr* (masc.) to get the feminine noun. We will feminize صَغِير *ṣaghīr* (masc.) with the feminine marker ة to get the feminine adjectival noun صَغِيرَة *ṣaghīrah* (fem.) “a little one<sub>f</sub>”.

Generally, the dictionary will typically only supply the masculine adjectival noun. And we are expected to know how to feminize it to get the feminine adjectival noun.

As opposed to adjectival nouns, common nouns are not genderizable. So, for example, if we know that the noun غُلَام *ghulām* “a boy” exists, we cannot assume that we can feminize it, by using the feminine marker ة, for example, getting: × غُلَامَة *ghulāmah*. This would be a misguided attempt to obtain the meaning for “a girl” in Standard Arabic. Instead, we have to look up the Arabic word for “a girl” in the dictionary separately, and we find that it is جَارِيَة *jāriyah*.

Many times times, a masculine/feminine common noun pair will exist, that differ only by the feminine marker ة. For example:

- اِبْن *ibn* “a son” and اِبْنَة *ibnah* “a daughter”.
- مُعَلِّم *mueallim* “a teacher<sub>m</sub>” and مُعَلِّمَة *mueallimah* “a teacher<sub>f</sub>”

This does not indicate that the common noun is genderizable. Rather, when the common noun masc./fem. pair has a meaning that is derived from a verb or an adjective (like مُعَلِّم/مُعَلِّمَة), then the masculine/feminine pair are co-derived as separate non-genderizable words. We will discuss this in more detail in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

And when the common noun masc./fem. pair has a primitive (non-verbal and non-adjectival) meaning, (like اِبْن/اِبْنَة), then this is only a coincidence. We

alluded to this in section @ref(related-nouns-for-male-and-female-animate-beings).

7.5.1. Examples of Arabic adjectival nouns

Here are some examples of Arabic adjectival nouns that we will use in this chapter.

Arabic adjectival noun	Meaning
كَبِير <i>kabīr</i>	a big one
صَغِير <i>ṣaghīr</i>	a small one
طَيِّب <i>ṭayyib</i>	a good one
قَدِيم <i>qadīm</i>	an old one
جَدِيد <i>jadīd</i>	a new one
طَوِيل <i>ṭawīl</i>	a long/tall one
وَاسِع <i>wāsiʿ</i>	a wide one
عَرَبِيّ <i>ʿarabiyy</i>	an Arab
مَشْهُور <i>mash-hūr</i>	a famous one

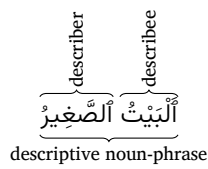
7.6. The describer and the describee in descriptive noun-phrases

Let’s learn how descriptive noun-phrases are formed in Arabic.

We learned in section @ref(terminology-the-describer-and-the-describee) above that descriptive noun-phrases consist of a describer and a describee.

In English descriptive noun-phrases, like “the small house”, the adjective describer (“small”) comes before the describee (“house”). Also, only one definite article (“the”) is used before the entire noun-phrase.

Here is the equivalent Arabic descriptive noun-phrase:



“the small house”  
(literally: “the small-one house”)

Note the following:

- The adjectival noun describer *الصَّغِيرُ* 'aṣṣaghīr “the small one<sub>m</sub>” comes after the describee *الْبَيْتُ* 'albayt “the house”.
- Both the adjectival noun describer *الصَّغِيرُ* 'aṣṣaghīr “the small one<sub>m</sub>” and the describee *الْبَيْتُ* 'albayt “the house” get the definite article *الْ* “the”.
- The adjectival noun describer *الصَّغِيرُ* 'aṣṣaghīr “the small one<sub>m</sub>” is genderized to match the describee *الْبَيْتُ* 'albayt “the house” in gender.
- The adjectival noun describer *الصَّغِيرُ* 'aṣṣaghīr “the small one<sub>m</sub>” matches the describee *الْبَيْتُ* 'albayt “the house” in state. In this example, they were both in the u-state but we will see examples in the other states as well.
- The word-for-word equivalence of the above descriptive noun-phrase is “the small-one house” but we will usually give the more natural translation: “the small house”

Let's try another example: let's try to translate the sentence: “The little girl took a new book from the good mother.”

Here is the sentence in Arabic:

أَخَذَتِ الْبَارِيَةُ الصَّغِيرَةُ كِتَابًا جَدِيدًا مِنَ الْأُمِّ الطَّيِّبَةِ.  
'akḥādhati -l-jāriyatu -ṣṣaghīratu kitāban jadīdan mina -l'ummi -ṭṭayyibah.  
“The little girl took a new book from the good mother.”

This sentence has three descriptive noun-phrases. We will analyze each one individually:

- i. *الْبَارِيَةُ الصَّغِيرَةُ*  
'al-jāriyatu -ṣṣaghīratu  
“the little girl”

In this phrase the definite feminine noun *الْبَارِيَةُ* 'al-jāriyatu is the doer of the verb *أَخَذَ* 'akḥādha “took”. Therefore it is in the u-state. It is also the describee in the descriptive noun-phrase. Its describer *الصَّغِيرَةُ* 'aṣṣaghīratu follows the describee and is made to match the describee in state (u-state), gender (feminine), and definiteness (definite).

- ii. *كِتَابًا جَدِيدًا*  
kitāban jadīdan  
“a new book”

In this phrase the indefinite masculine noun *كِتَابًا* kitāban is the doer of the verb *أَخَذَ* 'akḥādha “took”. Therefore it is in the a-state. It is also the describee in the descriptive noun-phrase. Its describer *جَدِيدًا* jadīdan follows the describee and is made to match the describee in state (a-state), gender (masculine), and definiteness (indefinite).

- iii. *الْأُمُّ الطَّيِّبَةُ*  
'al'ummi -ṭṭayyibati  
“the good mother”

In this phrase the definite feminine noun *الْأُمُّ* 'al'ummi is following the preposition *مِنْ* min “from”. Therefore it is in the i-state. It is also the

describer in the descriptive noun-phrase. Its describer *اَلطَّيِّبَةُ* *attayyibati* follows the describee and is made to match the describee in state (i-state), gender (feminine), and definiteness (definite).

Note carefully that the describer matches the describee in gender, not necessarily in having the same *ø* ending. The feminine adjectival noun describer *اَلطَّيِّبَةُ* *attayyibah* is still formed using the feminine marker *ø*, despite the feminine describee *اَلْأَمُّ* not having the *ø* feminine marker.

Sometimes, a common noun of one gender is used to refer to persons of either gender. For example:

- the noun *شَخْصٌ* *shakhṣ* is itself a masculine noun but it may be used to refer to both male and female persons.

If such a noun is a describee, then we will prefer to match the describer to the grammatical gender of the noun, not the physical gender of the person it is referring to. For example:

اَلْجَارِيَةُ شَخْصٌ طَيِّبٌ.

*aljāriyatu shakhṣun ṭayyib.*

“The girl is a good person.”

See how we preferred to use the masculine adjectival noun *طَيِّبٌ* *ṭayyib* instead of using the feminine *طَيِّبَةٌ* *ṭayyibah*.

## 7.7. Adjectival nouns as the information of a sentence

### 7.7.1. Indefinite adjectival noun

Let’s see how to use Arabic adjectival nouns as the information of a sentence.

information  
 {  
 اَلْبَيْتُ صَغِيرٌ.
 

 subject  
 {  
 اَلْبَيْتُ

“The house is small.”

(literally: “The house is a small-one.”)

In the above sentence, the indefinite adjectival noun *صَغِيرٌ* *ṣaghīr* “a small one” is used as the information of a sentence. Its indefiniteness and u-state is indicated by the nūnated *u*-mark ُ on its end.

When an adjectival noun is the information of a sentence, then it shall be genderized to match the gender of the subject noun. The subject noun in this case

(الْبَيْت) is masculine. Therefore, the masculine adjectival noun (صَغِير) is chosen.

Technically, the translation of this sentence is “The house is a small one.” However, because Arabic has only adjectival nouns and not adjectives, it is how we can express the English sentence “The house is small.” Therefore we can also translate it into English as such.

Now let’s try a sentence with a feminine subject:

الْجَارِيَةُ صَغِيرَةٌ.

‘*aljāriyatu ṣagḥīrah*

“The girl is a little one.” = “The girl is little.”

In the above example the subject (الْجَارِيَةُ “the girl”) was feminine. Therefore, we feminized the masculine adjectival noun صَغِير *ṣagḥīr* with the feminine marker ة to get the feminine adjectival noun صَغِيرَةٌ *ṣagḥīrah* “a little one” and used the feminine adjectival noun in the sentence.

### 7.7.2. Definite adjectival noun

Let’s see if a definite adjectival noun can be used in the information. For example, we would like to say “The old tree is the big one.”

The subject of the sentence is الشَّجَرَةُ الْقَدِيمَةُ *‘ashshajaratu -lqadīmiatu* “the old tree”. And the information is الْكَبِيرَةُ *‘alkabīratu* “the big one”. When we put the two together we get:

الشَّجَرَةُ الْقَدِيمَةُ الْكَبِيرَةُ

‘*ashshajaratu -lqadīmatu -lkabīratu*

The problem is that the above could also be interpreted as one phrase “the big old tree”, and not as the complete sentence “The old tree is the big one.” This is the same problem that we highlighted in section @ref(chap-smp-sent-sec-def-info).

The solution, too, is the same. We insert a detached pronoun, that matches the gender of the subject, between the subject and the information. So in order to get our intended meaning, we will say:

الشَّجَرَةُ الْقَدِيمَةُ هِيَ الْكَبِيرَةُ.

‘*ashshajaratu -lqadīmatu hiya -lkabīratu.*

“The old tree is the big one.”

## 7.8. Adjectival nouns used without a described noun

We have mentioned that adjectival nouns are just like other nouns that we have learned so far, in that they have gender, state, and definiteness. Can we then use an adjectival noun by itself and not when it is describing another noun?

The answer is yes, we can. So for example, you can say:

شَرِبَ الصَّغِيرُ حَلِيبًا.

*shariba -ṣṣaghīru ḥalibā.*

“The little one drank some milk.”

The above is a correct sentence. But, by itself, it is not very clear. What do we mean by “the little one”? Is it a little boy, or a little cat, or something else? So, context would be needed to know what exactly is being denoted by the adjectival noun when it is used by itself independently.

Here is the same sentence again, but this time with some clarifying context.

حَمَلَتِ الْأُمُّ الصَّغِيرَ. وَشَرِبَ الصَّغِيرُ حَلِيبًا.

*ḥamalati -l'ummu -ṣṣaghīra. washariba -ṣṣaghīru ḥalibā.*

“The mother carried the little one. And the little one drank some milk.”

So now we can tell that what is meant by الصَّغِيرُ *aṣṣaghīr* “the little one” here is “the baby”.

## 7.9. Adjectival nouns re-used as common nouns

Sometimes, an adjectival noun, through much usage, acquires the meaning of a common noun. It then gets listed with this meaning in the dictionary. We actually just saw an example above. The adjectival noun صَغِير *ṣaghīr* “a little one” is commonly used to mean “a baby”. Of course, context would be needed to know whether, in a particular sentence, it has its common noun meaning: “a baby”, or its general adjectival noun meaning: “a little one”.

The opposite of صَغِير *ṣaghīr* “a little one” is كَبِير *kabīr* “a big one”. It too has acquired the common noun meaning of “an elder person”. Here is an example of its usage:

قَدِمَ الْكَبِيرُ وَوَعظَ الْغُلَامَ.

*qadima -lkabīru wawaaḍha -lghulāma.*

“The elder arrived and admonished the boy.”

When an adjectival noun gets re-used as a common noun, it loses its genderizability. For example, the feminine adjectival noun حَسَنَة *ḥasanah* (fem.) “a good one” is re-used as a common noun meaning “a good deed”. So we can use it in a sentence:



الصَّيَّامُ حَسَنَةٌ.

ʾaṣṣiyāmu ḥasanah.

“Fasting is a good deed.”

The subject in this sentence is the masculine noun الصَّيَّامُ ʾaṣṣiyām “fasting”. And the information is the feminine noun حَسَنَةٌ ḥasanah “a good deed”. Note that the information does not match the subject in gender. This is because it lost its genderizability since it is no longer acting as an adjectival noun “a good one<sub>f</sub>”, but rather as the common noun “a good deed”.

What if we have the sentence:

الصَّدَقَةُ حَسَنَةٌ.

ʾaṣṣadaqatu ḥasanah.

The feminine gender of the subject الصَّدَقَةُ ʾaṣṣadaqah “charity” now matches the gender of the information حَسَنَةٌ ḥasanah. So now, technically, the information could be the adjectival noun, meaning “a good one<sub>f</sub>”. So the sentence could mean:

“Charity is good.”

Or the information could be the common noun, meaning “a good deed”. Then the sentence would mean:

“Charity is a good deed.”

Context would be needed to tell us which meaning is intended.

## 7.10. Common-nouns used as describers in a noun-phrase

Usually, adjectival nouns are used as the describer in an descriptive noun-phrase. However, we also often find a common noun used as a describer. For example,

هُوَ رَجُلٌ مُعَلِّمٌ.

huwa rajulun muʿallim.

“He is a teacher<sub>m</sub> man.”

= “He is a man who is a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

## 7.11. Multiple adjectival nouns describing the same noun

In English we can have a noun described by multiple adjectives separated by commas and the word “and”. For example, “The building is big, tall, and wide.” In Arabic we will separate the multiple adjectival nouns with ۞ wa- “and”:

الْبِنَاءُ كَبِيرٌ وَطَوِيلٌ وَوَاسِعٌ.

ʾalbināʾu kabirun waṭawilun wawāsiʾun

“The building is big and tall and wide.”

In an English descriptive noun-phrase, multiple describers may describe the same describee, without being separated by the word “and”. For example, “The man is a famous Arab writer.” In Arabic, we can do the same, except the describees will be in the reverse order:

الرَّجُلُ كَاتِبٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مَشْهُورٌ.

*ʾarrujulu kātibun ʿarabiyyun mash-hūr.*

“The man is a famous Arab writer.”

## 7.12. A prepositional phrase separating the describer from the describee

Consider the phrase:

كِتَابٌ مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ

*kitābun mina -lmaktabati*

“a book from the library”

If we want to add an adjectival noun as to describe “the book”, we may add it either before or after the prepositional phrase describer. Here are both examples as complete sentences:

قَرَأَ كِتَابًا صَغِيرًا مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ.

*qaraʾa kitāban ṣaġhīran mina -lmaktabati.*

AND

قَرَأَ كِتَابًا مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ صَغِيرًا.

*qaraʾa kitāban mina -lmaktabati ṣaġhīran.*

“a small book from the library”

The first option is usually chosen as a matter of preference but the second option is legitimate too.

## Chapter 8.

### Semi-flexible nouns

#### 8.1. Introduction

Nouns are of two main categories of nouns, with regard to their endings in the different noun states:

1. Rigid nouns.
2. Flexible nouns. These are further sub-divided into:
  - i. Fully-flexible nouns.
  - ii. Semi-flexible nouns.

So far we have been mostly studying fully-flexible nouns. In this chapter we will learn about semi-flexible nouns.

Here is an example of the kind of nouns we have learned so far:

State	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	رَجُلٌ	الرَّجُلُ
a-state	رَجُلًا	الرَّجُلَ
i-state	رَجُلِ	الرَّجُلِ

As you can see, the noun is nūnated when it is indefinite, and also, the vowel mark on the last letter changes for each state that the noun is in. These kinds of nouns are called *fully-flexible* nouns. They are by far the most common type of noun.

There are some nouns, however, that are *semi-flexible*. Here is an example of a semi-flexible noun, صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrāʾ* “a desert”:

State	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	صَحْرَاءُ	الصَّحْرَاءُ
a-state	صَحْرَاءَ	الصَّحْرَاءَ
i-state	صَحْرَاءِ	الصَّحْرَاءِ

As you can see, when صَحْرَاءَ *ṣaḥrā'* is indefinite, it is not nūnated. Also, when it is indefinite and in the i-state, the vowel mark on its final letter is not ِ, as you might expect but َ. And so the noun looks identical in the a-state and i-state when it is indefinite.

When it is definite, however, it looks just like fully-flexible nouns.

So there are two differences between fully-flexible and semi-flexible nouns:

1. When indefinite, a semi-flexible noun is not nūnated.
2. When indefinite and in the i-state, a semi-flexible noun's final letter does not have an *i*-mark. Instead it shall have an *a*-mark, just like when it is in the a-state.

The other category of nouns are *rigid* nouns. Rigid nouns don't change their endings due to their state. They are much fewer in number compared to flexible nouns. Pronouns are an example of rigid nouns.

## 8.2. Feminine markers

Before we discuss semi-flexible nouns in more detail, we will discuss feminine markers. We already know of one feminine marker: the *ə*. When a singular noun ends with *ə*, then that is an indication, with very few exceptions, that it is a feminine noun. Examples are:

Root	Feminine noun	Masculine noun from same root (if any)
جري	جَارِيَّةٌ “a girl <sub>f</sub> ”	–
علم	عَالِمَةٌ “a scholar <sub>f</sub> ”	عَالِمٌ “a scholar <sub>m</sub> ”
كلب	كَلْبَةٌ “a dog <sub>f</sub> ”	كَلْبٌ “a dog <sub>m</sub> ”
شجر	شَجَرَةٌ “a tree”	–
صغر	صَغِيرَةٌ <i>adj.</i> “small <sub>f</sub> ”	صَغِيرٌ <i>adj.</i> “small <sub>m</sub> ”

As you can see, the feminine marker *ə* is never part of the noun's root. It is thus considered *extrinsic* to the root. Also, sometimes, but not always, the feminine noun is formed by adding the feminine marker *ə* to the end of a masculine noun.

It is also important to note that *ə* is only a feminine marker for singular nouns. When we learn plurals, if Allāh wills, we will see that *ə* is used frequently with masculine plurals.

Now we will learn of two more feminine markers: *اء* and *ئ*.

Here are some examples of nouns that end with these two feminine markers:

Root	Feminine noun	Masculine noun (if any)
صحر	صَحْرَاءُ “a desert”	–
حمر	حَمْرَاءُ <i>adj.</i> “red <sub>f</sub> ”	أَحْمَرُ <i>adj.</i> “red <sub>m</sub> ”
ذكر	ذِكْرَى “a remembrance”	–
غضب	غَضَبَى <i>adj.</i> “very angry <sub>f</sub> ”	غَضَبَانُ <i>adj.</i> “very angry <sub>m</sub> ”

When extrinsic to the word’s root, اء and ى are feminine markers, just like ة. However, one important difference from ة is that sometimes اء and ى may not be extrinsic to the word’s root. In this case, they will not be feminine markers, and the noun will regularly be a masculine noun. Examples:

Root	Noun	Pattern using paradigm فعل
هدي	الْهَدَى (masc.) “the guidance”	الْفَعْلُ
خبء	خِبَاء (masc.) “a tent”	فِعَال

These cases will become more clear, if Allāh wills, when we study weak roots (roots that contain a weak letter like ي, و, ا).

Otherwise, when extrinsic to the word’s root, اء, and ى are consistently feminine markers, just like ة.

Also, just like ة, اء and ى are only feminine markers for singular nouns. We will see, if Allāh wills, that they are used frequently with masculine plurals.

By the way, another difference from ة is that when اء and ى are feminine markers, and a masculine counterpart exists, then the feminine noun is not formed by simply adding the feminine marker to the end of the masculine noun. The masculine and feminine nouns are different internally as well. For example, the feminine noun حَمْرَاءُ *adj.* “red<sub>f</sub>” is not formed simply by adding the feminine marker اء to the end of the masculine noun أَحْمَرُ *adj.* “red<sub>m</sub>”.

We will discuss this in more detail below.

### 8.3. Categories of semi-flexible nouns

We now return to our discussion of semi-flexible nouns. Semi-flexible nouns, in terms of their formation, fall under different categories. We will discuss them below.

When discussing semi-flexible nouns in isolation we will add the numeral 2 as a superscript to their ending, thus: صَحْرَاءُ<sup>2</sup> *ṣaḥrāʾ*<sup>2</sup>. This is to indicate their semi-flexibility.

### 8.3.1. Nouns that end with an extrinsic ء

If a noun ends with an ء, which is extrinsic to the word's root, then it shall be a semi-flexible noun.

We have already seen an example of such a noun above: <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'* "a desert". The root of this noun is صحر. You can see that the ending ء is not part of the root. Therefore it is a semi-flexible noun.

Furthermore, we have also learned that this ء, which is extrinsic to the word's root, is a feminine marker for singular nouns, just like ة, except that ة does not generally make a noun semi-flexible.

Here is an example sentence with this noun:

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى صَحْرَاءٍ وَاسِعَةٍ.  
*dhahaba -rrajulu 'ilā ṣaḥrā'a wāsi'ah.*  
 "The man went to a wide desert."

Note that the vowel mark on the final letter of صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'a* is َ, not ِ, even though it is indefinite and in the i-state (because it is preceded by the preposition إِلَى *'ilā* "to"). This is because it is a semi-flexible noun.

<sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'* in this sentence is also a describee, whose describer is وَاسِعَةٍ *wāsi'atin* "wide". The final vowel mark َ on the describee صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'a* has no effect on the final vowel mark on the describer وَاسِعَةٍ *wāsi'atin* "wide". All that matters in this regard is the state of the describee.

Note, also, that the describer وَاسِعَةٍ is feminine to match the gender of the describee <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'*.

Note, as well, that the describer وَاسِعَةٍ is nūnated as it is indefinite and fully-flexible. The inability of its describee <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā'* to be nūnated (because of its semi-flexibility) does not affect the describer.

Also, beware, as we've already mentioned, that there are some words where the ء ending may be part of the word's root, for example خِبَاءٌ *khībā'* "a tent" from the root خبء on the pattern خِبَاءٌ. Such words will be fully flexible. Also, for the same reason, ء in this word is not a feminine marker, and the word is masculine.

### 8.3.2. Nouns that end with an extrinsic ِ

If a noun ends with an ِ which is extrinsic to the word's root, then it shall be a semi-flexible noun.

We've already seen an example of such a word: <sup>2</sup>ذِكْرَى *dhikrā'* "a remembrance". The root of this word is ذكر and it is on the pattern فَعْلَى.

We've also learned that, similar to ء, this ِ, which is extrinsic to the word's root, is a feminine marker for singular nouns.

Since <sup>2</sup>ذِكْرَى *dhikrā*<sup>2</sup> already ends with the vowel-mark ِ, the last letter won't have any additional vowel markers and therefore the word will appear the same in all states:

State	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	ذِكْرَى	الَّذِكْرَى
a-state	ذِكْرَى	الَّذِكْرَى
i-state	ذِكْرَى	الَّذِكْرَى

Therefore, the state of such nouns cannot be determined by the vowel mark on their final letter, and has to be deduced otherwise by their function in the sentence. Nevertheless, these nouns are still included in the category of semi-flexible nouns, and not rigid nouns. This is because rigid nouns are closed set consisting only of pronouns and other similar words.

Here is an example of this word in a sentence:

الْكِتَابُ ذِكْرَى جَمِيلَةٌ.

<sup>2</sup>*alkitābu dhikrā jamīlah*.

"The book is a beautiful remembrance."

Note, again how the describer جَمِيلَةٌ *jamīlah* is feminine and in the u-state, in order to match the gender and state of the describee <sup>2</sup>ذِكْرَى *dhikrā*<sup>2</sup>.

Beware also that, just like in the case of ء, there are some words where ى may be part of the word's root, e.g. اَلْهُدَى <sup>2</sup>*alhudā* "the guidance" whose root is هدى. Because here the ى in اَلْهُدَى is part of the word's root, therefore it shall not be a semi-flexible noun. So, when it is indefinite, it will be nūnated: هُدى *hudan* "a guidance". Also, for the same reason, ى in this word is not a feminine marker, and the word is masculine.

### 8.3.3. Nouns on the pattern أَفْعَلْ

If a noun is on the pattern أَفْعَلْ <sup>2</sup>*afʿal* then it shall be a semi-flexible noun. By the way, there is no feminine marker on such words, so they will be masculine by default.

Most colors and many physical characteristics fall into this pattern. Colors and physical characteristics are adjectival nouns. The masculine noun for such adjectival-nouns is on the pattern أَفْعَلْ <sup>2</sup>*afʿal*. And the feminine adjectival noun is on the pattern فُعْلَاءَ <sup>2</sup>*faʿlā* (which is itself a semi-flexible noun pattern because of the extrinsic ء ending). Here are some examples of such adjectival nouns:

Root	Masc. Noun	Fem. noun	Meaning
حمر	أَحْمَرٌ <sup>2</sup>	حَمْرَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	red
سود	أَسْوَدٌ <sup>2</sup>	سَوْدَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	black

Root	Masc. Noun	Fem. noun	Meaning
بيض	أَبْيَضٌ <sup>2</sup>	بَيْضَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	white
عرج	أَعْرَجٌ <sup>2</sup>	عَرْجَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	lame
حور	أَحْوَرٌ <sup>2</sup>	حَوْرَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	beautiful eyed
بكم	أَبْكَمٌ <sup>2</sup>	بُكْمَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	mute

Example:

لَبِيسَ الرَّجُلُ قَمِيصًا أَبْيَضَ.  
*labisa -rrajulu qamiṣan 'abyaḍ.*  
 "The man wore a white shirt."

#### 8.3.4. Adjectival nouns that end with an extrinsic ان

The letters ان may be an extrinsic ending for nouns. This ending is not a feminine marker so the noun would typically be masculine. This ending may cause the noun to be semi-flexible.

This category is more complicated than the previous ones. The following conditions must be satisfied for a word that ends with ان to be a semi-flexible noun:

1. The noun must be a adjectival-noun on the pattern فَعْلَان. So the common noun ثُعْبَان *thuebān* "a serpent" of the root ثَعِيَ is a common noun and therefore, not a semi-flexible noun.
2. The ان must be extrinsic to the word's root. So جَبَان *jabānun* "cowardly", an adjectival noun of the root جَبِن, is not a semi-flexible noun.
3. The feminine of the adjectival noun shall not be formed by adding ة to the masculine noun. So نَدَمَان *nadmān* "regretful", an adjectival-noun from the root نَدِم, is not a semi-flexible noun, because its feminine is نَدْمَانَةٌ *nadmānah*.

It is rare that this last condition fails. Most adjectival nouns that end with an extrinsic ان are of the pattern فَعْلَان *faelān* and their feminine is of the pattern فَعْلَى *faelā* (which is itself a semi-flexible noun pattern). These adjectival-nouns typically have an emphatic meaning. The following are examples of semi-flexible adjectival-nouns that fall into this category:

Root	Masc. Noun	Fem. noun	Meaning
غضب	غَضَبَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	غَضَبَى <sup>2</sup>	very angry
عطش	عَطَشَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	عَطَشَى <sup>2</sup>	very thirsty
جوع	جَوْعَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	جَوْعَى <sup>2</sup>	very hungry



## 8.3.5. Nouns of the patterns فَفَافِيف and فَفَافِيف

Nouns that are of the patterns فَفَافِيف and فَفَافِيف are also semi-flexible nouns. Here each letter ف could be any letter of the alphabet.

Here are some examples of these nouns:

- مَسَاجِدٌ *masājid*<sup>2</sup> “mosques”
- مَفَاتِيحٌ *mafātīḥ*<sup>2</sup> “keys”

These patterns are only used for plurals and we will study them in more detail in chapter @ref(broken-plurals) , if Allāh wills.

Work in progress

Work in progress

## Chapter 9.

### Duals

#### 9.1. Introduction

For any number greater than one, English uses the plural. For example, the plural of “house” is “houses”. So in English we will say:

“two houses”

Arabic, on the other hand, uses the plural only for nouns in number three and higher. For nouns that are two in number Arabic uses the *dual*.

Since English does not have a dual, we will sometimes indicate it using the subscript 2, thus: “houses<sub>2</sub>”, to mean “two houses”.

#### 9.2. Forming the dual

The dual is formed by appending the dual suffix اَنِ -*āni* when the noun is in the u-state and اَيْنِ -*ayni* when the noun is in the a-state or i-state. Definite nouns, which have اَلْ in their beginning are dualized the same way.

For example, when we dualize بَيْت *bayt* “a house” in order to say “houses<sub>2</sub>”, we get:

States	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	بَيْتَانِ <i>baytāni</i>	اَلْبَيْتَانِ <i>'albaytāni</i>
a- and i-states	بَيْتَيْنِ <i>baytayni</i>	اَلْبَيْتَيْنِ <i>'albaytayni</i>

Note that indefinite duals are not nūnated. The only difference between definite and indefinite duals is the definite article اَلْ “the”.

Here are examples of duals in sentences:

- u-state:

اَلْكِتَابَانِ فِي الْحَقِيبَةِ.  
'*alkitābāni fī -lḥaqībah.*

“The books<sub>2</sub> are in the bag.”

- a-state:

قَرَأَ الْغُلَامُ كِتَابَيْنِ.  
*qara'a -lghulāmu kitābayn.*  
 “The boy read two books.”

- i-state:

عَظِبَتِ الْأُمُّ عَلَى الْجَارِيَتَيْنِ.  
*ghaḍibati -l'ummu ʿala -ljāriyatayn.*  
 “The mother became angry at the girls<sub>2</sub>.” ### Nouns ending in ة

If a noun ends with a ة, then it is converted to a ت before appending the dual suffix. For example, dualizing شَجَرَة *shajarah* “a tree”, we get “trees<sub>2</sub>”:

States	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	شَجَرَتَانِ <i>shajaratāni</i>	الشَّجَرَتَانِ <i>ashshajaratāni</i>
a- and i-states	شَجَرَتَيْنِ <i>shajaratayni</i>	الشَّجَرَتَيْنِ <i>ashshajaratayni</i>

Example:

الشَّجَرَتَانِ فِي الْحَدِيقَةِ.  
*ashsharatāni fi -lhadiqah.*  
 “The trees<sub>2</sub> are in the garden.”

If a feminine noun does end with a ة then it will simply be appended with اَنِ *-āni* and اَيْنِ *-ayni*. For example, dualizing أُم *umm* “a mother” in order to get “mothers<sub>2</sub>”, we get:

- u-state: أُمَّانِ *ummāni*
- a-state and i-state: أُمَّيْنِ *ummayni*

There are some nouns that end with an alif before the ة, like فَتَاة *fatāh* “a young woman”. We will learn how to dualize these nouns later, if Allāh wills.

### 9.2.1. Nouns ending with ء

If a noun ends with the feminine marker ء which is extrinsic to the word's root then the ء shall be replaced with a و when forming the dual. Examples:

Root	Singular	Dual (u-state)	Dual (a- and i-states)
صحرا	صَحْرَاءُ <i>ṣaḥrā'</i> “a desert”	صَحْرَاوَانِ <i>ṣaḥrāwāni</i>	صَحْرَاوَيْنِ <i>ṣaḥrāwayni</i>

Root	Singular	Dual (u-state)	Dual (a- and i-states)
حمر	حَمْرَاء <i>ḥamrāʾ</i> “red <sub>f</sub> ”	حَمْرَاوَان <i>ḥamrāwāni</i>	حَمْرَاوَيْن <i>ḥamrāwayni</i>

There are other words where the ء in the ء ending originates from the word's root. Example:

- فِغَال (masc.) “a tent”, pattern: فِغَال

We will learn how to form duals of these words in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

### 9.2.2. Nouns ending with ى

If a noun ends with ى which is extrinsic to the word's root then the ى shall be changed to a ي when adding the dual suffixes. Examples:

Root	Singular	Dual (u-state)	Dual (a- and i-states)
غضب	غَضَبٌ <i>ghaḍbā</i> “very angry <sub>f</sub> ”	غَضَبَيَان <i>ghaḍbayāni</i>	غَضَبَيَيْن <i>ghaḍbayayni</i>
ذكر	ذِكْرٌ <i>dhikrā</i> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرَيَان <i>dhikrayāni</i>	ذِكْرَيَيْن <i>dhikrayayni</i>

Just like in the case of ء, there are some words where ى is not extrinsic to the word's root. Example:

- اَلْهُدَى (masc.) “the guidance”, pattern: اَلْفُعْل

We will learn how to form duals of these words in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

## 9.3. Dual describers and describees in descriptive noun-phrases

We learned that when an adjectival noun is a describer in an descriptive noun-phrase, then it matches the describee in definiteness, state, and gender. For example:

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ الْقَدِيمَةِ.

*dhahabtu ʾila-lmadīnati-lqadimah.*

“I went to the old city.”

To this we add that the describer shall also match the describee in number. So if the describee is a dual then the adjectival-noun describer shall be dualized to match it. Examples:

الْأُمَمَانُ الطَّيِّبَتَانِ فِي الْبَيْتِ.  
*ʾalʾummāni -ṭṭayyibatāni fi -lbayt.*  
 “The good mothers<sub>2</sub> are in the house.”

قَرَأَ الْعُلَامُ كِتَابَيْنِ ثَقِيلَيْنِ قَدِيمَيْنِ.  
*qaraʾa -lghulāmu kitābayni ṭhaqīlatayni qadīmatayn.*  
 “The boy read two old heavy books.”

#### 9.4. Duals in subject-information sentences

In subject-information sentences, if the subject is a dual, and the information is a adjectival noun, then the information will typically match the subject in being a dual. For example:

الْأُمَمَانُ كَرِيمَتَانِ.  
*ʾalʾummāni karīmatān.*  
 “The mothers<sub>2</sub> are generous.”

الْكِتَابَانِ الْكَبِيرَانِ ثَقِيلَانِ.  
*ʾalkitābāni -lkabirāni ṭhaqīlān.*  
 “The big books<sub>2</sub> are heavy.”

Such is usually also the case even when the information is a common noun, not an adjectival noun. For example,

الرَّجُلَانِ مُعَلِّمَانِ.  
*ʾarrujulāni muʿallimān.*  
 “The men<sub>2</sub> are teachers<sub>m,2</sub>.”

Sometimes, however, the subject and information may not match in number because of the meaning of the sentence. For example,

الْوِسَادَتَانِ سَرِيرٌ.  
*ʾalwisādatāni sarīr.*  
 “The two cushions are a bed.”

In the above example, the information does not match the subject in both number, and, as it happens, in gender.

#### 9.5. Detached dual pronouns

We have already learned the detached pronouns that are used in place of singular nouns. They are repeated here:

Singular participant	Detached pronoun
Masc. absentee	هُوَ <i>huwa</i> “he”
Fem. absentee	هِيَ <i>hiya</i> “she”
Masc. addressee	أَنْتَ <i>’anta</i> “you <sub>m,1</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	أَنْتِ <i>’anti</i> “you <sub>f,1</sub> ”
Speaker	أَنَا <i>’ana</i> “I”

Now we will learn the detached pronouns for the dual participants:

Dual participant	Detached pronoun
Absentee	هُمَا <i>humā</i> “they <sub>2</sub> ”
Addressee	أَنْتُمَا <i>’antumā</i> “you <sub>2</sub> ”
Speaker	–

Note that the dual detached pronouns are the same for both genders. Also, there is no detached pronoun for the dual speaker-participant. If the speaker-participant consists of two individuals then we will use the plural pronoun, which we will learn in the next chapter, if Allāh wills.

Here are some examples of their use:

هُمَا الرَّجُلَانِ.

*huma -rrajulān.*

“They<sub>2</sub> are the men<sub>2</sub>.”

هُمَا مُعَلِّمَتَانِ كَرِيمَتَانِ.

*humā muʿallimatāni karīmatāni.*

“They<sub>2</sub> are noble teachers<sub>f</sub>.”

قَالَتِ الْأُمُّ لِلْجَارِيَتَيْنِ أَنْتُمَا قَرِيبَتَانِ مِنِّي.

*qālati -l’ummu liljāriyatayni ’antumā qarībatāni minnī.*

“The mother said to the girls<sub>2</sub>, ‘You<sub>2</sub> are near me.’”

In the last example, the feminine adjectival-noun قَرِيبَتَانِ *qarībatāni* is used because it is referring to the feminine noun الْجَارِيَتَيْنِ *’aljāriyatayni* “the girls<sub>2</sub>”.

## 9.6. Attached dual pronouns

We have also already learned the attached pronouns for the singular participant. They too are repeated here:

Singular participant	Attached pronoun
Masc. absentee	هُوَ <i>-hu</i> “him”

Singular participant	Attached pronoun
Fem. absentee	هَآ - <i>hā</i> “her”
Masc. addressee	كَ - <i>ka</i> “you <sub>m,1</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	كِ - <i>kī</i> “you <sub>f,1</sub> ”
Speaker	يَ “me”

Now we will learn the attached pronouns for the dual participant:

Dual participant	Attached pronoun
Absentee	هُمَا - <i>humā</i> “them <sub>2</sub> ”
Addressee	كُمَا - <i>kumā</i> “you <sub>2</sub> ”
Speaker	—

Note the following points about them:

- Like the dual detached pronouns, the dual attached pronouns are the same for both genders. Also, there is no attached pronoun for the dual speaker-participant. Again, the plural pronoun will be used in this case.
- The dual absentee-participant detached and attached pronouns (“they<sub>2</sub>”/“them<sub>2</sub>”) are the same هُما -*humā*.
- Just like the absentee-participant singular masculine attached pronoun ُهو -*hu* “him”, the dual absentee-participant attached pronoun “them<sub>2</sub>” هُما -*humā* becomes هِما -*himā* when preceded by the vowels اَ -*i*, اِ -*ī*, or the semi-vowel اَيَّ -*ay*. Examples:
  - هِما *bihimā* “with them<sub>2</sub>”
  - فِيهِما *fīhimā* “in them<sub>2</sub>”
  - إِلَيْهِما *‘ilayhimā* “to them<sub>2</sub>”
- The preposition لِ *li* “for” becomes لَ *la* when followed by the dual attached pronouns:
  - لَهِما *lahumā* “for them<sub>2</sub>”
  - لَكُما *lakumā* “for you<sub>2</sub>”
- As expected, the long *ā* vowel at the ends of the dual attached pronouns becomes a short *a* vowel when followed by a connecting hamzah اَ. Example:

– ذَهَبَ إِلَيْكُما الرَّجُلُ.  
*dhahaba ‘ilaykuma -rrajulu.*  
 “The man went toward you<sub>2</sub>.”



## 9.6.1. Dual doer pronouns

The dual attached pronouns that we have just learned are also used as doer pronouns. Examples:

سَأَلَهُمَا الرَّجُلُ.

*sa'alahuma -rrajulu.*

"The man asked them<sub>2</sub>."

سَأَلْتُكُمَا.

*sa'altukumā*

"I asked you<sub>2</sub>."

سَأَلَتْكُمَا.

*sa'alatkumā.*

"She asked you<sub>2</sub>."

## 9.7. Verbs with dual doers

## 9.7.1. Dual nouns for the doer

We learned that the completed-action verb for a masculine doer is on the pattern *فَعَلَ*. And when the doer is feminine, the *ت* of femininity is attached to the verb thus: *فَعَلَتْ*. We have used these verbs with singular doer nouns. The doer noun always comes after the verb and shall be in the u-state. Examples:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ.

*dhahaba -lghulamū.*

"The boy went."

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ.

*dhahabat jāriyatun*

"A girl went."

These same verbs are used when the doer noun is a dual. Examples:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامَانِ.

*dhahaba -lghulamāni.*

"The boys<sub>2</sub> went."

ذَهَبَتِ جَارِيَتَانِ.

*dhahabat jāriyatāni.*

"Two girls went."

## 9.7.2. Dual pronouns for the doer

We have already learned the singular doer pronouns:

Singular participant	Doer pronoun	Meaning	Doer pronoun with verb
Masc. absentee	invisible	“he”	فَعَلَ <i>faʿala</i>
Fem. absentee	invisible	“she”	فَعَلَتْ <i>faʿalat</i>
Masc. addressee	تَ - <i>ta</i>	“you <sub>m,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتَ <i>faʿalta</i>
Fem. addressee	تِ - <i>ti</i>	“you <sub>f,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتِ <i>faʿalti</i>
Speaker	تُ - <i>tu</i>	“I”	فَعَلْتُ <i>faʿaltu</i>

Now we will learn the dual doer pronouns:

Dual participant	Doer pronoun	Meaning	Doer pronoun with verb
Absentee	اِ - <i>ā</i>	“them <sub>2</sub> ”	masc.: فَعَلَا <i>faʿalā</i> , fem: فَعَلَتَا <i>faʿalatā</i>
Addressee	تُما - <i>tumā</i>	“you <sub>2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُما <i>faʿaltumā</i>
Speaker	–	“us <sub>2</sub> ”	–

Note the following regarding the dual doer pronouns:

The dual doer pronouns are the same for both genders.

However, when the absentee-participant doer pronoun (اِ -*ā*) is used for a feminine doer, it is attached to the verb with an intervening ت of femininity thus: فَعَلَتَا *faʿalatā* “they<sub>f,2</sub> did” Here are some examples of the dual doer pronouns:

سَأَلْتُمَا

*saʿaltumānā*

“You<sub>2</sub> asked us”

سَأَلْتَاكُمَا

*saʿalatākumā*

“They<sub>f,2</sub> asked you<sub>2</sub>”

سَأَلَاهُمَا

*saʿalāhumā*

“They<sub>m,2</sub> asked them<sub>2</sub>”

### 9.7.3. Sentence word order with dual doers

As we’ve mentioned, the doer, whether a noun or a pronoun, always comes after the verb. Here are a couple of examples of verbal sentences with dual doers:

دَهَبَا إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*d̥hahabā ʾilā baytin.*

“They<sub>2</sub> went to a house.”

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلَانِ إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*dhahabā -rrujalāni 'ilā baytin.*

“The men<sub>2</sub> went to a house.”

The above verbal sentence can be rearranged to be a subject-information sentence. This gives more emphasis to the subject. In this case, the verb shall follow the subject and will need a doer pronoun after it.

الرَّجُلَانِ ذَهَبَا إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*'arrujalāni dhahabā 'ilā baytin.*

“The men<sub>2</sub>, they<sub>2</sub> went to a house.”

= “The men<sub>2</sub> went to a house.”

If there are multiple verbs associated with the same doer in a verbal sentence, the doer noun will follow the first verb and the rest of the verbs will have doer pronouns. For example:

أَكَلَ الرَّجُلَانِ وَشَرِبَا وَذَهَبَا.

*'akala -rrajulāni washaribā wadhahabā.*

“The men<sub>2</sub> ate and they<sub>2</sub> drank and they<sub>2</sub> went.”

= “The men<sub>2</sub> ate and drank and went.”

The above verbal sentence can be rearranged to be a subject-information sentence. In that case, all the verbs shall have doer pronouns. The sentence will have the same translation as above, except for an emphasis on the subject of the sentence.

الرَّجُلَانِ أَكَلَا وَشَرِبَا وَذَهَبَا.

*'arrajulāni 'akalā washaribā wadhahabā.*

“The men<sub>2</sub>, they<sub>2</sub> ate and they<sub>2</sub> drank and they<sub>2</sub> went.”

= “The men<sub>2</sub> ate and drank and went.”

Work in progress

## Chapter 10.

### Sound plurals

#### 10.1. Introduction

Arabic uses the plural for nouns in number three and higher. The formation and use of plurals in Arabic can be somewhat complicated. One of these complications is that, in using plurals, Arabic distinguishes between intelligent beings and non-intelligent beings. Intelligent beings are those living beings that are endowed with reason like humans, angels, and jinn. Non-intelligent beings include animals, inanimate objects, abstract concepts, etc.

As a further complication, there is sometimes more than one way to use plurals. In this chapter we will explain the most common usages to keep things as simple as possible.

Arabic has two categories of plurals:

1. The *sound plural*: English regularly forms the plural by adding the plural ending “s” to the end of a singular noun. For example:

Singular	Plural
book	books
house	houses
boy	boys
girl	girls

Arabic also forms some plurals by adding plural endings to the singular noun. This kind of plural is called a *sound plural* because the singular noun is kept more or less sound (intact) when adding the plural ending.

Arabic has two types of sound plurals:

- i. The *ūn* sound plural.
- ii. The *āt* sound plural.

We will describe each of these in this chapter.

2. The *broken plural*: When forming this plural the singular noun is not kept intact. We will learn about this plural in the next chapter, if Allāh wills.

## 10.2. The *ūn* sound plural

The *ūn* sound plural is formed by adding the ending *ūna* to the singular noun when it is in the u-state, and *īna* when the noun is in the a-state or i-state. For convenience, we will call it the “*ūn* sound plural” instead of the “*ūna/-īna* plural”.

Here is the *ūn* sound plural of مُعَلِّم *muʿallim* “a teacher<sub>m</sub>”:

State	Indefinite <i>ūn</i> plural “teachers <sub>m</sub> ”	Definite <i>ūn</i> plural “the teachers <sub>m</sub> ”
u-state	مُعَلِّمُونَ <i>muʿallimūna</i>	الْمُعَلِّمُونَ <i>ʾalmuʿallimūna</i>
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمِينَ <i>muʿallimīna</i>	الْمُعَلِّمِينَ <i>ʾalmuʿallimīna</i>

Note that, just like for duals, the indefinite *ūn* sound plural is not nūnated. The only difference between the definite and indefinite *ūn* sound plural is the definite article ال “the”.

The duals of مُعَلِّم *muʿallim* “a teacher<sub>m</sub>” are included here for comparison:

State	Indefinite <i>ūn</i> sound plural “teachers <sub>m,2</sub> ”	Definite <i>ūn</i> sound plural “the teachers <sub>m,2</sub> ”
u-state	مُعَلِّمَانِ <i>muʿallimāni</i>	الْمُعَلِّمَانِ <i>ʾalmuʿallimāni</i>
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمَيْنِ <i>muʿallimayni</i>	الْمُعَلِّمَيْنِ <i>ʾalmuʿallimayni</i>

Here are some examples of the *ūn* sound plural in sentences:

- u-state:

الْمُعَلِّمُونَ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ.  
*ʾalmuʿallimūna fi -lmadrasah*  
 “The teachers are in the school.”

- a-state:

سَأَلَ الْغُلَامُ مُعَلِّمِينَ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.  
*saʿala -lghulāmu muʿallimīna ʿan ʾamr.*  
 “The boy asked some teachers about a matter.”

- i-state:

طَلَبَ الْغُلَامُ مِنَ الْمُعَلِّمِينَ عِلْمًا.  
*ṭalaba -lghulāmu mina -lmuʿallimīna ʿilmā.*  
 “The boy sought some knowledge from the teachers.”

## 10.2.1. Applicability of the ūn sound plural

Except for very few exceptions, the ūn sound plural is used only for male intelligent beings.

The few exceptions of common nouns that denote non-male intelligent beings, yet have an ūn sound plural include:

- عالم *ʿālam* “a world” forms the ūn plural عَالَمُونَ *ʿālamūna* “worlds”.
- أرض *ʾarḍ* (fem.) “a land”, “an earth” forms the ūn plural أَرْضُونَ *ʾarḍūna* “lands”, “earths”.
- أهل *ahl* “a family” forms the ūn plural أَهْلُونَ *ahlūna* “families”.

## 10.3. The āt sound plural

The āt sound plural is formed by adding the ending ات *āt* to the indefinite singular noun.

Here is the āt sound plural of حيوان *ḥayawān* “an animal”:

State	Indefinite ūn plural “animals”	Definite ūn plural “the animals”
u-state	حَيَوَانَاتٌ <i>ḥayawānātun</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتُ <i>alḥayawānātu</i>
a- and i-states	حَيَوَانَاتٍ <i>ḥayawānātīn</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتِ <i>alḥayawānātī</i>

Note that:

- Unlike the ūn sound plural, the āt sound plural is nūnated when indefinite. Also, just like for singular nouns, the final vowel on the plural ending ات *āt* indicates the state of the plural.
- The āt sound plural does not take the *a*-mark َ and the nūnated *a*-mark ً. Instead the *i*-mark ِ and the nūnated *i*-mark ٍ are used to indicate both the *a*-state and the *i*-state.

State	the animal	the animals
u-state	الْحَيَوَانُ <i>alḥayawānu</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتُ <i>alḥayawānātu</i>
a-state	الْحَيَوَانِ <i>alḥayawāna</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتِ <i>alḥayawānātī</i>
i-state	الْحَيَوَانِ <i>alḥayawāni</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتِ <i>alḥayawānātī</i>

## 10.3.1. Nouns ending in ة

If a noun ends with a ة, then it is removed before appending the *āt* sound plural ending. Here, for example, is the *āt* sound plural of مُعَلِّمَةٌ *muʿallimah* “a teacher<sub>f</sub>”:

State	Indefinite <i>ūn</i> plural “teachers <sub>f</sub> ”	Definite <i>ūn</i> plural “the teachers <sub>f</sub> ”
u-state	مُعَلِّمَاتٌ <i>muʿallimātun</i>	الْمُعَلِّمَاتُ <i>ʾalmuʿallimātu</i>
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمَاتٍ <i>muʿallimātin</i>	الْمُعَلِّمَاتِ <i>ʾalmuʿallimāti</i>

Here are some examples of the *āt* sound plural in sentences:

- u-state:

فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ مُعَلِّمَاتٌ .  
*fī -lmaḍrasati muʿallimāt.*  
“In the school are teachers.”

- a-state:

نَصَرَ اللَّهُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.  
*naṣara -llāhu -lmuṣlimīn.*  
“Allāh aided the Muslims.”

- i-state:

نَظَرَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى الْحَيَوَانَاتِ.  
*naḍhara -lghulāmu ʾila -lḥayawānāt.*  
“The boy looked at the animals.”

There are some nouns that end with an alif before the ة, like فَتَاةٌ *fatāh* “a young woman”. We will learn how to pluralize these nouns later, if Allāh wills.

## 10.3.2. Nouns ending with ء

Consistent with what we learned for duals in section @ref(duals-of-extrinsic-alif-mamduda), if a noun ends with the feminine marker ء which is extrinsic to the word’s root then the ء shall be replaced with a ٍ when forming the *āt* sound plural. Example:

Root	Singular	<i>āt</i> sound plural
صح	صَحْرَاءُ <sup>2</sup> <i>ṣaḥrāʾ</i> “a desert”	صَحْرَاوَاتٍ <i>ṣaḥrāwāt</i>



## 10.3.3. Nouns ending with ي

Consistent with what we learned for duals in section @ref(duals-of-extrinsic-alif-maqsurā), If a noun ends with ي which is extrinsic to the word's root then the ي shall be changed to a ى when forming the āt sound plural. Examples:

Root	Singular	āt sound plural
ذَكَرَ	ذِكْرٌ <sup>2</sup> <i>dhikrā</i> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرِيَّاتٌ <i>dhikrayāt</i>

## 10.3.4. Common nouns of the patterns فَعْلَة/فُعْلَة, فُعْلَة/فُعْل, and فُعْلَة/فُعْل

Common nouns of the patterns فَعْلَة/فُعْلَة, فُعْلَة/فُعْل, and فُعْلَة/فُعْل are treated specially when forming their āt sound plural.

If a common noun is of these patterns and the middle root letter is not و or ي, and the middle and final root letters are not the same, then the word is modified internally when forming the āt sound plural.

There are two separate rules to consider:

1. If a common noun is of the pattern فَعْل *faʿl* or فَعْلَة *faʿlah*, then the o-mark on the middle letter shall be converted to an a-mark ا when forming the āt sound plural. For example;

- نَحْلَة *naḥlah* “a bee” becomes نَحْلَات *naḥlāt* “bees”, not × نَحْلَات *naḥlāt*.
- ضَرْبَة *ḍarbah* “a strike” becomes ضَرْبَات *ḍarabāt* “strikes”, not × ضَرْبَات *ḍarbāt*.
- صَفْحَة *ṣafḥah* “a page” becomes صَفْحَات *ṣafḥāt* “pages”, not × صَفْحَات *ṣafḥāt*.

If the middle root letter is و or ي, or the middle and final root letters are the same then this modification is not done. For example,

- جَوْزَة *jawzah* “a walnut” becomes جَوَزَات *jawzāt*.
- حَجَّة *hajjah* “a pilgrimage” becomes حَجَّات *hajjāt*.

2. If a common noun is of the pattern فُعْل *fuʿl*, فُعْلَة *fuʿlah*, فُعْل *fuʿl*, or فُعْلَة *fuʿlah* then the o-mark on the middle letter can, optionally, either:

- i. be retained,
- ii. be converted to an a mark, or
- iii. be converted to the vowel mark on the first letter.

For example:

- ظُلْمَة *ḍhulmah* “a darkness” can become, optionally, either ظُلُمَات *ḍhulmāt* or ظُلُمَات *ḍhulamāt*, or ظُلُمَات *ḍhulumāt* “darknesses”.

- كِسْرَة *kisrah* “a piece” can become, optionally, either كِسْرَات *kisrāt* or كِسْرَات *kisarāt*, or كَيْسِرَات *kisirāt* “pieces”.

Note that this rule of changing the vowel mark is only true for common nouns. Adjectival-nouns on these patterns will retain the o-mark when forming the *āt* sound plural. So صَعْب *ṣaʿb* and صَعْبَة *ṣaʿbah* “a difficult one” become only صَعَبَات *ṣaʿbāt*, not × صَعَبَات *ṣaʿabāt*.

### 10.3.5. Applicability of the *āt* sound plural

We had mentioned that the *ūn* sound plural is used, with very few exceptions, only for male intelligent beings. Conversely, the *āt* is used for both female intelligent beings, and for non-intelligent beings (both masculine and feminine) like animals, inanimate objects, and abstract concepts. Rarely, it is also used for male intelligent beings.

## 10.4. Conditions for forming the sound plural

Many times, a noun can form both an *ūn* sound plural and an *āt* sound plural. However, there are many nouns that can form only one of the two sound plurals. And many nouns don't form either sound plural; they only form broken plurals. (We will learn about broken plurals in the next chapter, if Allāh wills.) There are even nouns that can form both sound and broken plurals.

Here we will learn some of the conditions which a noun needs to satisfy in order for it to form the sound plurals.

### 10.4.1. Conditions for the *ūn* sound plural

The *ūn* sound plural is used, with very few exceptions, only for nouns that denote male intelligent beings. These guidelines will help you determine which nouns form the *ūn* sound plural.

We will treat common nouns and adjectival nouns separately.

#### 10.4.1.1. Common nouns

With very few exceptions (some of which we saw in section @ref(applicability-of-the-un-sound-plural)), common nouns denoting male intelligent beings are disqualified from forming the *ūn* sound plural if their feminine counterpart is not formed by adding a *ə* to the masculine noun. So, غُلَام *ghulām* “a boy” is disqualified from forming a *ūn* sound plural because its feminine counterpart is جَارِيَة *jāriyah* “a girl”, not × غُلَامَة *ghulāmah*.

Even if a common noun denotes a male intelligent being and its female counterpart is formed by adding a *ṣ*, further conditions are imposed that can restrict its having a *ūn* sound plural. We will explain these restrictions below:

We learned in section @ref(related-nouns-for-male-and-female-animate-beings) that, in terms of their meaning, nouns that denote animate beings are of two kinds:

- i. Nouns that have a primitive meaning. That is, their meaning is not derived from a verbal or adjectival meaning. Examples (for male intelligent beings whose feminine is formed by adding *ṣ* to the masculine noun):

Arabic word	Definition
ابْن <i>ibn</i>	a son
طِفْل <i>ṭifl</i>	a child
إِنْسَان <i>ʾinsān</i>	a human being
حُرّ <i>ḥurr</i>	a free man

Such nouns, in general, won't be expected to form *ūn* sound plurals, unless the *ūn* sound plural is explicitly allowed in their dictionary definition.

- ii. Nouns that have a meaning that is derived from a verbal or adjectival meaning. Examples (for male intelligent beings whose feminine is formed by adding *ṣ* to the masculine noun):

Word	Definition	<i>ūn</i> plural
مُعَلِّم	a teacher <sub>m</sub>	مُعَلِّمُونَ
مُسْلِم	a Muslim <sub>m</sub> (one who submits)	مُسْلِمُونَ
كَافِر	a disbeliever <sub>m</sub>	كَافِرُونَ
لَاعِب	a player <sub>m</sub>	لَاعِبُونَ

Such nouns, in general, can be expected to form *ūn* sound plurals.

The above definition of primitive and derived nouns, as we have explained it, is somewhat imprecise. For example, the word حُرّ *ḥurr* (masc.) “a free man” seems to have a meaning that is derived from the adjective “free” and it forms its feminine by adding *ṣ* to it thus: حُرّة *ḥurrah* (fem.) “a free woman”. Yet it is considered a primitive noun, and thus does not form an *ūn* sound plural.

Once you become more familiar with Arabic word patterns, distinguishing between primitive and derived nouns will become clearer, if Allāh wills.

## 10.4.1.2. Adjectival nouns

If an adjectival noun forms its feminine by adding the feminine marker ة to the masculine noun, then we may assume that it forms the *ūn* sound plural.

Most adjectival nouns satisfy this condition. For example, consider the adjectival noun:

- كَبِير *kabīr* (masc.) “a big one”

It forms its feminine by adding a ة to the masculine noun, thus:

- كَبِيرَة *kabīrah* (fem.) “a big one”

The above condition is satisfied; therefore, كَبِير *kabīr* (masc.) “a big one” forms the *ūn* sound plural كَبِيرُونَ *kabīrūna* “big ones”.

By the way, it is only the masculine adjectival noun that will form the *ūn* sound plural. Nouns with a ة are not allowed to form the *ūn* sound plural.

We have come across two patterns on adjectival nouns that don't form their feminine by adding ة to masculine noun. These are:

- i. <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَان *faelān*<sup>2</sup>, whose feminine is on the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَاء *faelā*<sup>2</sup>. Example: <sup>2</sup>غَضَبَان *ghadbān*<sup>2</sup> (masc.) “very angry” whose feminine is <sup>2</sup>غَضَبَاء *ghadbā*<sup>2</sup>.
- ii. <sup>2</sup>أَفْعَل *afʿal*<sup>2</sup>, whose feminine is on the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَاء *faelā*<sup>2</sup>. Example: <sup>2</sup>أَحْمَر *aḥmar*<sup>2</sup> (masc.) “red”, whose feminine is <sup>2</sup>حَمْرَاء *hamrā*<sup>2</sup>.

Because the above two patterns don't form their feminine by adding ة to the masculine noun, therefore the masculine nouns don't form the *ūn* sound plural. We will see in chapter @broken\_plurals, if Allāh wills, that they form broken plurals instead.

10.4.2. Conditions for the *āt* sound plural

Just like the *ūn* plural, there are conditions that should be fulfilled in order for a noun to form an *āt* plural. We provide the following guidelines to help you determine if a noun can form an *āt* plural.

## 10.4.2.1. Nouns that end with a feminine marker

Generally, all nouns that end with a feminine marker like ة, اء, and ئ are able to form an *āt* plural. Examples are:

Singular	<i>āt</i> sound plural
حَسَنَة <i>hasanah</i> adj. “a good one <sub>f</sub> ”	حَسَنَات <i>hasanāt</i>
حَسَنَة <i>hasanah</i> (common noun) “a good deed”	حَسَنَات <i>hasanāt</i>
صَدِيقَة <i>ṣadiqah</i> “a friend <sub>f</sub> ”	صَدِيقَات <i>ṣadiqāt</i>

Singular	<i>āt</i> sound plural
<sup>2</sup> صَحْرَاء <i>ṣaḥrā</i> <sup>2</sup> “a desert”	صَحْرَاوَات <i>ṣaḥrāwāt</i>
<sup>2</sup> ذِكْرَى <i>dḥikrā</i> <sup>2</sup> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرِيَات <i>dḥikrayāt</i>

The following are exceptions to this general rule, and don't form *āt* sound plurals:

- Adjectival nouns of the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَاء which is the feminine of the masculine adjectival noun pattern <sup>2</sup>أَفْعَل. For example, حَمْرَاء *ḥamrā* “red<sub>f</sub>”.
- Adjectival nouns of the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَى which is the feminine of the masculine adjectival noun pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَان. For example, غَضَبِي *ghaḍbā* “very angry<sub>f</sub>”.
- The following exceptional nouns:
  - اُمَّة *ummah* “a nation”
  - اَمَةٌ *amah* “a female slave”
  - شَفَّة *shafah* “a lip”

There are a few more such nouns, some of which we will introduce later.

All these exceptional nouns form broken plurals instead of the *āt* sound plural.

#### 10.4.2.2. Nouns that don't end with a feminine marker

##### Common nouns

Common nouns that don't end with a feminine marker will form the *āt* plural only if they don't have a broken plural listed in the dictionary. Furthermore, it is preferred if the noun have five or more letters.

- حَيَوَان *ḥayawān* “an animal” forms the *āt* plural حَيَوَانَات *ḥayawānāt* “animals”.
- حَمَّام *ḥammām* forms the *āt* plural حَمَّامَات *ḥammāmāt* “bathrooms”. (The doubled م counts as two letters.)

##### Masculine adjectival nouns

Masculine adjectival nouns are permitted to form an *āt* sound plural, but only when they are applied to non-intelligent beings.

For example, if the masculine adjectival noun صَعْب *ṣaʿb* “a difficult one” is applied to “books”, which is the plural of the masculine noun كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book”, then the masculine adjectival noun صَعْب *ṣaʿb* is permitted to form the *āt* plural صَعْبَات *ṣaʿbāt* “difficult ones”.

By the way, note that both the masculine adjectival noun صَعْب *ṣaʿb*, and its feminine صَعْبَةٌ *ṣaʿbah* form the same *āt* sound plural صَعْبَات *ṣaʿbāt*.

### 10.5. Detached plural pronouns

We have already learned the detached pronouns for singular and dual nouns. They are repeated here:

Participant	Detached pronoun
Absentee sing. masc.	هُوَ <i>huwa</i> “he”
Absentee sing. fem.	هِيَ <i>hiya</i> “she”
Absentee dual	هُمَا <i>humā</i> “they <sub>2</sub> ”
Addressee sing. masc.	أَنْتَ <i>’anta</i> “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”
Addressee sing. fem.	أَنْتِ <i>’anti</i> “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”
Addressee dual	أَنْتُمَا <i>’antumā</i> “you <sub>2</sub> ”
Speaker sing.	أَنَا <i>’ana</i> “I”
Speaker dual	—

Now we will learn the detached pronouns for the plural participants:

Participant	Detached pronoun
Absentee pl. masc.	هُمْ <i>hum</i> “they <sub>3,m</sub> ”
Absentee pl. fem.	هُنَّ <i>hunna</i> “they <sub>3,f</sub> ”
Addressee pl. masc.	أَنْتُمْ <i>’antum</i> “you <sub>3,m</sub> ”
Addressee pl. fem.	أَنْتُنَّ <i>’antunna</i> “you <sub>3,f</sub> ”
Speaker pl.	نَحْنُ <i>naḥnu</i> “we”

Note that the plural detached pronoun for the speaker participant نَحْنُ *naḥnu* “we” are the same for both genders.

Also, remember that there is no detached pronoun for the dual speaker-participant. So, if the speaker-participant consists of two individuals then we will use the plural pronoun.

Here are some examples of their use:

هُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

*hum muslimūn.*

“They<sub>3,m</sub> are men<sub>3</sub>.”

هُنَّ مُعَلِّمَاتٌ.

*hum muʿallimaāt.*

“They<sub>3,f</sub> are teachers<sub>f</sub>.”

أَنْتُمْ لَاعِبُونَ.

*’antum lāʿibūn.*

“You<sub>3,m</sub> are players<sub>3,m</sub>.”

أَنْتُنَّ صَدِيقَاتٍ.

*ʾantunna ṣadiqāt.*

“You<sub>3,f</sub> are friends<sub>3,f</sub>.”

نَحْنُ رَجُلَانِ فَقِيرَانِ.

*naḥnu rajulāni faqīrān.*

“We<sub>2,m</sub> are poor men<sub>2</sub>.” (Note the plural pronoun subject with a dual noun in the information.)

نَحْنُ مُسْلِمَاتٍ.

*naḥnu muslimāt.*

“We<sub>3,f</sub> are Muslims<sub>3,f</sub>.”

## 10.6. Attached plural pronouns

We have also already learned the attached pronouns for the singular and dual participants. They too are repeated here:

Participant	Attached pronoun
Absentee sing. masc.	هُ - <i>hu</i> “him”
Absentee sing. fem.	هَا - <i>hā</i> “her”
Absentee dual	هُمَا - <i>humā</i> “them <sub>2</sub> ”
Addressee sing. masc.	كَ - <i>ka</i> “you <sub>m,1</sub> ”
Addressee sing. fem.	كِ - <i>ki</i> “you <sub>f,1</sub> ”
Addressee dual	كُمَا - <i>kumā</i> “you <sub>2</sub> ”
Speaker sing.	ي - <i>ya</i> “me”
Speaker dual	—

Now we will learn the attached pronouns for the plural participant:

Participant	Attached pronoun
Absentee pl. masc.	هُمْ - <i>hum</i> “them <sub>3,m</sub> ”
Absentee pl. fem.	هُنَّ - <i>hunna</i> “them <sub>3,f</sub> ”
Addressee pl. masc.	كُم - <i>kum</i> “you <sub>3,m</sub> ”
Addressee pl. fem.	كُنَّ - <i>kunna</i> “you <sub>3,f</sub> ”
Speaker pl	نَا - <i>nā</i> “us”

Note the following points about them:

- The plural absentee-participant detached and attached pronouns (“they<sub>3,m</sub>”/“them<sub>3,m</sub>”) are the same:
  - masculine: هُمْ -*hum*.
  - feminine: هُنَّ -*hunna*.

- Just like *hu* “him” and *humā* “them<sub>2</sub>”, the plural absentee-participant attached pronouns *hum* “them<sub>3,m</sub>” and *hunna* “them<sub>3,f</sub>” become *himā* and *hinna* respectively, when preceded by the vowels *-i*, *-ī*, or the semi-vowel *-ay*. Examples:

- *bihimā* “with them<sub>3,m</sub>”
- *fihinna* “in them<sub>3,f</sub>”
- *ilayhim* “to them<sub>3,m</sub>”

- The final o-mark on the *ḥ* in the masculine plural pronouns (*hum*, *ʾantum*, and *kum* -*kum*) becomes a *u*-mark (*humu*, *ʾantumū*, and *kumū* respectively) when followed by a connecting hamzah. Examples:

- *humū al-muʿallimūn*.  
“They<sub>pl. masc.</sub> are the (male) teachers.”
- *dhāhaba ilaykumū r-rajul*.  
“The man went to you<sub>3,m</sub>.”
- *antumū al-muslimūn*. “You<sub>3,m</sub> are the Muslims<sub>3,m</sub>.”

- When the speaker plural attached pronoun *lā* is attached to a word that ends with a *ū* with a o-mark, there is only one *ū* written and it is doubled with a doubling mark *ā* on it. So we get:

- *lā + min = minnā*
- *lā + ʿan = ʿannā*
- *lā + lā = lāunnā*

- The preposition *li* “for” becomes *la* when followed by the plural attached pronouns:

- *lahum* “for them<sub>3,m</sub>”
- *lahunna* “for them<sub>3,f</sub>”
- *lakum* “for you<sub>3,m</sub>”
- *lakunna* “for you<sub>3,f</sub>”
- *lanā* “for us”

### 10.6.1. Plural doee pronouns

The plural attached pronouns that we have just learned are also used as doee pronouns. Examples:

*saʾalahumū r-rajul*.  
“The man asked them<sub>3,m</sub>.”



سَأَلْتُكُمْ.  
*sa'altukum*  
 "I asked you<sub>3,m</sub>."

سَأَلْتُكِ.  
*sa'alatkunn.*  
 "She asked you<sub>3,f</sub>."

سَأَلْنَا.  
*sa'alānā.*  
 "They<sub>2,m</sub> asked us."

سَأَلْتَاهُ.  
*sa'alatāh.*  
 "They<sub>3,m</sub> asked him."

## 10.7. Verbs with plural doers

### 10.7.1. Plural nouns for the doer

We learned that the completed-action verb for a masculine doer is on the pattern *فَعَلَ*. And when the doer is feminine, the *ت* of femininity is attached to the verb thus: *فَعَلَتْ*. We have used these verbs with singular and dual doer nouns. The doer noun always comes after the verb and shall be in the u-state. Examples:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ.  
*dhahaba -lghulamū.*  
 "The boy went."

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ.  
*dhahabat jāriyatun*  
 "A girl went."

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامَانِ.  
*dhahaba -lghulamāni.*  
 "The boys<sub>2</sub> went."

ذَهَبَتِ جَارِيَتَانِ.  
*dhahabat jāriyatāni.*  
 "Two girls went."

These same verbs are used when the doer noun is a plural. Examples:

ذَهَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ.  
*dhahaba -lmu'allimūn.*  
 "The teacher<sub>3,m</sub> went."

ذَهَبَتْ مُعَلِّمَاتٌ.  
*d̥hahabat muʿallimāt.*  
 “Teachers<sub>3,f</sub> went.”

### 10.7.2. Plural pronouns for the doer

We have already learned the singular and dual doer pronouns. They are repeated here:

Participant	Doer pronoun	Meaning	Doer pronoun with verb
Absentee sing. masc.	invisible	“he”	فَعَلَ <i>faʿala</i>
Absentee sing. fem.	invisible	“she”	فَعَلَتْ <i>faʿalat</i>
Absentee dual	اَ -ā	“them <sub>2</sub> ”	masc.: فَعَلَا <i>faʿalā</i> , fem: فَعَلَتَا <i>faʿalatā</i>
Addressee sing. masc.	تَ -ta	“you <sub>m,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتَ <i>faʿalta</i>
Addressee sing. fem.	تِ -ti	“you <sub>f,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتِ <i>faʿalti</i>
Addressee dual	تُمَا -tumā	“you <sub>2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُمَا <i>faʿaltumā</i>
Speaker sing.	تُ -tu	“I”	فَعَلْتُ <i>faʿaltu</i>
Speaker dual	–	“us <sub>2</sub> ”	–

Now we will learn the plural doer pronouns:

plural participant	Doer pronoun	Meaning	Doer pronoun with verb
Absentee pl. masc.	و	“they <sub>3,m</sub> ”	فَعَلُوا <i>faʿalū</i>
Absentee pl. fem.	نَ -na	“they <sub>3,f</sub> ”	فَعَلْنَ <i>faʿalna</i>
Addressee pl. masc.	تُمْ -tum	“you <sub>m,3</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُمْ <i>faʿaltum</i>
Addressee pl. fem.	تُنَّ -tunna	“you <sub>f,3</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُنَّ <i>faʿaltunna</i>
Speaker pl.	نَا -nā	“we”	فَعَلْنَا <i>faʿalnā</i>

Note the following regarding the plural doer pronouns:

- The تَ of femininity does not attach to the absentee plural feminine doer pronoun نَ -na “they<sub>3,f</sub>” فَعَلْنَ. Example:

- ذَهَبْنَ *dḥahabna* “they<sub>3,f</sub> went”

This is different from the behavior of the absentee dual doer pronoun لَآ -ā “them<sub>2,f</sub>” which, for a feminine doer, does attach to the ت of femininity. Example:

- ذَهَبَتَا *dḥahabatā* “they<sub>2,f</sub> went”

- The final o-mark on the م in the masculine plural doer pronoun تُمْ -*tum* becomes a u-mark تُم -*tumu* when followed by a connecting hamzah. Examples:

- أَكَلْتُمْ خُبْزًا.  
ʾakaltum kḥubzā.  
“You<sub>3,m</sub> ate some bread.”
- أَكَلْتُمُ الْخُبْزَ.  
ʾakaltumu -lkḥubz.  
“You<sub>3,m</sub> ate the bread.”

- The absentee plural masculine verb doer pronoun “they<sub>3,m</sub>” و ū is written with a silent alif after it which is written only and not pronounced. This alif is dropped when a doee pronoun is attached. For example:

- ضَرَبُوا الرَّجُلَ.  
ḍarabu -rrajul.  
“They<sub>3,m</sub> hit the man.”
- ضَرَبُوهُ.  
ḍarabūh.  
“They<sub>3,m</sub> hit him.”

- The plural masculine verb doer pronoun for the addressed person “you<sub>3,m</sub>” تُمْ -*tum* becomes تُمُو *tumū* when a doee pronoun is attached. For example:

- ضَرَبْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ.  
ḍarabtumu -rrajul.  
“You<sub>3,m</sub> hit the man.”
- ضَرَبْتُمُوهُ.  
ḍarabtumūh.  
“You<sub>pl. masc.</sub> hit him.”

- The plural speaking participant doer pronoun نَا -*nā* is the same as the plural speaking participant attached pronoun نَا -*nā*. But you can tell them apart because the doer pronoun, when attached to the verb, causes the final letter of the verb to have a o-mark. Consider the following two sentences:

سَأَلْنَا.  
saʾalnā.  
“We asked.”

سَأَلْنَا.  
 sa'alanā.  
 "He asked us."

### 10.7.3. Sentence word order with plural doers

As we've mentioned, the doer, whether a noun or a pronoun, always comes after the verb. Here are a couple of examples of verbal sentences with plural doers:

ذَهَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ إِلَى مَدْرَسَةٍ.  
 dhahaba -lmu'allimūna 'ilā madrasah.  
 "The teachers<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school."

ذَهَبُوا إِلَى مَدْرَسَةٍ.  
 dhahabā 'ilā madrasah.  
 "They<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school."

لَعِبَتِ الصَّدِيقَاتُ فِي الْبَيْتِ.  
 la'ibati -ṣṣadiqātu fi -lbayt.  
 "The friends<sub>3,f</sub> played in the house."

لَعِبْنَ فِي الْبَيْتِ.  
 la'ibna fi -lbayt.  
 "They<sub>3,f</sub> played in the house."

The above verbal sentences with plural doers can be rearranged to be a subject-information sentences. This gives more emphasis to the subject. In this case, the verb shall follow the subject and will need a doer pronoun after it.

الْمُعَلِّمُونَ ذَهَبُوا إِلَى مَدْرَسَةٍ.  
 'almu'allimūna dhahabū 'ilā madrasah.  
 "The teachers<sub>3,m</sub>, they<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school." = "The teachers<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school."

الصَّدِيقَاتُ لَعِبْنَ فِي الْبَيْتِ.  
 'aṣṣadiqātu la'ibna fi -lbayt.  
 "The friends<sub>3,f</sub>, they<sub>3,f</sub> played in the house." = "The friends<sub>3,f</sub> played in the house."

If there are multiple verbs associated with the same doer in a verbal sentence, the doer noun will follow the first verb and the rest of the verbs will have doer pronouns. For example:

أَكَلَ اللَّاعِبُونَ وَشَرِبُوا وَذَهَبُوا.  
 'akala -llā'ibūna waṣharibū waḍhahabū.  
 "The players<sub>3,m</sub> ate and they<sub>3,m</sub> drank and they<sub>3,m</sub> went."  
 = "The players<sub>3,m</sub> ate and drank and went."

The above verbal sentence can be rearranged to be a subject-information sentence. In that case, all the verbs shall have doer pronouns. The sentence will

have the same translation as above, except for an emphasis on the subject of the sentence.

الَّلَاعِبُونَ أَكَلُوا وَشَرِبُوا وَذَهَبُوا.

ʾallāʿibūna ʾakalū waṣharibū waḍḥahabū.

“The players<sub>3,m</sub>, they<sub>3,m</sub> ate and they<sub>3,m</sub> drank and they<sub>3,m</sub> went.”

= “The players<sub>3,m</sub> ate and drank and went.”

Similarly,

أَكَلَتِ اللَّاعِبَاتُ وَشَرِبْنَ وَذَهَبْنَ.

ʾakalati -llāʿibātu waṣharibna waḍḥahabn.

“The players<sub>3,f</sub> ate and they<sub>3,f</sub> drank and they<sub>3,f</sub> went.”

and

الَّلَاعِبَاتُ أَكَلْنَ وَشَرِبْنَ وَذَهَبْنَ.

ʾallāʿibātu ʾakalna waṣharibna waḍḥahabn.

“The players<sub>3,f</sub>, they<sub>3,f</sub> ate and they<sub>3,f</sub> drank and they<sub>3,f</sub> went.”

= “The players<sub>3,f</sub> ate and drank and went.”

#### 10.7.4. Verbs with multiple doers mentioned individually

If there are multiple doers of a verb, and each is mentioned individually, then there is often more than one way to handle them. Here we will give the more common usage.

If the verb is followed by multiple doers, only the first is the true doer with respect to modifying the verb according to its gender and number. Examples:

ذَهَبَتِ الْأُمُّ وَالْغُلَامُ.

ḍḥahabati -lʾummu wa-lghulāmu.

“The mother and the boy went.”

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ وَالْأُمُّ.

ḍḥahaba -lghulāmu wa -lʾummu.

“The boy and the mother went.”

If the doers consist of different persons (speaking person, addressed person, and absent person), then they are placed in order of strength: The speaking person is stronger than the addressed person, who is stronger than the absent person. The verb doer pronoun of the first (true) doer is then used. Example:

ذَهَبْتُ أَنَا وَأَنْتَ وَهُوَ.

ḍḥahabtu ʾana waʾanta wahuwa.

“I, you, and he went.”

Note how the speaking person detached pronoun أَنَا ʾana is used in addition to the doer pronoun تِ -tu in order to add وَ wa “and” to it.

If the sentence is a subject information sentence, and the verb is in the information, then the doer pronoun corresponding to the number of the subject is used. Examples:

أَنْتَ وَهُوَ ذَهَبْتُمَا.

<sup>ʾ</sup>anta wahuwa dhahabtumā.

“You<sub>1,m</sub> and he, you<sub>2</sub> went.”

أَنَا وَمُحَمَّدٌ ذَهَبْنَا.

<sup>ʾ</sup>ana wamuhammadun dhahabnā.

“I and Muḥammad, we went.”

الْأُمُّ وَالْجَارِيَةُ ذَهَبَتَا.

<sup>ʾ</sup>alʾummu wa-ljāriyatu dhahabatā.

“The mother and the girl went.”

الْأُمُّ وَالْجَارِيَتَانِ ذَهَبْنَ.

<sup>ʾ</sup>alʾummu wa-ljāriyatāni dhahabna.

“The mother and the two girls, they<sub>3,f</sub> went.”

If the doers consist of both male and female persons, then the verb will have the masculine doer prenoun corresponding to the number of the doers. Example:

الْأُمُّ وَالْجَارِيَةُ وَالْعَلَامُ ذَهَبُوا.

<sup>ʾ</sup>alʾummu wa-ljāriyatu wa-lghulāmu dhahabū.

“The mother, the girl, and the boy, they<sub>3,m</sub> went.”

## Chapter 11.

### Broken plurals

#### 11.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we introduced sound plurals, which are formed by appending suffixes to the singular noun. The singular noun in these plurals remains, more or less, intact when forming these plurals. The sound plurals correspond to English regular plurals which are formed by appending “s” to the singular noun. However, English has some plurals that are not formed by adding the plural ending “s”. Here are some examples,

Singular	Plural
man	men
woman	women
child	children
mouse	mice

In these plurals, the singular noun is altered to form the plural.

Arabic also forms such plurals. They are called *broken* plurals because the singular noun is not kept intact but its structure is, in most cases, altered, or “broken-up” when forming the plural.

While English only forms such plurals for a handful of nouns, Arabic forms broken plurals for many nouns.

#### 11.2. Review of word patterns and semi-flexible nouns

Before we begin our discussion about broken plurals, we will do a quick review of word patterns and semi-flexible nouns. This will, if Allāh wills, facilitate the explanation of broken plurals.

Most words in Arabic are formed from three letter roots. We use the paradigm root فَعَلَ to show word patterns. For example, the noun رَجُل *rajul* “a man” is formed from the root رَجَل on the pattern فَعْل *faʿul*.

Most nouns in Arabic are *fully-flexible*. This means that, when indefinite, they are nūnated and the indefinite i-state is shown by a nūnated i-mark ِ at the end

of the noun. For example, رَجُلٌ *rajul* “a man” and بَيْتٌ *bayt* “a house” are fully-flexible nouns. So, you can see, below, that they are nūnated, and the indefinite i-state is indicated by a nūnated *i*-mark ِ:

ذَهَبَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*dhahaba rajulun 'ilā bayt.*

“A man went to a house.”

Some nouns are *semi-flexible*. This means that they are not nūnated, and also, the indefinite i-state is indicated by an *a* mark َ. Examples of such nouns are:

- غَضَبٌ *ghaḍbā*<sup>2</sup> *adj.* (fem.) “a very angry one<sub>f</sub>” from the root غَضَب
- صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrā*<sup>2</sup> (fem.) “a desert<sub>f</sub>” from the root صَحَر

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ غَضَبٌ إِلَى صَحْرَاءٍ.

*dhahabat jāriyatun ghaḍbā 'ilā ṣaḥrā*?

“A very angry girl went to a desert.”

When definite, semi-flexible nouns are identical to fully-flexible nouns:

ذَهَبَتْ الْجَارِيَةُ الْغَضَبُ إِلَى الصَّحْرَاءِ.

*dhahabati -ljāriyatu -lghaḍbā 'ila -ṣṣaḥrā*?

“The very angry girl went to the desert.”

All nouns that have the endings ء and ِ, that are extrinsic to the word's root, are semi-flexible. ء and ِ are also feminine markers for singular nouns, just like ة. (Except that ة does not, in general, make a noun semi-flexible.)

It is important to note that ة, ء, and ِ are only feminine markers for singular nouns. We will see that they are also endings for broken plural nouns and, in that case, they are not feminine markers. However, ء and ِ, when endings for broken plural nouns, will make the broken plural nouns semi-flexible, just as they do for singular nouns.

Nouns that are of the patterns فَعَاوِف and فَعَاوِف are also semi-flexible nouns. Here each letter ف could be any letter of the alphabet. These are patterns for broken plurals, as we will see very soon. We had mentioned this in section @ref(fafafif-diptote).

This concludes our short review of word patterns and semi-flexible nouns. We will use these concepts in our discussion of broken plurals.

### 11.3. Patterns of the broken plural

Broken plurals occur in specific patterns, which we will show using the paradigm فعل for three-letter roots. Arabic also has (comparatively fewer) four-letter roots and we will show patterns for broken plurals of four-letter roots using the paradigm فَعْلَل. We will also use the letter ف, when needed, to indicate any letter of the alphabet.

We now give all but the rarest broken plural patterns below.



1. **فُعَل** *fu'el*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
صُورَة	صُور	a picture	دَوْلَة	دُول	a dynasty/state
أُمَّة	أُمَم	a nation	رُكْبَة	رُكَب	a knee

2. **فُعَل** *fu'el*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَحْمَر <sup>2</sup>	حُمَر	red <sub>m</sub>	أَعْمَى <sup>2</sup>	عُمَى	blind <sub>m</sub>
حَمْرَاء <sup>2</sup>	حُمَر	red <sub>f</sub>	عَمْيَاء <sup>2</sup>	عُمَى	blind <sub>f</sub>
أَخَوَر <sup>2</sup>	حُور	a beautiful eyed one <sub>m</sub>	أَصَم <sup>2</sup>	صُم	deaf <sub>m</sub>
خَوْرَاء <sup>2</sup>	حُور	a beautiful eyed one <sub>f</sub>	صَمَاء <sup>2</sup>	صُم	deaf <sub>f</sub>
أَسْوَد <sup>2</sup>	سُود	black <sub>m</sub>	أَبْكُمْ <sup>2</sup>	بُكُمْ	mute <sub>m</sub>
سَوْدَاء <sup>2</sup>	سُود	black <sub>f</sub>	بَكْمَاء <sup>2</sup>	بُكُمْ	mute <sub>f</sub>
أَبْيَض <sup>2</sup>	بَيْض	white <sub>m</sub>	نَاقَة	نُوق	a camel <sub>f</sub>
بَيْضَاء <sup>2</sup>	بَيْض	white <sub>f</sub>			

3. **فُعُل** *fu'ul*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
كِتَاب	كُتُب	a book	رَسُول	رُسُل	a messenger
جِدَار	جُدُر	a wall	سَفِينَة	سُفُن	a ship

4. **فُعَل** *fi'el*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
قِطْعَة	قِطَع	a piece	سِيرَة	سَيَر	a course of life
هَرَّة	هَرَر	a cat <sub>f</sub>			

5. **فُعَال** *fiʿāl*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
رَجُلٌ	رِجَالٌ	a man	حَسَنٌ	حِسَانٌ	adj. a good one <sub>m</sub>
إِمْرَأَةٌ	نِسَاءٌ	a woman	حَسَنَةٌ	حِسَانٌ	adj. a good one <sub>f</sub>
أُنْثَى <sup>2</sup>	إِنَاثٌ	a female	صَعْبٌ	صِغَابٌ	adj. a difficult one <sub>m</sub>
عَبْدٌ	عِبَادٌ	a slave <sub>m</sub>	صَعْبَةٌ	صِغَابٌ	adj. a difficult one <sub>f</sub>
أَمَةٌ	إِمَاءٌ	a slave <sub>f</sub>	صَغِيرٌ	صِغَارٌ	adj. a small one <sub>m</sub>
جَبَلٌ	جِبَالٌ	a mountain	صَغِيرَةٌ	صِغَارٌ	adj. a small one <sub>f</sub>
ثَوْبٌ	ثِيَابٌ	a garment	كَبِيرٌ	كِبَارٌ	adj. a big one <sub>m</sub>
رِيحٌ	رِيَّاحٌ	a wind	كَبِيرَةٌ	كِبَارٌ	adj. a big one <sub>f</sub>
مَرَّةٌ	مَرَارٌ	an occasion	ضَعِيفٌ	ضِغَافٌ	adj. a weak one <sub>m</sub>
بَحْرٌ	بِحَارٌ	a sea	ضَعِيفَةٌ	ضِغَافٌ	adj. a weak one <sub>f</sub>
عَمُودٌ	عِمَادٌ	a pillar	كَرِيمٌ	كَرَامٌ	adj. a generous one <sub>m</sub>
رَوْضَةٌ	رِيَّاضٌ	a garden	غَضَبَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	غَضَابٌ	adj. a very angry <sub>m</sub>
رُمْحٌ	رِمَاحٌ	a spear	غَضَبَيْنِ <sup>2</sup>	غَضَابٌ	adj. a very angry <sub>f</sub>

6. **فُعُول** *fuʿūl*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَمْر	أُمُور	a matter	جَيْش	جُيُوش	an army
بَيْت	بُيُوت	a house	قَلْب	قُلُوب	a heart
حَق	حُقُوق	a truth, a right	رَأْس	رُؤُوس	a head
مَلِك	مُلُوك	a king	شَهْر	شُهُور	a month
سَيْف	سُيُوف	a sword	نَفْس	نُفُوس	a self
شَيْخ	شُيُوخ	an old man	عَيْن	عُيُون	a (water) spring
شَاهِد	شُهُود	a witness			

7. فُعْل *fuʿʿal*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
رَاكِع	رُكَّع	one who bowes <sub>m</sub>	غَائِب	غُغَيْب	absent
رَاكِعَة	رُكَّع	one who bowes <sub>f</sub>			

8. فُعْلَال *fuʿʿāl*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
قَارِئ	قُرَّاء	a reader <sub>m</sub>	كَافِر	كُفَّار	a disbeliever <sub>m</sub>
تَاجِر	تُجَّار	a trader <sub>m</sub>	جَاهِل	جُهَّال	an ignorant one <sub>m</sub>
عَامِل	عُمَّال	a worker <sub>m</sub>			

9. فُعْلَة *faʿʿalah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
سَاحِر	سَحَرَة	a magician <sub>m</sub>	قَاتِل	قَتَلَة	a killer <sub>m</sub>
عَامِل	عَمَلَة	a labourer <sub>m</sub>	سَيِّد	سَادَة	a chief <sub>m</sub>

10. فُعْلَة *fuʿʿalah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
قَاضٍ	قُضَاةٌ	a judge <sub>m</sub>	رَؤَا	رُؤَاةٌ	a narrator <sub>m</sub>

11. **فُعْلَةٌ** *fi'alah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
دُبٌّ	دِبَبَةٌ	a bear	قِرْدٌ	قِرَدَةٌ	a monkey
هَرٌّ	هَرَرَةٌ	a cat <sub>m</sub>			

12. **فُعْلَةٌ** *fi'alah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَخٌ	إِخْوَةٌ	a brother	فَتًى	فِتْيَةٌ	a young man

13. **أَفْعُلٌ** *af'ul*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
رَجُلٌ	أَرْجُلٌ	a leg	شَهْرٌ	أَشْهُرٌ	a month
نَفْسٌ	أَنْفُسٌ	a self	عَيْنٌ	أَعْيُنٌ	an eye

14. **أَفْعَالٌ** *af'eāl*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
بَابٌ	أَبْوَابٌ	a door	مَيِّتٌ	أَمْوَاتٌ	dead
قَلَمٌ	أَقْلَامٌ	a pen	شَيْءٌ	أَشْيَاءٌ <sup>2</sup>	a thing
قَدَمٌ	أَقْدَامٌ	a foot	إِسْمٌ	أَسْمَاءٌ	a name
صَاحِبٌ	أَصْحَابٌ	a companion <sub>m</sub>	يَوْمٌ	أَيَّامٌ	a day
شَرِيفٌ	أَشْرَافٌ	a noble one <sub>m</sub>	عَدُوٌّ	أَعْدَاءٌ	an enemy
طِفْلٌ	أَطْفَالٌ	a child	عَيْنٌ	أَعْيَانٌ	an eminent person
بَيْتَرٌ	آبَارٌ	a (water) well			

15. أَفْعَلَةٌ *afeilah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
لِسَان	أَلْسِنَةٌ	a tongue	طَعَام	أَطْعَمَةٌ	a food
إِمَام	أَئِمَّةٌ	a leader <sub>m</sub>	إِلَه	آلِهَةٌ	a god

16. فَوَاعِلٌ *fawā'il*<sup>2</sup>. (Semi-flexible because of فَعَّافٌ<sup>2</sup> pattern.) Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
صَاحِبَةٌ	صَوَاحِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	a companion <sub>f</sub>	عَامِل	عَوَامِلٌ <sup>2</sup>	a factor
جَارِيَةٌ	جَوَارٍ <sup>2</sup>	a girl	شَاهِد	شَوَاهِدٌ <sup>2</sup>	a corroborating evidence
أَمْر	أَوَامِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a command	خَاتَم	خَوَاتِمٌ <sup>2</sup>	a ring (jewelry)
نَادِرَةٌ	نَوَادِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a joke, a witticism	فَارَس	فَوَارِسٌ <sup>2</sup>	a horse-man

17. فَعَائِلٌ *faeā'il*<sup>2</sup>. (Semi-flexible because of فَعَّافٌ<sup>2</sup> pattern.) Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
حُرَّةٌ	حَرَائِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a free woman	جَزِيرَةٌ	جَزَائِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	an island
ضَرَّةٌ	ضَرَائِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a co-wife	رِسَالَةٌ	رِسَائِلٌ <sup>2</sup>	a message
حَدِيقَةٌ	حَدَائِقٌ <sup>2</sup>	a garden	حَوَاجَةٌ	حَوَائِجٌ <sup>2</sup>	a need
حَقِيبَةٌ	حَقَائِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	a bag	دَلِيلٌ	دَلَائِلٌ <sup>2</sup>	an evidence
كَبِيرَةٌ	كِبَائِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a major sin	خَلِيفَةٌ	خَلَائِفٌ <sup>2</sup>	a successor
كَرِيمَةٌ	كَرَائِمٌ <sup>2</sup>	a generous one <sub>f</sub>			

18. فُعْلَانٌ *fielān*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
غُلَام	غُلَمَانٌ	a boy	ثَوْرٌ	ثَوْرَانٌ	a bull
جَارٌ	جِيرَانٌ	a neighbor	غُرَابٌ	غُرَبَانٌ	a crow

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَخ	إِخْوَان	a brother	فَأْر	فُئْرَان	a mouse

19. **فُعْلَان** *fu'elān*. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
بَلَد	بُلْدَان	a country	شَجَاع	شُجْعَان	a brave one
جِدَار	جُدْرَان	a wall	شَاب	شُبَّان	a young man

20. **فُعْلَاء** *fu'elā*<sup>2</sup>. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَمِير	أُمَرَاء <sup>2</sup>	a commander <sub>m</sub>	خَلِيفَة	خُلَفَاء <sup>2</sup>	a caliph
فَقِير	فُقَرَاء <sup>2</sup>	a poor one <sub>m</sub>	عَالِم	عُلَمَاء <sup>2</sup>	a scholar <sub>m</sub>
بَخِيل	بُخَلَاء <sup>2</sup>	a miser <sub>m</sub>	شَاعِر	شُعَرَاء <sup>2</sup>	a poet <sub>m</sub>
صَعِيف	صُعَفَاء <sup>2</sup>	a weak one <sub>m</sub>			

21. **أَفْعِلَاء** *af'eilā*<sup>2</sup>. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
نَبِيّ	أَنْبِيَاء <sup>2</sup>	a prophet <sub>m</sub>	شَدِيد	أَشْدَاء <sup>2</sup>	a forceful one <sub>m</sub>
صَدِيق	أَصْدِقَاء <sup>2</sup>	a friend <sub>m</sub>	قَوِيّ	أَقْوِيَاء <sup>2</sup>	a strong one <sub>m</sub>
غَنِيّ	أَغْنِيَاء <sup>2</sup>	a rich one <sub>m</sub>	شَقِيّ	أَشْقِيَاء <sup>2</sup>	a wretched one <sub>m</sub>

22. **فَاعِلَاء** *fa'elā*<sup>2</sup>. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
مَرِيضٌ	مَرَضَى <sup>2</sup>	a sick one <sub>m</sub>	جَرِيحٌ	جَرَحَى <sup>2</sup>	a wounded person
أَسِيرٌ	أَسْرَى <sup>2</sup>	a captive			

23. <sup>2</sup>فاعِلِي faeālī<sup>2</sup>. (Semi-flexible because of <sup>2</sup>فَعَّافٍ pattern.) Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
لَيْلَةٌ	لَيَالٍ <sup>2</sup>	a night	أَرْضٌ	أَرَاضٍ <sup>2</sup>	a land, an earth
أَهْلٌ	أَهَالٍ <sup>2</sup>	a family			

24. <sup>2</sup>فَعَالِنِ faeālā<sup>2</sup>. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
صَحْرَاءٌ <sup>2</sup>	صَحَارَى <sup>2</sup>	a desert	فَتْوَى <sup>2</sup>	فَتَاوَى <sup>2</sup>	a formal legal opinion
يَتِيمٌ <sup>2</sup>	يَتَامَى <sup>2</sup>	an orphan	هَدْيَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	هَدَايَا <sup>2</sup>	a gift

25. <sup>2</sup>فَعِيل faeīl (rare). Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
عَبْدٌ	عَبِيدٌ	a slave <sub>m</sub>	حَمِيرٌ	حَمِيرٌ	a donkey <sub>m</sub>

26. <sup>2</sup>فُعُولَةٌ fueūlah (rare). Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
بَعْلٌ	بُعُولَةٌ	a husband			

27. <sup>2</sup>فِعَالَةٌ fieālah (rare). Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
حَجَرٌ	حِجَارَةٌ	a stone			

28. **فَعَلَ** *faʿal* (rare). Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
خَلَقَ	خَلَقَ	a circular ring			

29. **فَعَلَ** *faʿl* (very rare). Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
صَاحِب	صَحْب	a companion			

30. <sup>2</sup>فَفَافِف *fafāfif*<sup>2</sup>. Includes the sub-patterns:

- <sup>2</sup>فَعَالِل *faʿālil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>أَفَاعِل *ʾafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>تَفَاعِل *tafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>مَفَاعِل *mafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>

Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
تَغَلَّب	تَغَالِب <sup>2</sup>	a fox	تَجَرَّبَ	تَجَارِب <sup>2</sup>	an experience
عَنْكَبُوت	عَنَّاكِب <sup>2</sup>	a spider	مَسْجِد	مَسَاجِد <sup>2</sup>	a mosque
دِرْهَم	دَرَاهِم <sup>2</sup>	a dirham	مَعْنَى	مَعْنَى <sup>2</sup>	a meaning
جَوْهَر	جَوَاهِر <sup>2</sup>	a gem	مَحَال	مَحَلَّة <sup>2</sup>	a locality
إِصْبَع	أَصَابِع <sup>2</sup>	a finger	مَعِيشَة	مَعَايِش <sup>2</sup>	a means of subsistence
أَنْمَلَة	أَنَامِل <sup>2</sup>	a finger tip			

31. <sup>2</sup>فَفَافِف *fafāfif*<sup>2</sup>. Includes the sub-patterns:

- <sup>2</sup>فَعَالِل *faʿālil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>أَفَاعِل *ʾafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>تَفَاعِل *tafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>مَفَاعِل *mafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>يَفَاعِل *yafāʿil*<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>فَوَاعِل *fawāʿil*<sup>2</sup>



Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
سُلْطَان	سُلَاطِين <sup>2</sup>	a sultan	إِعْصَار	أَعْصِير <sup>2</sup>	a whirl-wind
شَيْطَان	شَيَْاطِين <sup>2</sup>	a devil	تَّأْرِخ	تَوَارِيخ <sup>2</sup>	a history
سِكِّين	سِكََاكِين <sup>2</sup>	a knife	تَصْوِير	تَصَاوِير <sup>2</sup>	a picture
دِينَار	دَنَانِير <sup>2</sup>	a dīnār	مِفْتَاح	مَفَاتِيح <sup>2</sup>	a key
مَسْكِين	مَسَاكِين <sup>2</sup>	a needy person	مَلْعُون	مَلَاعِين <sup>2</sup>	an accursed one <sub>m</sub>
كُرْسِي	كُرَاسِي <sup>2</sup>	a chair	يَنْبُوع	يَنَابِيع <sup>2</sup>	a (water) spring
أُمِّيَّة	أَمَاطِي <sup>2</sup>	a wish	جَاوِيس	جَوَامِيس <sup>2</sup>	a buffalo

### 32. فَعَالِلَة faʿālilah. Examples:

Singular	Plural	Meaning	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أُسْتَاذ	أُسَاتِذَة	a professor	مَلَك	مَلَايِكَة	an angel
فَيْلَسُوف	فَلَاسِفَة	a philosopher	جَبَّار	جَبَابِرَة	a tyrant

Note the following from the above broken plural patterns and examples:

- Both common nouns and adjectival nouns form broken plurals.
- There are comparatively fewer broken plurals for female intelligent beings than for male intelligent beings. We will expand on this in a subsequent section.
- Some patterns of the broken plural are also patterns singular nouns. For example, the pattern فَعَالِ fīʿāl has both singular nouns, like كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book” and broken plurals, like رِجَال *rijāl* “men”
- The broken plural patterns فُعْلَان *fīʿlān* and فُعْلَان *fūʿlān* are fully-flexible nouns. Although they end with the ان ending which is extrinsic to the root, they are not semi-flexible nouns. Only singular adjectival nouns that end with an extrinsic ان on the pattern فُعْلَان, and that also fulfil the other conditions listed in section @ref(adjectival-noun-an-diptote), are semi-flexible.
- There is often a correlation between the pattern of a singular noun and the pattern of its plural.

Sometimes this correlation is very strong:

- All singular nouns of the patterns  $^2$ أَفْعَل  $af\acute{e}al^2$  and  $^2$ فَعْلَاء  $fa\acute{e}l\bar{a}$  that denote colors and physical characteristics, have broken plurals on the pattern فُعُل  $fu\acute{e}l$ . Example:

Singular	Plural
حَمْرَاء $^2$ , أَحْمَر $^2$ “red”	حُمُر
بُكْمَاء $^2$ , أَبْكَم $^2$ “mute”	بُكْم

- Singular nouns that have four or more consonant letters (excluding  $\delta$ ) regularly form their broken plurals on the patterns  $^2$ فَقَافِف and  $^2$ فَقَافِيف. The pattern  $^2$ فَقَافِيف is used when there is an intermediate long vowel between the consonants. Examples:

Singular	Plural
إِصْبَع “a finger”	أَصَابِع $^2$
مِفْتَاح “a key”	مِفْتَاح $^2$

- Singular nouns of the patterns فَعْلَة  $fi\acute{e}lah$  and فُعْلَة  $fu\acute{e}lah$  regularly form their broken plurals on the pattern فَعَل  $fi\acute{e}al$  and فُعَل  $fu\acute{e}al$  respectively. Examples:

Singular	Plural
قِطْعَة “a piece”	قِطَاع
رُكْبَة “a knee”	رُكَب

Other times, this correlation is more like a tendency:

- Singular nouns on the pattern فَعِيلَة  $fa\acute{e}il\bar{a}$  tend to form broken plurals on the pattern  $^2$ فَعَائِل  $fa\acute{e}i\bar{a}l^2$ . Examples:

Singular	Plural
حَدِيقَة “a garden”	حَدَائِق $^2$
حَقِيْبَة “a bag”	حَقَائِب $^2$

- Singular nouns on the pattern فَاعِل  $f\bar{a}i\bar{e}l$ , that denote male intelligent beings, tend to form broken plurals on the pattern فُعَل  $fu\acute{e}e\bar{a}l$ , فُعَال  $fu\acute{e}a\bar{a}l$ , and فَعْلَة  $fa\acute{e}al\bar{a}$ . Examples:

Singular	Plural
غَائِب “absent”	غُيِّب
قَارِئ “a reader <sub>m</sub> ”	قُرَّاء
قَاتِل “a killer <sub>m</sub> ”	قَتَلَة

- Singular nouns on the pattern فَاعِل *fāʿil* and فَاعِلَة *fāʿilah*, that don’t denote male intelligent beings, tend to form broken plurals on the pattern فَوَاعِل *fawāʿil*. Examples:

Singular	Plural
صَاحِبَة “a companion <sub>f</sub> ”	صَوَاحِب <sup>2</sup>
عَامِل “a factor”	عَوَامِل <sup>2</sup>

فَارِس *fāris* “a horseman” with the plural فَوَارِس<sup>2</sup> is one of a number of exceptions.

- Some words have roots that have the same letter repeated in the root. These are called *doubled roots*.

- For example:

Root	Word	Pattern
دَبَّ	دُبَّ “a bear”	فُعْل
حَلَّ	مَحَلَّة “a locality”	مَفْعَلَة
أَمَّ	إِمَام “a leader”	فُعَال
حَقَّ	حَقَّ “a truth, a right”	فُعْل
هَرَّ	هِرَّ “a cat <sub>m</sub> ”	فُعْل

We will discuss doubled roots in detail in chapter @ref(doubled-roots). For now we will mention the following:

- The repeated letter in the word root may get doubled or separated in the word’s pattern. Frequently, the repeated letter may be doubled in the singular, and separated in the plural. Examples:

Singular	Plural
حَقَّ “a truth, a right”	حُقُوق
دُبَّ “a bear”	دِبَبَة
هِرَّ “a cat <sub>m</sub> ”	هِرَزَة

The reverse also occurs, where the repeated letter may be separated in the singular, and doubled in the plural. Examples:

Singular	Plural
إِمَامٌ “a leader <sub>m</sub> ”	أَيَّامَةٌ

- The doubled letter may modify the basic word pattern somewhat. For example:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
شَدَّ	أَفْعَلَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	× أَشْدَدَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	أَشْدَاءُ <sup>2</sup>
حَلَّ	مَفَاعِلُ <sup>2</sup>	× مَحَالِلُ <sup>2</sup>	مَحَالٌ <sup>2</sup>
صَمَّ	أَفْعَلُ <sup>2</sup>	× أَصَمَمُ <sup>2</sup>	أَصَمٌ <sup>2</sup>

- We have previously learned that the endings ة, ء, and ئ that are extrinsic to the word’s root are feminine markers for singular nouns. These extrinsic endings also occur for broken plurals but there, they are *not* feminine markers.

In fact, in a sort of role reversal, the endings ة in a broken plural tends to indicate that the singular is a masculine noun. And the ء ending is only for broken plurals of male intelligent beings. Examples:

Singular	Plural
لِسَانٌ “a tongue”	أَلْسِنَةٌ
هَيَّ “a cat <sub>m</sub> ”	هَزَرَةٌ
أَمِيرٌ “a commander <sub>m</sub> ”	أُمَرَاءُ
صَدِيقٌ “a friend <sub>m</sub> ”	أَصْدِقَاءُ

- There often exist multiple broken plurals for the same singular noun. Many times, in fact, a singular noun may have a sound plural in addition to one or more broken plurals. Examples:

Singular	Plural
شَهْرٌ	شُهُورٌ, أَشْهُرٌ
عَيْنٌ	أَعْيَانٌ, عُيُونٌ, أَعْيُنٌ
عَامِلٌ	عَمَلٌ, عَمَلَةٌ, عَوَامِلُ <sup>2</sup> , عَامِلُونَ

We will discuss how to manage these multiple plurals in a subsequent section.

- Occasionally, multiple singular nouns will share the same broken plural. Examples:

Singular	Plural
مَكْتَب “an office”	مَكَاتِب <sup>2</sup>
مَكْتَبَة “a library”	مَكَاتِب <sup>2</sup>

Context will then tell us which of two meanings is intended.

- The letters ء, ل, و, and ي are considered *weak* letters. Words that one or more these weak letters in their roots are called *defective* words. We will discuss defective words more completely in later chapters, if Allāh wills. For now, we will note the following:
  - Weak letters often get interchanged with one another when going from a singular to a plural. Examples:

Root	Singular	Plural
أَرخ	تَأْرِخ	تَوَارِخ <sup>2</sup>
نوق	نَاقَة	نُوق
ثور	تَوْر	ثِيْرَان

- Weak letters can affect surrounding vowels. For example:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
بيض	فُعْل	× بُيَض	بَيْض

- The weak letter ي, when followed by the ي ending, usually modifies (in writing) it to an *ʾalif* instead. The pronunciation is the same. For example:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
هدي	فَعَالِي <sup>2</sup>	× هَدَايِي <sup>2</sup>	هَدَايَا <sup>2</sup>

- A ي at the end of a word, in some states, gets omitted and replaced by a nūnated *i*-mark ِ on the preceding letter. This happens even when the ي is extrinsic to the root, and even if the word is semi-flexible (and thus would not normally be nūnated). Examples:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
قضي	فَاعِل	× قَاضِي	قَاضٍ
جري	فَوَاعِل <sup>2</sup>	× جَوَارِي <sup>2</sup>	جَوَارٍ <sup>2</sup>
ليل	فَعَالِي <sup>2</sup>	× لَيَالِي <sup>2</sup>	لَيَالٍ <sup>2</sup>

- Weak letters can also get omitted in the singular and resurface in the plural. Examples:

Root	Singular	Plural
أخو	أَخٌ	إِخْوَانٌ, إِخْوَةٌ
أمو	أَمَةٌ	إِمَاءٌ

- If there are more than four consonant letters in a word, then only four of them are selected to form the broken plural. For example:

Singular	Plural
عَنْكَبُوتٌ “a spider”	عَنَّاكِبٌ <sup>2</sup>

- Some words have individual irregularities as well and we will discuss them below:

- The word *أُمْرَأَةٌ* and its plural *نِسَاءٌ* are both irregular and we will discuss them separately in chapter @ref(irregular-nouns).
- The broken plural *أَشْيَاءٌ* *ʾashyāʾ* (of the singular noun *شَيْءٌ* *shayʾ* “a thing”) is irregular in that it is semi-flexible. Otherwise its pattern *أَفْعَالٌ* *ʾafeāl* is regularly fully-flexible.
- The broken plural of the singular noun *مَلَكٌ* *malak* “an angel” is *مَلَائِكَةٌ* *malāʾikah*. It is on the pattern *فَعَالِلَةٌ* *faʿālilah*. But it is unusual in that the plural has an extra letter *ء* that is missing in the singular. This is because the singular has a lesser-used variant: *مَلَأَكٌ* *malʾak* that is used to form the plural.
- The broken plural of the singular noun *دِينَارٌ* “a *dīnār*” is *دَنَانِيرٌ*<sup>2</sup>. It is on the pattern *فَعَالِيلٌ*<sup>2</sup>. It is irregular in that there are two *ن*'s in the plural whereas the singular only has one.
- The root of *بئرٌ* *biʾr* “a (water) well” is *ب.أ.ر*. The pattern of its broken plural is *أَفْعَالٌ*. Based on its root letters, its plural on this pattern ought regularly to have been *أَبَارٌ* *ʾabʾār*. And this plural exists but is not very commonly used. Instead, in forming the plural, the root letters *ب* and *أ* get swapped irregularly, and the more commonly used plural is actually *آبَارٌ* *ʾābār*.

There are other words as well with similar irregularities.

### 11.4. Co-existence of multiple broken plurals

We noted that there are often multiple broken plurals for the same singular noun. Many singular nouns even have a sound plural in addition to one or more broken plurals. Here are some examples.

Singular	Meanings	Plural
جِدَار	a wall	جُدُرَان, جُدُر
شَهْر	a month	شُهُور, أَشْهُر
صَعِيف	a weak one <sub>m</sub>	صُعَفَاء <sup>2</sup> , ضِعَاف
أَمْر	a matter; a command	أَوَامِر <sup>2</sup> , أُمُور
عَيْن	an eye; a (water) spring; an eminent person	أَعْيَان, عُيُون, أَعْيُن
عَامِل	a worker; a labourer; a factor	عَمَلَة, عَوَامِل <sup>2</sup> , غَامِلُونَ عُمَال

We will deal with the co-existence of sound and broken plurals in the next section. In this section, we will explain the existence of multiple broken plurals, and when one of them is preferred or required to be used over the other. Basically, there could be a few things going on:

1. Sometimes it is more or less optional which of the multiple broken plurals to use. For example, the singular noun جِدَار has two broken plurals: جُدُر, جُدُرَان. Either could be used, more or less, interchangeably.
2. Sometimes, the usage of one of the plurals may be restricted. For example, ضِعَاف and صُعَفَاء are both broken plurals of the masculine adjectival noun صَعِيف “a weak one<sub>m</sub>”. For male intelligent beings, like “weak men”, either of the two plurals could be used. But remember that broken plurals that end with an extrinsic ء ending may only be used for male intelligent beings. So the plural صُعَفَاء may only be used for male intelligent beings like “men” or “boys”, and not for masculine nouns that denote non-intelligent beings like “lions” or “pens”, etc.

Interestingly, ضِعَاف is also shared as the broken plural for the feminine adjectival noun صَعِيفَة “a weak one<sub>f</sub>”. So it can be used for plurals of feminine nouns, both for female intelligent beings like “women” and “girls”, and for feminine nouns that denote non-intelligent beings like “trees”.

3. Other times, the singular has multiple distinct meanings, and each of these distinct meanings is associated with its own broken plural(s). Here are some examples:

- The word *أمر* <sup>ʾ</sup>*amr* has two distinct meanings, each with its own plural:
    - i. “a matter”. This has the broken plural *أُمُور* <sup>ʾ</sup>*umūr*.
    - ii. “a command”. This has the broken plural *أَوَامِر* <sup>2</sup>*awāmīr*.
  - The word *عَيْن* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ayn* has multiple distinct meanings. There are three main meanings, and they share the broken plural with each other in the following way:
    - i. “an eye”. This meaning primarily uses the plural *أَعْيُن* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾaeyun* but it may also use the plural *عُيُون* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾeuyūn*, and rarely also the plural *أَعْيَان* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾaeyān*.
    - ii. “a (water) spring”. This meaning primarily uses the plural *عُيُون* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾeuyūn* but it may also use the plural *أَعْيُن* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾaeyun*, and rarely also the plural *أَعْيَان* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾaeyān*.
    - iii. “an eminent person”. This meaning only uses the plural *أَعْيَان* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾaeyān*.
  - The word *عَامِل* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾamīl* has the following meanings and plurals:
    - i. “a worker<sub>m</sub>”. Generally, this has the plural *عُمَال* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾummāl*.
    - ii. “a labourer<sub>m</sub>”. This uses the plural *عَمَلَة* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾamalah*.
    - iii. “a factor”. This uses the plural *عَوَامِل* <sup>2</sup>*ʾawāmīl*.
4. Arabic has what are known as *plurals of fewness*. These are specific patterns that may (sometimes, but not always) be used when the persons or things denoted by the plural are only a few (ten or less) and not many. These patterns are:
- i. *فُعْلَة* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾfēlah*
  - ii. *أَفْعُل* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾafēul*
  - iii. *أَفْعَال* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾafēāl*
  - iv. *أَفْعِلَة* <sup>ʾ</sup>*ʾafēilah*

For example:

- i. *شَهْر* <sup>ʾ</sup>*shahr* “a month”, plurals: *أَشْهُر*, *شُهُور*. The plural *أَشْهُر* could be used when the number of months are only a few (ten or less), and the plural *شُهُور* could be used when the number of months are large.
- ii. The plurals *أَعْيُن* and *عُيُون* of the word *عَيْن* could also possibly be used similarly in this manner for both meanings: “an eye” and “a (water) spring”. (But not for the meaning “an eminent person” which only uses the plural *أَعْيَان*).

Of course, this distinction only applies when the singular noun has additional plurals, not just one from the above four patterns. If a noun has only one of the about four plural patterns then it may be used indiscriminately and will not indicate any limitation in number.



## 11.5. Co-existence of sound and broken plurals

Some nouns have both sound and broken plurals for more or less the same meaning. Here are some examples:

Singular	Meaning	Sound plural	Broken plural
قَاتِل	a killer	قَاتِلُونَ	قَتَلَة
كَافِر	a disbeliever	كَافِرُونَ	كُفَّار
كَبِير	a big one <sub>m</sub>	كَبِيرُونَ	كِبَار
كَبِيرَة	a big one <sub>f</sub>	كَبِيرَات	كِبَار
صَغِير	a small one <sub>m</sub>	صَغِيرُونَ	صِغَار
صَغِيرَة	a small one <sub>f</sub>	صَغِيرَات	صِغَار
رَاكِع	one who bows <sub>m</sub>	رَاكِعُونَ	رُكَّع
رَاكِعَة	one who bows <sub>f</sub>	رَاكِعَات	رُكَّع
صَاحِبَة	a companion <sub>f</sub>	صَاحِبَات	صَوَاجِب <sup>2</sup>
جَارِيَة	a girl	جَارِيَات	جَوَار <sup>2</sup>
حَدِيقَة	a garden	حَدِيقَات	حَدَائِق <sup>2</sup>

We will treat the *ūn* and *āt* sound plurals separately.

### 11.5.1. *ūn* plurals and broken plurals

Remember from chapter @ref(sound-plurals) that *ūn* plurals are, with very few exceptions, only used for male intelligent beings.

If a singular noun has both an *ūn* sound plural and one or more broken plurals, then the use of the broken plural is generally preferred. The sound plural is then, generally, reserved for certain verbal usages. (We will study these in later chapters, if Allāh wills.)

So, for example, قَتَلَة is preferred over قَاتِلُونَ generally for the meaning: “killers”.

### 11.5.2. *āt* plurals and broken plurals

*āt* plurals are used for both female intelligent beings and non-intelligent beings. We will discuss each of these separately.

## 11.5.2.1. Female intelligent beings

Remember from section @ref(conditions-for-the-at-plural) that, generally, all nouns that end with feminine markers (ة, اء, and ى) can form the *āt* sound plural.

There are some nouns that are excepted from this statement. These nouns only have broken plurals and don't form sound plurals. For female intelligent beings, these nouns are:

- Adjectival nouns of the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَاءَ which is the feminine of the masculine adjectival noun pattern <sup>2</sup>أَفْعَلْ. For example, حَوْرَاءُ *hawrā* “a beautiful eyed one<sub>f</sub>” uses the broken plural حُور *hūr*
- Adjectival nouns of the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَى which is the feminine of the masculine adjectival noun pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَانْ. For example, غَضَبَى *ghaḍbā* “very angry<sub>f</sub>” uses the broken plural غَضَاب *ghīḍāb*.
- The following exceptional nouns:
  - نِسَاءُ “a woman”, broken plural: نِسَاءُ
  - إِمَاءُ “a slave<sub>f</sub>”, broken plural: إِمَاءُ
  - أُمَّةٌ “a nation”, broken plural: أُمَمٌ

In the case of these nouns we have no choice but to use the broken plural.

For other nouns that denote female intelligent beings, the use of the *āt* sound plural is preferred over any broken plurals that the noun may have.

So, for example, the use of the *āt* sound plural صَغِيرَات is preferred over the broken plural صِغَار for the adjectival noun صَغِيرَةٌ “a small one<sub>f</sub>”. However, both are permitted.

The following are excepted from this general statement:

- أَنْثَى “a female”, plural: إِنَاث. The *āt* sound plural is almost unused for this word.
- Broken plurals of the patterns:
  - فَوَاعِلْ <sup>2</sup>*fawāʿil*
  - فَعَائِلْ <sup>2</sup>*faʿāʿil*

These broken plural patterns are, in fact, predominantly used for female intelligent beings and non-intelligent beings, and only rarely for male intelligent beings. So the broken plural جَوَارٍ “girls” may be used freely as the plural of جَارِيَةٌ “a girl” and is not preferred over by جَارِيَات. Similarly, صَوَاجِبْ may freely be used as the plural of صَاحِبَةٌ.

Only a few nouns denoting male intelligent beings have broken plurals on these patterns, like:

- فَوَارسْ “a horseman”, plural: فَوَارِسْ <sup>2</sup>

– خَلِيفَة “a successor”, plural: خَلَائِفٌ<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, with the general preference of using the *āt* sound plural over the broken plural for female intelligent beings, you will find that نِسَاء *nisā* “women” is the only widely found broken plural for female intelligent beings in normal usage.

#### 11.5.2.2. Non-intelligent beings

For non-intelligent beings, the broken plural is preferred for use over *āt* sound plurals.

So, for example, حَدَائِقُ *hadāʾiq*<sup>2</sup> is preferred over حَدِيقَات *hadiqāt* as the plural of حَدِيقَة, though both are correct.

### 11.6. Usage of plurals

The treatment of plurals in sentences is quite complicated. Here we will give a simplified explanation that should suffice for basic usage, until we give a fuller treatment in (TODO: give chapter reference).

We will discuss the plurals of intelligent beings and non-intelligent beings separately.

#### 11.6.1. Plurals of intelligent beings in descriptive noun-phrases

Consistent with what we have learned so far, when the describee in a noun-phrase is plural, then the describer comes after it, and matches it in state, definiteness, gender, and number.

Either or both of the describer and the describee may be sound plurals or broken plurals.

Here are some examples:

لَعِبَ الطِّفْلُ الصَّغِيرُ مَعَ الْغُلَمَانِ الْكِبَارِ.  
*laeiba -ṭṭiflu -ṣṣagḥiru maʿa -lḡhilmāni -lkibār.*  
 “The small child played with the big boys.”

أَخَذَ التِّلْمِيذُ الْعِلْمَ عَنِ الْمُعَلِّمِينَ الْكَرَامِ.  
*ʾakḥadḥa -ṭṭilmidḥu -lʿilma ʿani -lmueallimīna -lkirām.*  
 “The pupil took knowledge from the noble teachers.”

لِلْجَارِيَةِ صَوَاحِبٌ طَيِّبَاتٌ.  
*liḷjāriyati ṣawāhibu ṭayyibāt.*  
 “The girl has good companions.”

فِي السُّوقِ تُجَارٌ صَادِقُونَ.  
*fi -ssūqi tujjārūn ṣādiqūn.*

“In the market are honest traders.”

خَدَمَ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ الْغَنِيُّ الْفَقْرَاءَ الضَّعَافَ مِنَ الْيَتَامَى الصَّغَارِ.  
*kḥadama -rrajulu -ṣṣālīḥu -lghaniyyu -lfuqarā'a -ḍḍi'āfa mina -lyatāmā -ṣṣighār.*  
 “The rich righteous man served the weak poor ones from the little orphans.”

### 11.6.2. Plurals of intelligent beings in subject-information sentences

If the subject of a sentence is a plural denoting intelligent beings then the information typically matches it in being a plural. This is especially the case if the information is an adjectival noun. For example:

الْغُلَمَانُ أَطْفَالٌ طَيِّبُونَ.  
*'alghilmānu 'atfālun ṭayyibūn.*  
 “The boys are good children.”

الرِّجَالُ أَغْنِيَاءُ.  
*'arrijālu 'aghniyā'.*  
 “The men are rich.”

الْمُعَلِّمَاتُ عَالِمَاتُ.  
*'almu'allimātu 'ālīmāt,*  
 “The teachers<sub>f</sub> are scholars<sub>f</sub>.”

Sometimes the information may not match the subject in plurality because of the meaning of the sentence. For example:

الْمُسْلِمُونَ أُمَّةٌ.  
*'almuslimūna 'ummah.*  
 “The Muslims are a nation.”  
 الْجِيرَانُ الطَّيِّبُونَ نِعْمَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ.  
*'aljirānu -ṭṭayyibūna niematun mina -llāh.*  
 “Good neighbors are a blessing from Allah.”

The use of detached pronouns is consistent with what we learned in section @ref(detached-plural-pronouns). Examples:

أَنْتُنَّ نِسَاءٌ كَرِيمَاتُ.  
*'antunna nisā'un karīmāt.*  
 “You<sub>3,f</sub> are generous women.”

أَنْتُمْ شُبَّانٌ شَجَاعُونَ.  
*'antum shubbānun shujēānun*  
 “You<sub>m,3</sub> are courageous young men.”

الشَّيَاطِينُ هُمْ الْمَلَأَعِينُ.  
*'ashshayāṭīnu humu -lmalā'ēin.*  
 “The devils are the accursed ones.”

هُنَّ نِسَاءٌ غَنِيَّاتٌ.  
*hunna nisā'un ghaniyyāt.*  
 “They<sub>3,f</sub> are rich women.”

نَحْنُ غِلْمَانٌ أَصْدِقَاءُ.  
*nahnu ghilmānun 'aṣḍiqā'.*  
 “We are boys who are friends.”

### 11.6.3. Plurals of intelligent beings with verbs

We have already studied verbs with sound plurals in section @ref(verbs-with-plural-doers). The same discussion applies to broken plurals as well. The doer and doee pronouns are the same. Here are a couple of examples:

قَرَأَتِ النِّسَاءُ وَكَتَبْنَ.  
*qara'ati -nnisā'u wakatabn.*  
 “The women read and wrote.”

الْغِلْمَانُ لَعِبُوا بِكَرَّةٍ حُمْرَاءَ.  
*'alghilmānu lacibū bikuratin ḥamrā'.*  
 “The boys, they played with a red ball.”

طَبَخَتِ النِّسَاءُ طَعَامًا لِلرِّجَالِ فَأَكَلُوهُ وَشَكَرُوهُنَّ.  
*ṭabakhati -nnisā'u ṭa'āman lirrijāli fa'akalūhu waṣhakarūhunna.*  
 “The women prepared some food for the men, so they<sub>3,m</sub> ate it and they<sub>3,m</sub> thanked them<sub>3,f</sub>.”

ظَلَمَ الْجَبَابِرَةُ الْمَسَاكِينَ وَقَتَلُوهُمْ.  
*ḍhalama -ljabābiratu -lmasākina waqatalūhum.*  
 “The tyrants wronged the needy ones<sub>3,m</sub> and killed them<sub>3,m</sub>.”

### 11.6.4. Usage of plurals of non-intelligent beings

We now turn our attention to plurals of non-intelligent beings. The treatment of plurals of non-intelligent beings is very different from everything we have learned so far. In this basic, simplified, explanation: regardless of the grammatical or physical gender of the singular noun, plurals of non-intelligent beings are treated, for the purposes of matching adjectival nouns and pronouns, as grammatically feminine singular.

So, for example, the noun بَيْت *bayt* denotes the inanimate object “a house”. Its plural is بُيُوت. This plural is treated as a feminine singular noun. This is despite the fact that the singular noun بَيْت *bayt* “a house” is grammatically masculine. See how the بُيُوت *buyūt* is used in the examples below:

الْبُيُوتُ كَبِيرَةٌ.  
 “The houses are big.”

سَكَنُوا فِي بُيُوتٍ صَغِيرَةٍ.  
 “They<sub>3,m</sub> lived in small houses.”

سَقَطَتِ الْبُيُوتُ.  
 “The houses fell.”

الْبُيُوتُ سَقَطَتْ.  
 “The houses, they fell.”

هِيَ بُيُوتٌ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ.  
 “They are houses for the poor.”

Plurals of inanimate objects and animals (both male and female) are treated the same way. It doesn't matter what the grammatical or physical gender of the singular is or whether it has a sound or broken plural. Examples:

هِيَ ثِيَرَانٌ وَحْشَةٌ.  
 “They are wild bulls.”

الْهَرَزُ شَرِبَ الْحَلِيبَ.  
 “The cats<sub>m</sub>, they drank the milk.”

الْهَرَزُ شَرِبَ الْحَلِيبَ.  
 “The cats<sub>f</sub>, they drank the milk.”

السُّفُنُ طَوِيلَةٌ.  
 “The ships are tall.”

فِي الصَّنَدُوقِ أَشْيَاءٌ عَجِيبَةٌ.  
 “In the box are wonderful things.”

(Note how أَشْيَاءٌ<sup>2</sup> is indefinite but is not nūnated. This is because it is irregularly semi-flexible.)

By the way, this rule only applies to adjectival nouns in the describee or the information. A common noun in the describer or information will continue match the describee or subject in gender and number.

For example, if you say:

الْأَفْعَالُ الصَّالِحَةُ هِيَ الْحَسَنَةُ.  
 “The righteous acts are the good ones.”

then *حَسَنَةٌ* may only be the feminine adjectival noun “a good one”.

If instead you want to use *حَسَنَةٌ* with its common noun meaning of “a good deed”, then you have to use the plural:

الْأَفْعَالُ الصَّالِحَةُ هِيَ الْحَسَنَاتُ.  
 “The acts are the good deeds.”

The plural *هِيَ* may continue to be used instead of *هُنَّ*, although the latter is also valid:

الْأَفْعَالُ الصَّالِحَةُ هُنَّ الْحَسَنَاتُ.  
 “The acts are the good deeds.”

Similarly, if an adjectival noun connoting a non-intelligent being is used not as a describer or an information in a sentence, then it should be pluralized to indicate plurality.

الْحَيَوَانَاتُ صَغِيرَةٌ وَكَبِيرَةٌ. الْكَبِيرَاتُ وَحْشَةٌ.

“The animals are big and small. The big ones are wild.”

In the second sentence above, we could not have said (for the same meaning):

× الْكَبِيرَةُ وَحْشَةٌ. الْكَبِيرَةُ وَكَبِيرَةٌ.

It is important to note that treating non-intelligent beings as grammatically feminine is only for the plural. Singular and dual nouns for non-intelligent beings are treated according to the gender of singular noun, as we have learned in previous chapters. So, for example,

الْبَيْتُ كَبِيرٌ.

“The house is big.”

not

× الْبَيْتُ كَبِيرَةٌ.

أَكَلَ الْأَسَدَانِ الظَّبْيُ.

“The lions<sub>2</sub> ate the gazelle.”

not

× أَكَلَتِ الْأَسَدَانِ الظَّبْيُ.

Work in progress

Work in progress



## Chapter 12.

### Annexation

#### 12.1. Introduction

Consider the following expression:

“the boy’s book”

This expression establishes a relation of *belonging* between the two nouns: (i) “the boy”, and (ii) “the book”. It says that the book *belongs* to the boy.

Arabic expresses this meaning using a construction called *annexation*. In this chapter we will learn about this construction.

#### 12.2. Forming the annexation

The word “annexation” means the addition of a new *annexed* item to an existing *base* item. We use the term *annexation* in Arabic grammar when an *annexe* noun is annexed to a *base* noun by being placed right before it. Here is an example of an annexation:



“the boy’s book”

The annexation construction consists of two nouns:

1. The *annexe* noun: This is the first noun in the annexation.
2. The *base* noun: This is the second noun in the annexation.

The annexe noun كِتَاب is annexed to, and belongs to, the base noun الْغُلَام. You can use the alphabetical order (A, B) to help you remember that the annexe noun comes before the base noun.

### 12.3. State of the annexe and base nouns

The base noun in an annexation is always in the i-state. The annexe noun may be in any state, depending on its function in the sentence. For example,

كِتَابُ الْغُلَامِ ثَقِيلٌ.

“The boy’s book is heavy.”

(The annexe noun is in the u-state.)

أَخَذَتِ الْجَارِيَةُ كِتَابَ الْغُلَامِ.

“The girl took the boy’s book.”

(The annexe noun is in the a-state.)

كَتَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُ فِي كِتَابِ الْغُلَامِ.

“The teacher<sub>m</sub> wrote in the boy’s book.”

(The annexe noun is in the i-state.)

### 12.4. Definiteness of the annexation

Consider again the annexation expression we have been using so far:

كِتَابُ الْغُلَامِ

“the boy’s book”

The base noun *الْغُلَامِ* is definite because it is prefixed by *الْ* “the”. Therefore we have translated it as “the boy”. The annexe noun *كِتَاب* is not made definite by *الْ*. Nor is it made indefinite by nūnation. Rather, its definiteness is determined by the base noun. Because the base noun *الْغُلَامِ* is definite, therefore the annexe noun *كِتَاب* is also definite. The entire annexation is definite.

Consider now the case when the base noun is indefinite.

كِتَابُ غُلَامٍ

“a boy’s book”

In the above example, the base noun *غُلَامٍ* is indefinite because it is nūnated and because it does not prefixed by *الْ*. Therefore we have translated it as “a boy”. The annexe noun *كِتَاب* is neither nūnated, nor does it have *الْ*. Its definiteness is, again, determined by the base noun. Because the base noun *غُلَامٍ* is indefinite, therefore the annexe noun *كِتَاب* is also indefinite. The entire annexation is indefinite.

We will see soon, if Allāh wills, why the definiteness of the annexe noun is important.

Here are some examples of definite and indefinite annexations.

لَبَسَ الطِّفْلُ قَمِيصَ رَجُلٍ.

“The child wore a man’s shirt.”

أَخَذَ أَمِيرُ الْجَيْشِ رَايَةَ الْمَلِكِ وَرَفَعَهَا.

“The army’s commander took *the* king’s flag and raised it.”

جَلَسَ الرَّجُلُ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ.

“The man sat in *a* tree’s shade.”

#### 12.4.1. Translating the annexation using “of”

So far we have been using the English “s” to translate the Arabic annexation. Examples:

بَيْتُ رَجُلٍ

“a man’s house”

بَيْتُ الرَّجُلِ

“the man’s house”

Instead of using “s” we may use “of” as well. For example:

بَيْتُ رَجُلٍ

“a/the house of a man”

بَيْتُ الرَّجُلِ

“a/the house of the man”

Note that the annexe noun “house” may be prefixed with either “a” or “the”. This will depend on what is more natural in English. Often time both will fit. Here are some examples:

لَبَسَ الطِّفْلُ قَمِيصَ رَجُلٍ.

“The child wore a/the shirt of a man.”

أَخَذَ أَمِيرُ الْجَيْشِ رَايَةَ الْمَلِكِ وَرَفَعَهَا.

“The commander of the army took *the* flag of the king and raised it.”

جَلَسَ الرَّجُلُ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ.

“The man sat in *the* shade of a tree.”

فَتَحَ اللَّصُّ شُبَّاکَ الْبَيْتِ وَدَخَلَ الْبَيْتَ.

“The thief opened *a/the* window of the house and entered the house.”

It is important to understand that translating the annexe noun into English with “a” or “the” is purely for the reason of obtaining a natural translation. This does not affect whether or not the annexe noun is grammatically considered definite in Arabic.

As we mentioned earlier, the definiteness of the annexe noun in Arabic depends only on the definiteness of the base noun. If the base noun is definite then the annexe noun shall be considered definite as well. And if the base noun is indefinite then the annexe noun shall be considered indefinite as well.

The need to maintain this distinction will become apparent in the next section.

If the base noun is definite, and it is desired to make the annexe noun grammatically indefinite, then it is necessary to break the annexation, and use a prepositional phrase instead, usually with the preposition *لِ*, which, here, will mean “of”. Example:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى بَيْتِ الرَّجُلِ.

“The boy went to a house of the man.”

فَتَحَ اللَّصُّ شُبَّانًا مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَدَخَلَ الْبَيْتَ.

“The thief opened a window of the house and entered the house.”

## 12.5. Broken plurals and *āt* sound plurals in annexations

There is no special rules for broken plurals and *āt* sound plurals in annexations. They behave just like singular nouns. Remember only that *āt* plurals end with *ٍ* and *ِ* in the a-state. Here are some examples:

حَيَوَانَاتُ الْغَابَةِ وَخَشَّةٌ.

“The animals of the forest are wild.”

قَرَأَتْ طَالِبَاتُ الْمَدْرَسَةِ صَفَحَاتِ الْكُتُبِ

“The school’s students<sub>f</sub> read the pages of the books.”

فِي الْخَزَائِنَةِ أَقْلَامُ مُعَلِّمَاتٍ.

“In the cupboard are teachers’<sub>f</sub> pens.

Contrary to broken plurals and *āt* plurals, duals and *ūn* sound plurals behave differently in annexations. We will deal with them in section @ref(duals-and-sound-un-plurals-in-annexations)

## 12.6. Describers in an annexation

### 12.6.1. Describing the base noun

Consider the following expression:

كِتَابُ الْجَارِيَةِ

“the girl’s book”

Now say that we want to form an descriptive noun-phrase “the small girl’s book”. Basically, we want to describe the base noun *الْجَارِيَةِ* “the girl” with the adjectival noun *صَغِير* “a small one”. Here is how we will express this in Arabic:

كِتَابُ الْجَارِيَةِ الصَّغِيرَةِ

“the small girl’s book”

In the manner we are already familiar with, we place the describer *صَغِير* “a small one” after the describee *الْجَارِيَةِ* “the girl” and match the describer with the describee in definiteness, state, gender and number (singular, dual, or plural).

Similarly, if we had an indefinite annexation, we would get:

كِتَابُ جَارِيَةٍ صَغِيرَةٍ  
“a small girl’s book”

Here are some more examples:

لَعَبَتْ الْجَارِيَةُ فِي حَدِيقَةِ الْبَيْتِ الْكَبِيرِ.  
“The girl played in the garden of the big house.”

قَرَأَ الْغُلَامُ سُورَةَ الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ.  
“The boy read the sūrah of the Noble Qur’ān.”

جَلَسَ الرَّجُلُ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ عَرِيضَةٍ وَسَبِيحَةٍ.  
“The man sat in the shade of a wide broad tree.”

### 12.6.2. Describing the annexe noun

Consider, again, the same annexation:

كِتَابُ الْجَارِيَةِ  
“the girl’s book”

Say, now, that we want to describe the annexe noun كِتَاب “book” with the adjectival noun صَغِير “a small one”. Normally, nothing can come between the annexe noun and the base noun in an annexation. So, the describer needs to be placed, again, after the base noun. However, this time it will match the annexe noun, not the base noun, in state, definiteness, gender, and number. So we get:

كِتَابُ الْجَارِيَةِ الصَّغِيرِ  
“the girl’s small book”

Note how the describer الصَّغِير matches the annexe noun كِتَاب in state and gender. Note also how the describer is definite with an اَلْ. This is because it is matching the annexe noun كِتَاب in definiteness. The annexe noun كِتَاب is definite, not with اَلْ, but rather because of the definite base noun الْجَارِيَةِ “the girl”. We’ve already learned this rule in section @ref(definiteness-of-the-annexation) above.

Similarly, if we describe the annexe noun كِتَاب in an indefinite annexation, we get:

كِتَابُ جَارِيَةٍ صَغِيرٍ  
“a girl’s small book”

This time the describer صَغِير is indefinite with a nūnated u-mark ُ. This is because the annexe noun كِتَاب is indefinite. It is indefinite because base noun جَارِيَةِ “a girl” is indefinite.

Now, you might be foreseeing a problem. What if the annexe noun and the base noun have the same gender, and the annexe too is in the i-state? For example, in the sentence:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى بَيْتِ الرَّجُلِ الْكَبِيرِ.  
“The boy went to the big/old man’s house.”

or

“The boy went to the man’s big house.”

How do we know whether the describer كَبِير is meant to describe the annexe noun بَيْت or the base noun الرَّجُل? The annexe noun بَيْت and the base noun الرَّجُل are both masculine, singular, definite, and in the i-state.

The answer is that in such cases, context will have to be clear to tell us which of the two meanings is intended. If the context makes it clear then there is no harm in using such a sentence for either of the two meanings.

Also, sometimes, the meaning of the describer is such that it will likely apply to only one of the two nouns. For example,

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى بَيْتِ الرَّجُلِ الْكَرِيمِ.

“The boy went to a noble/generous man’s house.”

In the sentence above the describer كَرِيم “noble/generous” is likely to apply to a man, and not to a house.

If, however, the context is not clear, and the meaning of the describer can apply to both the annexe noun and the base noun, then the describer is likely to apply to the base noun and not to the annexe noun. So then, this interpretation is more likely:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى بَيْتِ الرَّجُلِ الْكَبِيرِ.

“The boy went to the big/old man’s house.”

In order to apply a describer to the annexe noun in such a case, it is better to break the annexation and form a prepositional phrase instead, usually with the preposition لِ, which, here, will mean “of”. Example:

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْكَبِيرِ لِلرَّجُلِ .

“The boy went to the big house of the man.”

Here are some more examples:

لَعَبَتِ الْجَارِيَةُ بِكُرَةِ الْغُلَامِ الْحُمْرَاءِ.

“The girl played with the boy’s red ball.”

(Note that حُمْرَاءِ feminine to match كُرَةِ.)

سَقَطَتْ وَرَقَةٌ الشَّجَرَةِ الْخَضْرَاءِ عَلَى مَاءِ النَّعْرِ الْعَرِيضِ.

“The green leaf of the tree fell on the water of the broad river.”

(Note that خَضْرَاءِ is in the u-state to match وَرَقَةٌ.)

حَمَلَ الْغُلَامُ حَقِيْبَةَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ الثَّقِيْلَةِ.

“The boy carried the heavy school-bag.”

(literally: the heavy bag of the school).

كَتَبَ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى صَفْحَةٍ كِتَابٍ بَيْضَاءِ.

“The man wrote on the white page of a book.”

(Note that بَيْضَاءِ is feminine to match صَفْحَةٍ. However, also note that it has an a-mark ِ in the i-state because it is semi-flexible.)

## 12.7. Semi-flexible nouns in an annexation

Remember that semi-flexible nouns are not nūnated and that when indefinite, their i-state is indicated by an *a*-mark َ. But when definite with ألْ then they behave just like fully-flexible nouns. Example of the semi-flexible noun صَحْرَاءُ<sup>2</sup> “a desert”:

State	Indefinite	Definite
u-state	صَحْرَاءُ	الصَّحْرَاءُ
a-state	صَحْرَاءَ	الصَّحْرَاءَ
i-state	صَحْرَاءِ	الصَّحْرَاءِ

We will now see how semi-flexible nouns behave in an annexation.

### 12.7.1. A semi-flexible noun as the base noun

Here are examples of the semi-flexible noun صَحْرَاءُ<sup>2</sup> “a desert” as the base noun in an annexation:

الْقَرْيَةُ فِي وَسْطِ الصَّحْرَاءِ.  
“The village is in the middle of the desert.”

شَرِبَ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ مَاءً مِنْ بئرِ صَحْرَاءِ.  
“The bedouin drank some water from a desert’s well.”

As you can see, when صَحْرَاءُ<sup>2</sup> is definite, then its i-state is indicate by an *i*-mark ِ, just like fully-flexible nouns. However, when it is indefinite, then its i-state is indicate by an *a*-mark َ.

This is consistent with the general behavior of semi-flexible nouns that we are familiar with.

### 12.7.2. A semi-flexible noun as the annexe noun

Contrary from expected behavior, a semi-flexible annexe noun, even when indefinite, takes an *i*-mark ِ in the i-state instead of an *a*-mark َ. Example,

قَدِمَ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ مِنْ صَحْرَاءِ أَرْضٍ بَعِيدَةٍ.  
“The bedouin came from the desert of a far land.”

In the above example, صَحْرَاءُ<sup>2</sup> “a desert” is indefinite because it is the annexe noun to an indefinite base noun أَرْضٍ “a land”. It is in the i-state because it is preceded by the preposition مِنْ “from”. Nevertheless, it takes an *i*-mark مِنْ صَحْرَاءِ أَرْضٍ, not an *a*-mark, which would be incorrect: × مِنْ صَحْرَاءَ أَرْضٍ.

### 12.8. Annexations with more than two nouns

So far we have seen annexations with two nouns. Annexations may be arbitrarily long. Here is an example of a noun-chain with more than two nouns:

$$\underbrace{\text{مِفْتَاحُ بابِ الْبَيْتِ}}_{b_1 \quad a_1}$$

$$b_2 \quad a_2$$

“the house’s door’s key”

The above annexation consists of three nouns. It may be divided into two sub-annexations:

- i. مِفْتَاحُ بابِ “door’s key”. Its annexe noun  $a_1$  is مِفْتَاحُ and its base noun  $b_1$  is بابِ.
- ii. بابِ الْبَيْتِ “the house’s door”. Its annexe noun  $a_2$  is بابِ and its base noun  $b_2$  is الْبَيْتِ.

The noun بابِ “door” is common to both sub-annexations. It is the base noun of the first sub-annexation مِفْتَاحُ بابِ “door’s key”. At the same time, it is also the annexe noun of the second sub-annexation بابِ الْبَيْتِ “the house’s door”.

Only the final base noun may have اَلْ or be nūnated. If the final base noun has اَلْ (as above) then all the nouns in the annexation are definite.

And if the final base noun is indefinite, as in the example below, then all the nouns in the annexation are indefinite.

$$\text{مِفْتَاحُ بابِ بَيْتِ}$$
 “a house’s door’s key”

All the nouns except the first annexe noun must be in the i-state. Consistent with section @ref(a-semi-flexible-noun-as-the-annexe-noun) if a semi-flexible noun is any of the annexe nouns and is in the i-state, then its i-state is indicated by an  $\alpha$ -mark َ. Example:

$$\text{مِنْ بئرِ صَحْرَاءِ اَرْضِ}$$
 “from the well of the desert of a land”

### 12.9. Pronouns as base nouns

Consider the expression:

“his book”

This expression is very similar to the annexation:

$$\text{كِتَابُ الْعُلاَمِ}$$
 “the boy’s book”



The difference is that we would like to replace the base noun **الْعَلَام** “the boy” with the pronoun “his”. For this we use the attached pronoun **هُ**. When we place this pronoun as the base noun, we get:

كِتَابُهُ

“his book”

This annexation follows the same rules as the other annexations we have been studying so far:

- The annexe noun may be in any state, depending on its function in the sentence.
- The base noun is in the i-state. But because the base noun is a pronoun, and pronouns are rigid nouns (see section @ref(rigidity-of-pronouns) that don't change their ending based on their state, therefore it's i-state will not be apparent.

Here are some examples of this annexation used in sentences:

كِتَابُهُ ثَقِيلٌ.

“His book is heavy”

قَرَأَ الرَّجُلُ كِتَابَهُ.

“The man read his book.”

كَتَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُ فِي كِتَابِهِ.

“The teacher<sub>m</sub> wrote in his book.”

If the annexe noun ends with **ه** then it is converted to a **ت** when annexing it to an attached pronoun. For example:

ذَهَبُوا إِلَى مَدْرَسَتِهِمْ.

“They went to their school.”

Here are some more examples of annexing to the different attached pronouns:

دَخَلْتَ بَيْتَكَ.

“You<sub>1,m</sub> entered your<sub>1,m</sub> house.”

أَكَلْنَا طَعَامَهُمَا.

“They<sub>2,f</sub> ate their<sub>2</sub> food.”

قَدِمْتُ إِلَى مَدِينَتِكُمْ.

“I have arrived to your<sub>3,m</sub> city.”

هُوَ إِمَامُ مَسْجِدِنَا.

“He is the 'Imām of our mosque.”

If the annexe noun is semi-flexible then it gets a **ِ** in the i-state, as we've already learned. Example with the semi-flexible broken plural **حَدَائِقُ** “gardens”.

لَعَبْنَ فِي حَدَائِقِهِنَّ.

“They<sub>3,f</sub> played in their<sub>3,f</sub> gardens.”

If an annexe noun ends with *ي* then it gets converted to an alif when annexing it to an attached pronoun. Example with <sup>2</sup>فُتَاوَى “legal opinions”:

كُتِبَ تَلَامِذُهُ السَّيِّخِ فُتَاوَاهُ فِي كُتُبِهِمْ.

“The pupils of the religious scholar wrote down his legal opinions in their books.”

For the singular speaker-participant there are two variants for the attached pronoun:

- i. *-ī ي*
- ii. *-ya يَ*

The first (*-ī ي*) is more commonly used. Example:

قَرَأْتُ كِتَابِي

“I read my book.”

أَقْلَامِي قَصِيرَةٌ.

“My pens are short.”

If, however, the annexe noun ends in a long vowel or a semi-vowel then (*-ī ي*) is disallowed and only (*-ya يَ*) shall be used. Example with the semi-flexible broken plural <sup>2</sup>هَدَايَا “gifts”:

أَعْجَبَتْهُمْ هَدَايَايَ.

“My gifts pleased them.”

### 12.9.1. Describers with annexations to pronouns

Consider the annexation:

كِتَابُهُ

“his book”

The annexe noun is كِتَاب and the base noun is the pronoun ه. We would like add a describer to this expression. Remember from section @ref(definiteness-of-pronouns) that pronouns are definite nouns. That makes the annexe noun كِتَاب also definite. Therefore, any describer for this annexation will need to be definite too.

Here is a new rule: Pronouns may not be describees. That is: they are not allowed to have describers. Even in English you may say:

“The good boy went.”

but you can’t say:

× “The good *he* went.”

So, any describers for the annexation must necessarily only describe the annexe noun, not the base pronoun. Example:

كِتَابُهُ الْأَحْمَرُ

“his red book”

Here are some more examples:

كَتَبْتُ بِقَلَمِي الْأَسْوَدِ

“I wrote with my black pen.”

حَمَلَ غُلَمَانُ الْقَرْيَةِ حَقَائِبَهُمُ الثَّقِيلَةَ إِلَى مَدْرَسَتِهِمُ الْبَعِيدَةِ.

“The village boys carried their heavy bags to their distant school.”  
(literally: the village’s boys.)

## 12.10. Duals and ūn sound plurals in annexations

We have already dealt with broken plurals and āt sound plurals in annexations in section @ref(broken-plurals-and-at-sound-plurals-in-annexations).

In this section we will deal with duals and ūn sound plurals in annexations.

### 12.10.1. Duals and ūn sound plurals as base nouns

As base noun, duals and ūn sound plurals behave no differently than other nouns. Being base nouns they will be in the i-state and this shall be indicated by:

i. اَيْنِ -ayni for duals

ii. اَيْنَ -ina for ūn sound plurals

Here are some examples:

لَجِئَ الْمَظْلُومُونَ الضُّعَفَاءُ فِي بِلَادِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْأَمَّةِ.

“The weak wronged ones took refuge in the secure lands of the Muslims.”

أُخْتُ الْغُلَامَيْنِ الطَّوِيلَيْنِ صَغِيرَةٌ.

“The tall boys’<sub>2</sub> sister is little.”

هِيَ طَالِبَةٌ مُعَلِّمَتَيْنِ كَرِيمَتَيْنِ.

“She is the student<sub>f</sub> of noble teachers<sub>2,f</sub>.”

### 12.10.2. Duals and ūn sound plurals as annexe nouns

When duals and ūn sound plurals are annexe nouns, then their final ن is treated as a sort of nūnation and is, therefore, deleted before annexing them to a base noun. For example:

بَيْتَا الرَّجُلِ

“the man’s houses<sub>2</sub>”

not

× بَيْتَانِ الرَّجُلِ

Note, also, that because the base noun *الرَّجُلُ* begins with a connecting hamzah *أ*, therefore the long vowel *ā* at the end of *بَيْتَا* is pronounced as a short vowel *a*, thus:

*bayta -rrajuli*

not

× *baytā -rrajuli*

If the dual annexe noun were in the i-state then the final *ي* gets an *i*-mark *◌ِ* if there is following connecting hamzah. Example:

قَرَأْتُ كِتَابَيْ الرَّجُلِ.

*qara'tu kitābayi -rrajul*

"I read the man's books<sub>2</sub>."

Here are some more examples including *ūn* sound plurals:

مُعَلِّمُو الْغُلَامِ كِرَامٌ.

*mucallimu -lghulāmi kirām.*

"The boy's teachers<sub>3</sub> are noble."

(Note that there is no silent alif after *مُعَلِّمُو* as there is after a verb with a plural absentee-participant doer pronoun, e.g. *لَعِبُوا* "they<sub>3,m</sub> played")

لَعِبَ ابْنَا الرَّجُلِ مَعَ لَاعِبِي مَدِينَتِهِمْ.

*laeiba -bna -rrajuli maeā lāeibi madīnatihim.*

"The man's sons<sub>2</sub> played with the players of their city."

#### 12.10.2.1. Annexing duals and *ūn* sound plurals to pronouns

Duals and *ūn* sound plurals can be annexed to attached pronouns, and in this case too, they will lose their final *ن*. Examples:

مُعَلِّمُونَا طَيِّبُونَ.

"Our teachers<sub>3,m</sub> are good."

لَعِبَتْ الْجَارِيَةُ مَعَ صَدِيقَتَيْهَا

"The girl played with her friends<sub>2,f</sub>."

بَيْتَايَ كَبِيرَانِ.

"My houses<sub>2</sub> are big."

(Note that only the *ي* variant is allowed to be used because of *بَيْتَا* ending with a long vowel.)

قَرَأْتُ كِتَابَيْ

(Note how *ي* + *كِتَابَيْ* becomes *كِتَابَيَّ*.)

There are also two special cases in this category and we will examine them below:

Annexing an *ūn* sound plural to the singular speaker participant pronoun

When an *ūn* sound plural is annexed to the singular speaker participant pronoun, then again, only the *yi* variant can be used. However, in addition, the expression will appear the same regardless of the state of the annexe noun. So for all states (u-state, a-state, and i-state), we will get:

مُعَلِّمِي

We don't say × مُعَلِّمُوِي for the u-state. Examples:

مُعَلِّمِي كِرَامٌ.

“My teachers<sub>3,m</sub> are noble.”

(u-state)

سَأَلْتُ مُعَلِّمِي

“I asked my teachers<sub>3,m</sub>.”

(a-state)

أَخَذْتُ كِتَابًا مِنْ مُعَلِّمِي

“I took a book from my teachers<sub>3,m</sub>.”

(i-state)

Annexing an dual noun to a dual pronoun

When a dual noun is to be annexed to a dual pronoun, then the dual annexe noun is often converted to a plural. For example, instead of saying

نَظَرْتُ إِلَى رَأْسَيْهِمَا “I looked at their<sub>2</sub> heads<sub>2</sub>.”

it is in fact, more common, to say

نَظَرْتُ إِلَى رُؤُوسِهِمَا “I looked at their<sub>2</sub> heads<sub>3</sub>.”

Although the former is also correct. This is because the annexation of a dual to a dual is considered burdensome upon the tongue to utter, and so the plural is preferred.

## 12.11. Annexations with “and”

### 12.11.1. Multiple annexe nouns and one base noun

In English we can have an expression like “the pen and the book of the boy” = “the boy's pen and book”. In this sentence there are two annexe nouns and one base noun.

In order to express this in Arabic, we will say:

قَلَمُ الْغُلَامِ وَكِتَابُهُ

*qalamu -lghulāmi wa kitābuhu*

“the boy's pen and his book” = “the boy's pen and book”

Note that the annexation is not broken by the insertion of *wa* “and”. Rather a second annexation is used and the two are separated by *wa* “and”. This is the preferred way of expressing such expressions.

There is another, less preferred way of expressing this. And this is by breaking the first annexation and inserting *wa* “and”:

قَلَمٌ وَكِتَابُ الْغُلَامِ  
*qalamu wa kitābu -lghulāmi*  
 “the boy’s pen and book”

This second method is not considered as eloquent. Some even consider it incorrect. So we advise you to use the first method whenever possible.

#### 12.11.1.1. With pronouns

If the base noun in the first annexation is replaced with a pronoun then only the first method is allowed. For example,

قَلَمُهُ وَكِتَابُهُ  
*qalamuhu wakitābuhu*  
 “his pen and his book”

#### 12.11.2. One annexe noun and multiple base nouns

We can also have expressions like “the house of the boy and the girl”. In this sentence there is one annexe noun and two base nouns.

To express this in Arabic we will say:

بَيْتُ الْغُلَامِ وَالْجَارِيَةِ  
*baytu -lghulāmi wa-ljāriyati*  
 “the house of the boy and the girl”

Note that both *الْغُلَامِ* *alghulāmi* and *الْجَارِيَةِ* *aljāriyati* are in the i-state because they are both base nouns in the annexation.

#### 12.11.2.1. With pronouns

If one or both of the base nouns in the annexation is replaced with a pronoun then the first noun must be repeated. For example,

بَيْتُ الْغُلَامِ وَبَيْتُهَا  
 “the boy’s house and her house”  
 بَيْتُهُ وَبَيْتُهَا  
*baytuhu wabaytuhā*  
 “his house and her house”

## 12.12. Usage of the annexation

### 12.12.1. Primarily belonging

#### 12.12.2. نحو، مثل، شبه

Don't become definite when annexed to pronoun

#### 12.12.3. "self" نفس

صَرَبَا أَنْفُسَهُمَا

قَالَتْ لِي نَفْسِي

#### 12.12.4. annexation of material

خَاتَمٌ ذَهَبٍ

خَاتَمٌ ذَهَبٍ

خَاتَمٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ

#### 12.12.5. مَدِينَةُ دِمَشْقٍ

#### 12.12.6. مجرد ترفيه

Work in progress

Work in progress



## Chapter 13.

### Irregular nouns

#### 13.1. Introduction

There are some nouns in Arabic which are *irregular* and behave a little differently than other *regular* nouns. In this chapter we will study these irregular nouns.

#### 13.2. The five nouns

There are five nouns in Arabic which are irregular in the same basic way. Collectively, they are called “the five nouns”. They behave a little differently from regular nouns in how they display their state.

##### 13.2.1. أَبٌ *’ab*, أَخٌ *’akh*, and حَمٌّ *ḥam*

The first three nouns that we will talk about are:

- i. أَبٌ *’ab* “a father” (root: أبو)
- ii. أَخٌ *’akh* “a brother” (root: أخو)
- iii. حَمٌّ *ḥam* “a father-in-law” (root: حمو)

The final root letter of all three of these nouns is ڤ. However, irregularly, it is omitted in most formations of the word. It does resurface in some cases as we will describe below.

Without the final root letter ڤ, these nouns display their state like regular nouns. Here are some examples:

لِلْجَارِيَةِ أَبٌ كَبِيرٌ وَأَخٌ صَغِيرٌ.  
*liġjāriyati ’abun kabīrun wa’akhun ṣaġhīr*  
“The girl has an old father and a young brother.”

صَرَبَ الْعَلَامُ أَخًا لَهُ.  
*ṣaraba -lġhulāmu ’akhan lahu.*  
“The boy beat a brother of his.”

الْحَمُّ وَالْأَبُ فِي بَيْتِ الْأَخِ.

*ʾalḥamu walʾabu fi bayti -lʾakh.*

“The father-in-law and the father are in the brother’s house.”

Where the nouns behave irregularly is when they are an annexe noun in an annexation. Then instead of displaying their state with ا, اِ, and اِ, they display their state using the long vowels و *ū*, ا *ā*, and ي *ī* instead. Here are some examples:

هُوَ أَخُو الْجَارِيَةِ.

*huwa ʾakhū -ljāriyah*

“He is the girl’s brother.”

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا صَدِيقِي عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

*saʾaltu ʾabā ṣadiqī ʿan ʾamr.*

“I asked my friend’s father about a matter.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ حَمِي الرَّجُلِ.

*dhahabtu ʾilā bayti ḥami -rrajul.*

“I went to the man’s father-in-law’s house.”

When these nouns are annexed to attached pronouns, then in most cases they will behave as above. So, for example,

أَبُوهُ

*ʾabūhu*

“his father” (u-state).

أَخَانَا

*ʾakhānā*

“our brother” (a-state).

However, if the attached pronoun is ي (for the singular speaker participant), then in that case, the attached pronoun ي attaches to the annexe noun directly, without any intervening long vowel:

أَخِي

*ʾakhī*

“my brother” (u-state, a-state, and i-state).

أَبِي

*ʾabī*

“my father” (u-state, a-state, and i-state).

حَمِي

*ḥamī*

“my father-in-law” (u-state, a-state, and i-state).

Here are some more examples in sentences:

أَخُوهُ طَوِيلٌ وَأَخُوهَا قَصِيرٌ وَأَخِي كَبِيرٌ.

*ʾakhūhu ṭawilun waʾakhūhā qaṣīrun waʾakhī kabīr.*

“His brother is tall and her brother is short and my brother is big.”

سَأَلَ أَخَاهُمْ وَأَخَانَا.

*saʾaltu ʾakhāhum waʾakhānā.*

“I asked their<sub>m,3+</sub> brother and our brother.”

شَكَرَ أَخِي أَبِي.

*shakara ʾakhī ʾabī.*

“My brother thanked my father.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ أَخِيهِنَّ.

*dḥahabtu ʾilā bayti ʾakḥihinn.*

“I went to their<sub>f,3+</sub> brother’s house.”

The above irregular behavior of these three nouns is only when they are annexe nouns. When they happen to be base nouns in annexations, then they again they behave like regular nouns and their state is displayed by the short vowel marks ُ, ِ, and ٍ, when definite, and by nūnation ٌ, ٍ, and ٍ, when indefinite. . Examples:

بَيْتُ الْأَخِ كَبِيرٌ.

*baytu -lʾakḥi kabīr.*

“The brother’s house is big.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ أَخٍ.

*dḥahabtu ʾilā bayti ʾakḥ.*

“I went to a brother’s house.”

When these nouns form their duals and plurals, then the final root letter و is resurfaces. In forming the broken plural, the final root letter و, being a weak letter, sometimes converts to a ء. The following table shows their duals and plurals.

Word	Dual (u-state)	Dual (a-state and i-state)	Plural
أَب ʾab	أَبَوَانِ ʾabawāni	أَبَوَيْنِ ʾabayni	آبَاء ʾābāʾ
أَخ ʾakḥ	أَخَوَانِ ʾakhawāni	أَخَوَيْنِ ʾakhawayni	إِخْوَان ʾikḥwāh, ʾikḥwān
حَم ḥam	حَمَوَانِ ḥamawāni	حَمَوَيْنِ ḥamawayni	أَحْمَاء ʾaḥmāʾ

One special note regarding the dual أَبَوَانِ/أَبَوَيْنِ: in addition to meaning “two fathers”, they can also mean “both parents”, i.e., “a father and a mother”. Here are examples of these words in sentences:

ذَهَبَ الْأَخَوَانِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ.

*dhahaba -l'akhawāni fi -lmasjidi.*

“The brothers<sub>2</sub> went to the mosque.”

سَأَلْتُ أَخَوَيَّ عَنْ أَمْرٍ

*sa'altu 'akhawayya 'ean 'amrin.*

“I asked my brothers<sub>2</sub> about a matter.”

شَكَرْتُ لِأَبَوَيْهِ

*shakartu li'abawayhi.*

“I thanked his parents.”

### 13.2.2. ذُو *dhū* and ذَات *dhāt*

The fourth irregular noun from “the five nouns” is the masculine noun ذُو *dhū* and its feminine counterpart ذَات *dhāt*. The words ذُو *dhū* and ذَات *dhāt* mean “owner of” or “possessor of”.

So, for example, ذُو *dhū* -*lmāli* means “possessor<sub>m</sub> of wealth” or “wealthy person<sub>m</sub>”. The singular, dual, and plural of ذُو *dhū* in all three states is shown in the table below:

State	Singular	Dual	Plural
u-state	ذُو <i>dhū</i>	ذَوَا <i>dhawā</i>	ذَوُو <i>dhawū</i>
a-state	ذَا <i>dhā</i>	ذَوَيَّ <i>dhaway</i>	ذَوِي <i>dhawī</i>
i-state	ذِي <i>dhī</i>	same as a-state	same as a-state

The noun ذُو *dhū* and its duals and plurals are only ever used as annexe nouns in annexations. Furthermore, they may not be annexed to pronouns. Here are some examples:

الرَّجُلُ ذُو الْمَالِ.

*'arrujulu dhū -lmāl.*

“The man is the possessor of wealth.” = “This man is wealthy.”

The word ذَات *dhāt* is the feminine of ذُو *dhū*. When used as an annexe noun, its states, duals, and plurals are as in the table below:

State	Singular	Dual	Plural
u-state	ذَاتُ <i>dhātu</i>	ذَوَاتَا <i>dhawātā</i>	ذَوَاتُ <i>dhawātu</i>
a-state	ذَاتِ <i>dhāta</i>	ذَوَاتِي <i>dhawātay</i>	ذَوَاتِ <i>dhawāti</i>
i-state	ذَاتِي <i>dhāti</i>	same as a-state	same as a-state

Examples:

هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةُ ذَاتُ ثَمَرٍ كَثِيرٍ.

*hādhihi -shshajaratu dhātu thamarin kathīrin.*

“This tree is the possessor of much fruit.” = “This tree is very fruitful.”

As opposed to ذُو which is only an annexe noun, ذَات may be used a noun in its own right. In this case it means “personality” or “essence”. This usage is often found in theological or philosophical works. And, as such, unlike ذُو which can’t be annexed to attached pronouns, ذَات can be annexed to attached pronouns. Examples:

### 13.2.3. فَمَ *fam*

The fifth of “the five nouns” is فَمَ *fam* “a mouth”. It is the most irregular of “the five nouns”.

In some ways, the word فَمَ *fam* is regular. It is only irregular when it is a singular annexe noun. Let’s first see its regular behavior.

عَلَى الْوَجْهِ فَمٌ وَفِي الْفَمِ لِسَانٌ.

*ʿala -lwajhi famun wafi -lfami lisān*

“On the face is a mouth, and in the mounth is a tongue.”

It is a base noun in an annexation regularly:

نَطَقَ لِسَانُ الْفَمِ.

*naṭaqa lisānu -lfam.*

“The mouth’s tongue articulated [speech].”

It forms duals regularly, which are used in annexations regularly

فَمَا اللَّتَهْرَيْنِ كَبِيرَانِ.

*fama -nnahrayni kabirāni.*

“The mouths<sub>2</sub> of the rivers<sub>2</sub> are big.”

Let’s now see its irregular behavior.

When فَمَ is a singular annexe noun, then it is usual for it to follow the example of the rest of the five nouns.

Here is how it will appear as a singular annexe noun in the three states:

u-state	a-state	i-state
فُو <i>fū</i>	فَا <i>fā</i>	فِي <i>fī</i>

Examples of usage:

فُو اللَّهْرِ كَبِيرٌ.

*fu -nnahri kabir.*

“The mouth of the river is big.”

فُوهَا جَمِيلٌ.  
fūhā jamīl.

“Her mouth is beautiful.”

فَتَحَ فَاهُ.  
fataḥa fāh.

“He opened his mouth.”

جَعَلَتْ أَلُمُّ لُقْمَةً طَعَامٍ فِي فِي ابْنَتِهَا.  
jaʿalati -l'ummu luqmata ṭaeāmin fī fī -bnaṭihā.

“The mother put a morsel of food in her daughter’s mouth.”

When the attached pronoun for the speaking person *ي* is attached to *fū*, *fā*, *fū*, or *fī* the combination is always *fiyya* in all three states. Examples:

فِي مَفْتُوحٍ.  
fiyya maftūh.

“My mouth is open.”

فَتَحْتُ فِيَّ.  
fataḥtu fiyy.

“I opened my mouth.”

أَكَلْتُ بِفِيَّ.  
ʾakaltu biḥfiyy.

“I ate with my mouth.”

In addition to the above irregular behavior, it is permissible, but less common, to treat *فم* regularly as an annexe noun in an annexation. So it is permissible to also say:

فَمُ النَّهْرِ كَبِيرٌ.  
famu -nnahri kabir.

“The river’s mouth is big.”

فَمِي مَفْتُوحٌ.  
fami maftūhun.

“My mouth is open.”

فَمُهَا جَمِيلٌ.  
famuhā jamīlun.

“Her mouth is beautiful.”

فَتَحَ فَمَهُ.  
fataḥa famahu.

“He opened his mouth.”

جَعَلَتْ أَلُمُّ لُقْمَةً طَعَامٍ فِي فَمِ ابْنَتِهَا.  
jaʿalati -l'ummu luqmata ṭaeāmin fī fami -bnaṭihā.

“The mother put a morsel of food in her daughter’s mouth.”

The other irregularity of *فم* *fam* “a mouth” is that its broken plural is أَفْوَاهُ *ʾafwāh*.

Note that the letter م has not been used to form the broken plural, and instead a 9, and a 8 are used to form it.

### 13.3. Other irregular nouns

There are more nouns that have irregularity in their own ways. We will discuss them below.

#### 13.3.1. 9ulū and 9ulāt

9ulū (first syllable has a short vowel with a silent 9) means “people<sub>m</sub> of”. It is only used as a masculine plural annexe noun, similar in meaning to 99ū dhawū which we discussed in section @ref(zu) above. There is no singular or dual of this noun.

Here is its form in the different states:

u-state	a-and i-state
9ulū	9ulī

Example:

لأولبي الأرحام حقوق.  
li'uli -l'arḥāmi ḥuqūq.

“The people of the wombs (i.e. blood relatives) have rights.”

The feminine counterpart of 9ulū is 9ulāt “women of”. The first syllable again has a short vowel with a silent 9.

u-state	a-and i-state
9ulātu	9ulāti

لأولات الحمل حقوق على بُعُولَتِهِنَّ.  
li'ulāti -lḥamlī ḥuqūq ʿalā buʿūlatihinn.

“The women of pregnancy (i.e. pregnant women) have rights upon their husbands.”

## 13.3.2. اُمُّ ʾumm

The noun اُمُّ ʾumm “a mother” forms two *āt* sound plural variants:

- i. اُمَمَات ʾummahāt
- ii. اُمَمَات ʾummāt

The first variant اُمَمَات ʾummahāt is more commonly used. Example:

اُمَمَاتُ اَلْغِلْمَانِ طَيِّبَاتٌ.  
ʾummahātu -lghilmāni ṭayyibāt.  
“The boys’ mothers are good.”

## 13.3.3. سَنَة sanah

The noun سَنَة *sanah* “a year” forms both an *āt* sound plural and an *ūn* sound plural. (Remember from section @ref(applicability-of-the-un-sound-plural) that a few nouns that don’t denote male intelligent beings have *ūn* sound plurals.)

In both plurals, the singular noun is modified irregularly.

Singular	<i>āt</i> sound plural	<i>ūn</i> sound plural (u-state)	<i>ūn</i> sound plural (a- and i-states)
سَنَة <i>sanah</i>	سَنَوَات <i>sanawāt</i>	سِنُونُ <i>sinūna</i>	سِنِينَ <i>sinīna</i>

Either of the two plurals may be used interchangeably. Here are some examples:

## 13.3.4. مَاء māʾ

مَاء māʾ “a water” forms its broken plural irregularly: مَيَّاه *miyāh* “waters”.

## 13.3.5. شَفَة shafah

شَفَة *shafah* “a lip” forms its broken plural irregularly: شِفَاه *shifāh* “lips”.

Also, despite ending in the feminine marker ة, it does not form an *āt* sound plural.



13.3.6. ابْن *ibn*, ابْنَة *ibnah*, and بِنْت *bint*

The noun ابْن *ibn* “a son” is from the root بنو. It has two feminine counterparts:

- i. ابْنَة *ibnah*
- ii. بِنْت *bint*

which mean “a daughter”.

ابْن *ibn* “a son” forms both a broken plural and an *ūn* sound plural.

Its broken plural is أَبْنَاء *abnā* “sons”.

In forming the *ūn* sound plural, the singular noun is modified irregularly:

Singular	<i>ūn</i> sound plural (u-state)	<i>ūn</i> sound plural (a- and i-states)
ابْن <i>ibn</i>	بَنُونَ <i>banūna</i>	بَنِينَ <i>banīna</i>

The feminine ابْنَة and بِنْت “a daughter” form the irregular *āt* sound plural □□□□□□ *banāt* “daughters”. Note that بَنَات *banāt* is not a broken plural from the root بنت. Therefore, it obeys the rules of *āt* sound plurals and does not end with َ or ِ in the a-state.

Here are some examples using these nouns:

13.3.7. نَاس *nās*, and أَنَاس *unās*

نَاس *nās* and أَنَاس *unās* are from the root أنس. They both mean “a people”.

When indefinite, only أَنَاس *unās* tends to be used, and نَاس *nās* tends to be unused.

When definite, only أَلْنَّاس *annās* tends to be used, and أَلْأَنَاس *al'unās* is unused.

Here are some examples using these nouns:

13.3.8. The nouns إِمْرَأ *imra* and إِمْرَأَة *imra'ah*

The nouns إِمْرَأ *imra* (masc.) “a man, a person” and إِمْرَأَة *imra'ah* (fem.) “a woman” are quite irregular.

Firstly, إِمْرَأَة *imra'ah* “a woman” is, from the perspective, of its meaning, the feminine counterpart of رَجُل *rajul* “a man (male human being)”.

إِمْرَأ *imra*, on the other hand, only means “a man” in a general sense. For example, in the sentence “A man is only as good as his word.” It can also be translated as “a person”.

Secondly, اِمْرَأٌ 'imra' "a man, a person" has no plural. اُنَاسٌ/اَنَاسٌ "a people" and قَوْمٌ "a population" may be used when a plural is required.

اِمْرَأَةٌ 'imra'ah "a woman" irregularly forms the broken plurals نِسَاءٌ *nisā'* and نِسْوَةٌ *niswah* "women". The former (نِسَاءٌ *nisā'*) is more commonly used.

Like شَفَّةٌ *shafah* it also, despite ending in the feminine marker ة, does not form an āt sound plural.

Thirdly, both nouns are very irregular in how they become definite nouns with اَلْ. When اَلْ is prefixed to these nouns to make them definite, they lose the initial connecting hamzah and change their internal vowels. This table shows what we mean:

State	Definite of اِمْرَأٌ	Definite of اِمْرَأَةٌ
u-state	اَلْمَرْءُ 'almar'u	اَلْمَرْأَةُ 'almar'atu
a-state	اَلْمَرْءَ 'almar'a	اَلْمَرْأَةَ 'almar'ata
i-state	اَلْمَرْءِ 'almar'i	اَلْمَرْأَةِ 'almar'ati

The masculine noun اِمْرَأٌ 'imra' has an additional irregularity. When it is indefinite, it irregularly displays its state, not only on its final letter ء, but also on the letter before it ر.

It is also permissible for it to behave regularly by displaying its state on its final letter only, but this is not as commonly used.

This table shows what we mean:

State	Regular indefinite (less common)	Irregular indefinite (more common)
u-state	اِمْرَأٌ 'imra'un	اِمْرُؤٌ 'imru'un
a-state	اِمْرَءًا 'imra'an	اِمْرُءًا 'imra'an
i-state	اِمْرَئِ 'imra'in	اِمْرِئِ 'imri'in

Here are some examples of these nouns:

## Chapter 14.

### Proper nouns

#### 14.1. Introduction

Proper nouns are also known as names. Here are some examples of Arabic names:

Men's	names	Women's	names
مُحَمَّد	Muḥammad	عَائِشَة <sup>2</sup>	ʿĀ'ishah
سَعِيد	Sae'īd	فَاطِمَة <sup>2</sup>	Faṭimah
الْحَسَن	al-Ḥasan	حَفْصَة <sup>2</sup>	Ḥaḥṣah
النُّعْمَان	al-Nu'emān	سَمِيَّة <sup>2</sup>	Sumayyah
طَلْحَة <sup>2</sup>	Talḥah	جَمِيلَة <sup>2</sup>	Jamilah
أَسَامَة <sup>2</sup>	Usamah	زَيْنَب <sup>2</sup>	Zaynab
عُثْمَان <sup>2</sup>	ʿUṭhmān	مَرْيَم <sup>2</sup>	Maryam
عُمَر <sup>2</sup>	ʿUmar	سُعَاد <sup>2</sup>	Su'ād
إِبْرَاهِيم <sup>2</sup>	Ibrāhīm	أَسْمَاء <sup>2</sup>	Asmā'
عَبْدُ اللَّهِ	ʿabd Allāh	لَيْلَى <sup>2</sup>	Laylā
أَبُو بَكْر	Abū Bakr	أُمُّ حَبِيبَة <sup>2</sup>	Umm Ḥabībah

Place	names	Misc.	names
مَكَّة <sup>2</sup>	Makkah	رَمَضَان <sup>2</sup>	Ramadān (a month)
دِمَشْق <sup>2</sup>	Damascus	أُحُد	Uḥud (a mountain)
مِصْر <sup>2</sup>	Egypt	النَّيْل	the Nile (a river)
الْقَاهِرَة	Cairo	الْفَاتِحَة	the Fāṭiḥah (a sūrah)
الْهِنْد	India	الْجُمُعَة	Friday

Note the following points from the list above:

- Although some names begin with اَلْ, most don't.
- Many names are semi-flexible (indicated by <sup>2</sup>).
- Some names consist of more than a single word, like عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ʿabd Allāh

We will explain these and more details regarding proper nouns in this chapter.

## 14.2. Definiteness of proper nouns

Proper nouns differ from common nouns and adjectival nouns in a couple of important ways:

- All proper nouns, even if they don't begin with اَلْ, are definite.
- A proper noun which does not begin with اَلْ, and which is fully-flexible, shall be nūnated, despite being definite.

The above points are exemplified in the following sentence:

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْكَرِيمِ وَزَيْنَبَ الطَّيِّبَةِ.

*dhahabtu ʾilā bayti muḥammadini -lkarīmi wazaynaba -ṭṭayyibah.*

"I went to the house of the noble Muḥammad and the good Zaynab."

Note the above from the above example:

- مُحَمَّد is fully-flexible so it has a nūnated *i*-mark ِ in the *i*-state.
- زَيْنَب is semi-flexible so it is not nūnated, and instead has an *a*-mark َ in the *i*-state.
- The proper nouns مُحَمَّد and زَيْنَب are describees in descriptive noun phrases.
- Their describers (الْكَرِيمِ and الطَّيِّبَةِ, respectively) have اَلْ to match the definiteness of the definite proper noun describees. Furthermore, they both end with ِ because they match the *i*-state of their describees.

## 14.3. Meanings of names

Many names are re-used from common nouns and adjectival nouns with positive meanings. Examples:

- مُحَمَّد Muḥammad "a highly praised one<sub>m</sub>"
- سَعِيد Saʿīd "a happy (fortunate) one<sub>m</sub>"
- الْحَسَن al-Ḥasan "the good one<sub>m</sub>"
- طَلْحَة Ṭalḥah "an acacia (tree)"
- جَمِيلَة Jamīlah "a beautiful one<sub>f</sub>"

It is possible for these names to sometimes (technically) cause a sentence to have an ambiguous meaning. For example,

جَلَسَ الْحَسَنُ مَعَ سَعِيدٍ.

*jalsa -lhasanu maʿa saʿīd*

"al-Ḥasan sat with Saʿīd."

or

"The good one<sub>m</sub> sat with a happy (fortunate) one<sub>m</sub>."

Context would tell us whether the proper noun or the common/adjectival noun meaning is intended.

Note however the following sentence:

ذَهَبَتْ جَمِيلَةٌ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ.

*dhahabat jamīlatu 'ila -lbayt.*

This sentence can only be understood to use جَمِيلَةٌ with its proper noun meaning:

“Jamilah went to the house.”

This is because جَمِيلَةٌ is semi-flexible as a proper noun and fully-flexible as an adjectival/common noun. If جَمِيلَةٌ were intended to be used with its adjectival/common noun meaning then it would have a nūnated *u*-mark ُ and the sentence would be:

ذَهَبَتْ جَمِيلَةٌ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ.

*dhahabat jamīlatun 'ila -lbayt.*

“A beautiful one<sub>f</sub> went to the house.”

We will learn why جَمِيلَةٌ is semi-flexible as a proper noun in section @ref(proper-nouns-ending-with-looped-ta) below.

## 14.4. Flexibility of proper nouns

In this section we will discuss the flexibility of proper nouns. For now, we will deal only with proper nouns that do not begin with أَ. In terms of their flexibility, proper nouns consist of two types:

- i. Fully-flexible proper nouns.
- ii. Semi-flexible proper nouns.

We will treat each of them below.

### 14.4.1. Fully-flexible proper nouns

For names that don't begin with أَ, the default assumption is that they are fully-flexible, unless they fall into one of the categories of semi-flexible nouns (which we will study soon).

Examples of fully-flexible names are:

مُحَمَّدٌ	Muḥammad	مُعَاذٌ	Mueādh
نُوحٌ	Nūh	سَعْدٌ	Saʿd
شُعَيْبٌ	Shuʿayb	عَمَّارٌ	ʿammār
عَلِيٌّ	ʿalī	حَسَّانٌ	Ḥassān
زَيْدٌ	Zayd	سَعِيدٌ	Saeīd
أَنَسٌ	Anas	أُحُدٌ	Uḥūd (a mountain)

These are all masculine names.

Examples of sentences with fully-flexible proper nouns:

زَيْدٌ غُلَامٌ طَيِّبٌ.  
zaydun ghulāmun ṭayyib  
“Zayd is a good boy.”

شَكَرَ أَنَسٌ عَلِيًّا.  
shakara 'anasun 'aliyyā.  
“Anas thanked 'Alī.”

لَبَسَ سَعِيدٌ قَمِيصَ نُوحٍ الْأَخْضَرَ.  
labisa sa'īdun qamiṣa nūḥini -l'akhḡar.  
“Sae'id wore Nūḥ's green shirt.”

#### 14.4.2. Semi-flexible proper nouns

The rules for the semi-flexibility of proper nouns are a little different from the rules for the semi-flexibility of common nouns and adjectival nouns that we learned in chapter @ref(semi-flexible-nouns). Proper nouns shall be semi-flexible if they fall under one of the categories below. Note that the categories are not mutually exclusive. That is: some semi-flexible proper nouns will fall into more than one category.

##### 14.4.2.1. Names ending with ة

All names ending with ة shall be semi-flexible. This rule is specific to proper nouns. We have already seen that common nouns and adjectival nouns that end with ة are fully-flexible.

Most such proper nouns are feminine names. Examples:

خَدِيجَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Khadījah	مَيْمُونَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Maymūnah
فَاطِمَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Faṭimah	صَفِيَّةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ṣafiyyah
عَائِشَةُ <sup>2</sup>	ʿĀ'ishah	خَوْلَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Khawlah
سُمَيَّةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Sumayyah	جَمِيلَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Jamīlah
حَفْصَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ḥafṣah	آسِيَّةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Āsiyah

However, some masculine names may end with ة too:

حَمْزَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ḥamzah	مُعَاوِيَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Mu'āwīyah
أَسَامَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Usamah	عِكْرِمَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Eikrimah
طَلْحَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ṭalḡah	عُبَادَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	ʿUḇādah

Example:

طَلَحَهُ الطَّوِيلُ بَعْلُ جَمِيلَةَ الْكَرِيمَةِ.

“The tall Ṭalḥah is the husband of the generous Jamīlah.”

#### 14.4.2.2. Names ending with an extrinsic ء or ى

Similar to common nouns and adjectival nouns, all names ending with an extrinsic ء or ى shall be semi-flexible. These are usually feminine names. Examples:

أَسْمَاءٌ <sup>2</sup>	Asmāʾ	لَيْلَى <sup>2</sup>	Laylā
دَرْدَاءٌ <sup>2</sup>	Dardāʾ	سَلْمَى <sup>2</sup>	Salmā

Examples in sentences:

ذَهَبْتُ سَلْمَى إِلَى بَيْتِ أَسْمَاءَ.

“Salmā went to Asmā’s house.”

Sentence word order is usually pretty flexible. For stylistic reasons, it is permissible for a doer to precede the doer. For example,

سَأَلَتْ دَرْدَاءُ أَسْمَاءَ.

“Asmā asked Dardā”

But because words that end with ى never display any state, then for these words the sentence word order becomes more rigid. So the following sentence:

سَأَلَتْ لَيْلَى سَلْمَى.

would usually only mean “Laylā asked Salmā.”

#### 14.4.2.3. Names ending with an extrinsic ان

All names ending with an extrinsic ان will be semi-flexible.

This is somewhat different from the rule we learnt for common noun and adjectival nouns in section @ref(adjectival-noun-an-diptote). There only adjectival nouns of the pattern فُعْلَان and whose feminine was not formed by adding ة to it were considered semi-flexible nouns.

Examples:

عُثْمَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	ʿUthmān	رَمَضَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ramaḍān
سُفْيَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	Sufyān	شُعْبَانٌ <sup>2</sup>	Shāʿebān

Example:

جَلَسَ عُثْمَانُ مَعَ سُفْيَانَ فِي رَمَضَانَ.

“ʿUthmān sat with Sufyān in Ramaḍān.”

## 14.4.2.4. Names on the pattern أَفْعَل

All names on the pattern أَفْعَل shall be semi-flexible. Examples:

<sup>2</sup> أَحْمَد	Aḥmad	<sup>2</sup> أَسْعَد	As'ad
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## 14.4.2.5. Names of the pattern فُعْل

Names of the pattern فُعْل shall be semi-flexible. Examples:

<sup>2</sup> عُمَر	ʿUmar	<sup>2</sup> مُضَر	Muḍar
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## 14.4.2.6. Names that are originally verbs

Names that are originally verbs are semi-flexible. Examples:

- <sup>2</sup>يَزِيد Yazīd “He increases”
- <sup>2</sup>يَعِيش Yaʿīsh “He lives”

Their origin as verbs will be apparent when we study incomplete-action verbs.

## 14.4.2.7. Names of foreign origin

Names of foreign origin are generally semi-flexible. These include the names of angels, many of the previous prophets and messengers, and other persons. Examples:

<sup>2</sup> جِبْرِيل	Jibrīl	<sup>2</sup> زَكَرِيَّا	Zakariyyā
<sup>2</sup> إِبْرَاهِيم	Ibrāhīm	<sup>2</sup> يَحْيَى	Yahyā
<sup>2</sup> إِسْمَاعِيل	Ismāʿīl	<sup>2</sup> هَاجِر	Hājar
<sup>2</sup> إِسْحَاق	Is-ḥāq	<sup>2</sup> مَرْيَم	Maryam
<sup>2</sup> يَعْقُوب	Yaʿqūb	<sup>2</sup> يَا جُوج	Ya'jūj
<sup>2</sup> يُوسُف	Yūsuf	<sup>2</sup> مَاجُوج	Ma'jūj
<sup>2</sup> يُونُس	Yūnus	<sup>2</sup> إِبْلِيس	Iblis
<sup>2</sup> إِدْرِيس	Idris	<sup>2</sup> فِرْعَوْن	Pharoah
<sup>2</sup> أَيُّوب	Ayyūb	<sup>2</sup> هَرَقْل	Heraclius
<sup>2</sup> مُوسَى	Mūsā	<sup>2</sup> كِسْرَى	Chosroes
<sup>2</sup> عِيسَى	ʿIsā	<sup>2</sup> قَيْصَر	Caesar

Note that <sup>2</sup>فِرْعَوْن “Pharoah” as <sup>2</sup>قَيْصَر “Caesar”, despite being titles, are treated as proper names.



The only exception to this rule is a masculine name of foreign origin that comprises of only three letters, and whose middle letter has an O-mark. Such a name will be fully-flexible. Example:

- نُوح Nūh

#### 14.4.2.8. Feminine names

All feminine names, regardless of their origin, or their ending, shall be semi-flexible. We have already given examples of semi-flexible feminine names that end with ة, اء, and ئ, so we will provide other examples here:

زَيْنَب <sup>2</sup>	Zaynab	مَرْيَم <sup>2</sup>	Maryam
سُعَاد <sup>2</sup>	Sueād	هَاجِر <sup>2</sup>	Hājar

The only exception to this rule is a feminine name of native Arabic origin, that comprises of only three letters, and whose middle letter has an O-mark. Such a name is permitted to be optionally fully-flexible or semi-flexible. Examples:

- هِنْد Hind
- دَعْد Daed

Example of usage:

دَهَبَتْ هِنْدٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ دَعْدٍ.

or

دَهَبَتْ هِنْدٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ دَعْدٍ.

“Hind went to Daed’s house.

#### 14.5. The name فُلَان

The fully-flexible name فُلَان is used as a place-holder name in casual conversations. It may be translated into English as “so-and-so”. For example,

ظَلَمَ الرَّجُلُ فُلَانًا وَعَدَرَ بِفُلَانٍ. “The man wronged so-and-so and he acted treacherously with so-and-so.”

For females, the name فُلَانَة<sup>2</sup> is used.

صَدَقَتْ فُلَانَةٌ.

“So-and-so<sub>f</sub> told the truth.”

### 14.6. Irregular spelling of the name عَمْرُو ʿAmr

Irregularly, the fully-flexible name ʿAmr is written with an unpronounced و at its end: عَمْرُو when in the u- and i-states. In the a-state, the و is not added.

Name	u-state	a-state	i-state
ʿAmr	عَمْرُو ʿamrun	عَمْرًا ʿamran	عَمْرٍو ʿamrin

Some have mentioned that this و was added in the spelling in order to distinguish it from the name عُمَرُ ʿumar, when written without vowel marks. Or it could be the remnant of an older (pre-Islāmic) practice of appending a final و to personal names.<sup>1</sup>

### 14.7. The Replacement

Before we proceed with our discussion on proper nouns, we will take a short digression to discuss a grammatical concept called the *replacement*. We will only give a short preview here and will treat it fully in chapter @ref(the-replacement-chapter).

A *replacement* is a word that follows another word, the *replacee*, and replaces it from the perspective of the grammar of the sentence. The replacement is put in the same state as the replacee. Here is an example of a sentence with a replacement and a replacee:

أَحَدَ الْغُلَامِ شَيْئًا كِتَابًا.

replacement
replacee

“The boy took something: a book”

In the above sentence, the word كِتَابًا “a book” is the replacement of شَيْئًا “something”. Therefore, it is put in the same a-state.

The replacement is frequently used with proper nouns. For example,

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى بَيْتِ عَمِّهِ عَلِيٍّ.

“The boy went to his uncle ʿAlī’s house.”

In this sentence, the name عَلِيٍّ ʿalī is the replacement of the replacee عَمِّ “uncle”. Note, again, that the replacement comes after the replacee and matches

<sup>1</sup>Al-Jallad, “One wāw to rule them all: the origins and fate of wawation in Arabic and its orthography,” 2022.

it in state. However, the replacement does not need to come directly after the replacee. We can see that there is the pronoun *o* “his” between them.

Here is another example:

سَأَلَ الطَّالِبُ مُعَاذَ الْمُعَلِّمِ سَعْدًا.

“The student Mu‘ādh asked the teacher Sa‘d.”

## 14.8. Annexed names

So far we have only dealt with proper nouns that are single words. There are some proper nouns that may be formed from two words that are in an annexation. These belong to different categories:

### 14.8.1. “Slave of” names

Some names are formed by annexing the noun عَبْد *‘abd* “a slave” to one of the names of Allāh. The most common of these names are:

- عَبْدُ اللَّهِ *‘abd Allāh* “the Slave of Allāh”
- عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ *‘abd al-Raḥmān* “the Slave of the Most Merciful”

As usual, the base noun shall always be in the i-state. And the state of the annexe noun عَبْد *‘abd* is variable, depending on its function in the sentence. Example:

عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَخُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ. “‘abd Allāh is the brother of ‘abd al-Raḥmān.”

### 14.8.2. “Parent of” names

It is common to call a man, not by his own given name, but rather by calling him the father of one of his children, usually his first born son. For example, if a man named أَحْمَد *Aḥmad* had a son named زَيْد *Zayd*, he may be called أَبُو زَيْد *Abū Zayd* “Zayd’s father”. Example of usage in a sentence:

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ أَبِي زَيْدٍ.

“I went to Abū Zayd’s house.”

(Note how زَيْد *Zayd* has a nūnated *i*-mark ِ in the i-state because it is fully-flexible.)

While using the name of first-born son is more common, a daughter’s name could be used as well. Example,

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا رُقَيْيَةَ سُؤْلاً.

“I asked Abū Ruqayyah a question.”

(Note how رُقَيْيَةَ *Ruqayyah* has an *a*-mark َ in the i-state because it is semi-flexible.)

Women, too, are similarly called as the mother of one of their children. For example, the wife of the Prophet (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing

upon him) <sup>2</sup> أُمِّ حَبِيبَةَ Umm Ḥabībah was called thus because she had a daughter named <sup>2</sup> حَبِيبَةَ from a previous marriage.

By the way, a person need not literally be a father or a mother to be called in such a way. These names may be applied as nicknames.

For example, the Companion of the Prophet (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him) was called <sup>2</sup> أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ Abū Hurayrah because it is reported that he used to have a pet kitten (هُرَيْرَةٌ). Here is an example of this name in a sentence.

أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ صَحَابِيٌّ جَلِيلٌ.

“Abū Hurayrah is a great Companion.”

(Note how هُرَيْرَةٌ is now considered a semi-flexible proper noun even though it may originally have been derived from the common noun “a kitten”).

Similarly, the Companion أَبُو بَكْرٍ Abū Bakr is not known to have a son named بَكْرٍ.

It is often the case that a “parent of” name overtakes the actual given name of person in popularity, and becomes the person’s name for all intents and purposes. Such is indeed the case for the Companions أَبُو بَكْرٍ Abū Bakr and أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ Abū Hurayrah.

### 14.8.3. “Son of” names

In a manner similar to “parent of” names, a person may be referred to as the son of his parent. For example, the Companion عُمَرُ ʿUmar had a son named عَبْدُ اللَّهِ Eabd Allāh. He is commonly known as ابْنُ عُمَرَ Ibn ʿUmar “ʿUmar’s son”.

Attributing a son to his father is most common. But attributing him to a mother or other ancestor is also possible.

Examples:

- the Companion عَمَّارُ ʿAmmār was affectionately called ابْنُ سُمَيَّةٍ Ibn Sumayyah “Sumayyah’s son” by the Prophet (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him). His mother Sumayyah was an early martyr in Islām.
- the famous scholar ابْنُ كَثِيرٍ Ibn Kathīr is referred to by his grandfather’s name كَثِيرٌ Kathīr.
- a human being is called ابْنُ آدَمَ based on his being a descendent of the first man, the Prophet Adam.

#### 14.8.3.1. Full names

The full name of a person is formed by putting his given name first, and then his “son of” name after it as a replacement. Here is an example of a full name:

زَيْدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ

Zayd the son of ʿAlī

Note some peculiarities of the full name:

- The name زَيْد “Zayd” has lost its nūnation.
- The word بَن “son” is not written with its initial connecting hamzah ا.

These peculiarities are only when forming a full name in this manner. Consider for example the following sentence:

زَيْدُ ابْنِ عَلِيٍّ.

“Zayd is the son of ʿAli.”

In the above example, the name زَيْد is nūnated and ابْن is written with its connecting hamzah ا. Therefore this is not an expression of the full name in a replacee-replacement format. Rather, ابْنُ أَخْمَد here is the information of the sentence.

For women, the word بِنْت is used instead of بَن.

Example:

قَرَأَتْ الْمُعَلِّمَةُ كِتَابَ الطَّالِبَةِ زَيْنَبِ بِنْتِ أَحْمَدَ.

“The teacher read the book of the student Zaynab the daughter of Aḥmad.”

The names of multiple forefathers may be strung together in this way separated by بَن. For example:

أَسْمُ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ.

“Our prophet’s name is Muḥammad the son of ʿAbd Allāh the son of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.”

(Note that the second بَن is in the i-state to match the state of the annexe noun عَبْد in عَبْد اللَّهِ.)

We will deal with complete full names in section @ref(complete-full-names) below.

#### 14.8.4. Other annexed names

Other words besides عَبْد, أَب, أُم, and ابْن may be used in annexed names too. Here are some examples:

- دُو الْقَرْنَيْنِ Dhu l-Qarnayn “He of the two horns”
- مَدِينَةُ النَّبِيِّ *madīnatu -nnabiyyi* “The City of the Prophet”, frequently reduced to simply الْمَدِينَةُ “al-Madīnah”.

Context is used to infer whether by الْمَدِينَةُ is meant “al-Madīnah” or “the city”.

- أَمْرُو الْقَيْسِ Imru’ al-Qays “The man of al-Qays”, a pre-Islāmic poet.

14.9. Names beginning with اَلْ

Most names do not begin with اَلْ. Some, however, do begin with اَلْ. Examples:

اَلْحَسَن	al-Ḥasan	اَلزُّبَيْر	al-Zubayr
اَلْحُسَيْن	al-Ḥusayn	اَلنُّعْمَان	al-Nuʿmān
اَلْعَبَّاس	al-ʿAbbās	اَلْحَارِث	al-Ḥārith

If a proper noun begins with اَلْ then the question of its flexibility is mostly irrelevant. This is because noun beginning with اَلْ display their state fully, regardless of whether or not they are semi-flexible without the اَلْ. Examples:

اَلْحَسَنُ حَفِيدُ رَسُوْلِ اَللّٰهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم.  
“al-Ḥasan is the grandson of the messenger of Allāh (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him).”  
(u-state displayed with ُ.)

سَأَلَ الرَّجُلُ النُّعْمَانَ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.  
“The man asked al-Nuʿmān about a matter.”  
(a-state displayed with َ.)

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ النُّعْمَانِ.  
“I went to al-Nuʿmān’s house.”  
(i-state displayed with ِ.)

Names that begin with اَلْ can sometimes lose their initial اَلْ. Sometimes, this is systematic, as we will learn in section @ref(calling-names-with-al). Other times, it’s hard to tell why.

Conversely, names that don’t begin with اَلْ can sometimes gain it.

Examples:

- The name of the daughter of the Companion أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ Abu l-Dardā’ is actually دَرْدَاءٌ Dardā’, not اَلدَّرْدَاءُ.
- The son of the uncle of the Prophet (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him) اَلْعَبَّاسُ al-ʿAbbās is called ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ Ibn ʿabbās, not اَلْبَنُ اَلْعَبَّاسِ.

However, the son of اَلزُّبَيْرِ al-Zubayr is called ابْنُ اَلزُّبَيْرِ Ibn al-Zubayr with the اَلْ.

## 14.10. Place names

Place names are generally feminine. Because of their feminine gender, those not beginning with اَلْ will be semi-flexible according to section @ref(feminine-names) above.

Examples of place names are:

مَكَّة <sup>2</sup>	Makkah	اَلْمَدِينَة	al-Madinah
دِمَشْق <sup>2</sup>	Damascus	اَلْقَاهِرَة	Cairo
بَغْدَاد <sup>2</sup>	Baghdād	اَلْهِنْد	India
مِصْر <sup>2</sup>	Egypt	اَلصِّين	China
فَارِس <sup>2</sup>	Persia	اَلرُّوم	Rome
تَبُوك <sup>2</sup>	Tabūk	اَلْبَصْرَة	Baṣrah

Example of use:

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى مَكَّةَ الْمُكْرَّمَةِ وَالْمَدِينَةِ الْمُنَوَّرَةِ.

“The man went to the ennobled Makkah and the illuminated al-Madinah.”

While most place names are feminine, a few are masculine. Among these are:

اَلْيَمَن	Yemen	اَلشَّام	the Levant
اَلْعِرَاق	Iraq		

## 14.11. Names of tribes

Here are examples of names of tribes:

قُرَيْش	Quraysh	اَلْأَوْس	al-Aws
بَنُو تَمِيم	Banū Tamīm	اَلْخَزْرَج	al-Khazraj
هَوَازِن <sup>2</sup>	Hawāzin	بَنُو إِسْرَائِيل <sup>2</sup>	Banū Isrāʾīl

Tribes are usually called by the name of their progenitor. For example, إِسْرَائِيل<sup>2</sup> Isrāʾīl is a name of the Prophet يَعْقُوب<sup>2</sup> Yaeqūb. The *ūn* sound plural “sons/children” is annexed to the name إِسْرَائِيل<sup>2</sup> Isrāʾīl to get the name of the tribe بَنُو إِسْرَائِيل<sup>2</sup> Banū Isrāʾīl “the children of Isrāʾīl”. In the a- and i-states, this becomes بَنِي إِسْرَائِيل<sup>2</sup> Banī Isrāʾīl.

Not all tribe names have بَنُونَ “sons” annexed to them, but many do. And often it is optional to keep or drop the annexed بَنُونَ. Examples:

- قُرَيْش Quraysh usually does not have بَنُونَ annexed to it.
- بَنُو تَمِيم Banū Tamīm may optionally drop the annexed بَنُونَ and be called simply تَمِيم Tamīm.

### 14.11.1. Flexibility of tribe names

The flexibility of tribe names depends on the name. Here are some examples:

- <sup>2</sup>إِسْرَائِيل Isrā'īl is a name of foreign origin and is therefore semi-flexible.  
Example:

بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.  
“Allāh sent Mūsā to the children of Isrā'īl.”

- قُرَيْشٌ Quraysh and تَمِيمٌ Tamīm are native Arabic masculine names and are therefore fully-flexible. Example:

قُرَيْشٌ وَبَنُو تَمِيمٍ قَبِيلَتَانِ.  
“Quraysh and Banū Tamīm are tribes<sub>2</sub>.”

- <sup>2</sup>هَوَازِن Hawāzin is on the semi-flexible noun pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعَاْف and is therefore semi-flexible.

### 14.11.2. Gender of tribe names

Tribe names are unusual in that they are treated as both singular feminine and plural masculine. If the tribe name is the doer of a verb then it is usually treated as singular feminine. Otherwise, for example, if it comes before the verb, then the plural masculine pronouns are used for it.

Example:

سَكَنَتْ قُرَيْشٌ مَكَّةَ وَعَبَدُوا الْأَصْنَامَ.  
“Quraysh dwelled in Makkah and they worshipped idols.”

### 14.12. Titles

Titles are common nouns that denote a rank or position of a person. Titles in English include: Doctor, Mister, and King. For example:

- King David
- Mr. Smith
- Dr. Adams

Here are some examples of titles in Arabic:

النَّبِيِّ	Prophet	الإمام	Imām
الملك	King	الشيخ	Shaykh
الأمير	Commander	الخافض	Hāfiḍh
القاضي	Judge	الأستاذ	Professor



Some Arabic titles are left untranslated in English like

- اَلْإِمَامُ Imām (a leader)
- الشَّيْخُ Shaykh (a venerable man)
- اَلْحَافِظُ Ḥāfiḍh (one who has memorized, and preserved religious texts)

#### 14.12.1. Titles as replacees

Titles are usually placed in front a proper noun and made definite with اَلْ to match the proper noun. For example,

سَأَلَ رَجُلٌ اَلْإِمَامَ مَالِكًا عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

“A man asked Imām Mālīk about a matter.”

In the above sentence, the title اَلْإِمَامُ Imām is a replacee and the name مَالِكًا Mālīk is the replacement.

Some titles are formed from annexations. Examples:

خَلِيفَةُ رَسُولِ اَللَّهِ	the Successor of the Messenger of Allāh	سَيْفُ اَللَّهِ	the Sword of Allāh
أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ	the Commander of the Believers	عِمَادُ الدِّينِ	the Pillar of the Faith
أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ	the Mother of the Believers	صَلَاحُ الدِّينِ	the Righteousness of the Faith

Example:

أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَائِشَةُ هِيَ ابْنَةُ خَلِيفَةِ رَسُولِ اَللَّهِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ.

“The Mother of the Believers ʿĀʾishah is the daughter of the Successor of the Messenger of Allāh Abū Bakr.”

#### 14.12.2. Titles in annexations

Some prominent inanimate objects, like mountains, rivers, and cities, may have titles. For example:

- Mount Everest
- the river Nile
- the city of Damascus

In Arabic, the titles for these objects usually don’t occur as replacees as they do for persons. Rather, the title is annexed to the proper noun in an annexation. Examples:

جَبَلُ أُحُدٍ	Mount Uhud	مَدِينَةُ دِمَشْقَ	the city of Damascus
نَهْرُ النَّيْلِ	the river Nile	شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ	the month of Ramaḍān
يَوْمُ الْجُمُعَةِ	the day of Friday	سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ	the Sūrah of al-Fātiḥah

Example:

قَرَأَتِ الْغَارِيَةُ سُورَةَ الْفَاتِحَةِ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ.

“The girl read the Sūrah of al-Fātiḥah in the month of Ramaḍān.”

### 14.13. Nicknames

Nicknames are often given to people. They are usually descriptive of some physical quality or character trait of the person. For example, the Companion Abū Bakr was given the nickname الصَّدِّيقُ “the steadfast affirmer of the truth”.

Nicknames usually come after a person’s name as a replacement.

أَبُو بَكْرٍ الصَّدِّيقُ هُوَ خَلِيفَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

“Abū Bakr the steadfast affirmer of the truth is the successor of the messenger of Allāh.”

قَرَأَ سُلَيْمَانُ الْأَعْمَشُ الْقُرْآنَ.

“Sulaymān the weak-sighted read the Qur’ān.”

### 14.14. The affiliate adjectival noun

The affiliate adjectival noun is a kind of adjectival noun that indicates an affiliation.

Here are some examples of affiliate adjectival nouns:

عِرَاقِيّ	an Iraqi	قُرَشِيّ	a Qurayshite
مَكِّيّ	a Makkan	تَمِيمِيّ	a Tamimian
دِمَشْقِيّ	a Damascan	إِسْرَائِيلِيّ	an Isrā’īlite
شَافِعِيّ	a Shāfiʿite	حَنَفِيّ	a Ḥanafī
مَالِكِيّ	a Mālikī	حَنَبَلِيّ	a Ḥanbalī

Note the following about affiliate adjectival nouns:

- Generally, the ending يّ -iyy is suffixed to a noun to create an affiliate adjectival noun.

- The ة ending is removed before adding the يّ -iyy suffix.
- Sometimes there are other internal changes to the word before this suffix is added. For example,
  - فُرَيْش becomes فُرَيْي
- The affiliate adjectival noun may be formed from any of the names of a person. (Usually, one of the more distinctive names is chosen.) For example:
  - A follower of the school of thought of أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ Imām Abū Ḥanī-fah is called حَنْفِيّ “a Ḥanafi”.
  - A follower of the school of thought of حَنْبَلُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is called حَنْبَلِيّ “a Ḥanbali”.

We will treat adjectival nouns more fully in chapter @ref(the-affiliate-adjective-chapter).

Affiliate adjectival nouns frequently occur with proper nouns. They come after the proper noun as a replacement, and are made definite by ال to match the proper noun in definiteness. Examples:

ابْنُ كَثِيرٍ الدَّمَشَقِيُّ مُفَسِّرٌ وَمُؤَرِّخٌ.

“Ibn Kathīr the Damascan is an exegete and a historian.”

## 14.15. Complete full names

We have already studied how a basic full name is formed in section @ref(full-names). Here, we will expand on that topic.

The complete full name of a person is formed by placing some or all of his different names in a particular order. Each name in the order is a replacement of one of the names before it. Generally, the order is:

- i. Titles
- ii. “Father of” name
- iii. Given name
- iv. “Son of” names
- v. Affiliate names

The nickname’s position is variable.

Here are some examples of full names in varying degrees of completeness:

عَائِشَةُ هِيَ ابْنَةُ خَلِيفَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ.

“ʿĀʾishah is the daughter of the Successor of the Messenger of Allāh, Abū Bakr, the steadfast affirmer of the truth.”

قَتَلَ أَبُو لَوْلُؤَةَ الْمَجُوسِيَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبَا حَفْصٍ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ.

“Abū Lu’lu’ah, the Magian killed the Commander of the Believers, Abū Ḥafṣ, ʿUmar the son of al-Khaṭṭāb.”

الْحَافِظُ الْمُؤَرِّخُ الْمُفَسِّرُ عِمَادُ الدِّينِ أَبُو الْفِدَاءِ إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ كَثِيرٍ الْقُرَشِيُّ الدَّمَشْقِيُّ  
الشَّافِعِيُّ

“The Ḥāfiḍh, the historian, the exegete, the Pillar of the Faith, the father of al-Fidā’, Ismā’īl the son of ʿUmar the son of Kathīr, the Qurayshite, the Damascan, the Shāfiʿite”

(Note how the second *ibn* is in the i-state because it is a replacement of *ʿumar* which is in the i-state because it is a base noun of the first *ibn*.)

Work in progress

## Chapter 15.

### Calling out

#### 15.1. Introduction

When calling out to someone in Arabic, the particle يَا *yā* is usually prefixed to the person's name. For example,

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا زَيْنَبُ.

*ʾassalāmu ʿalaykum yā zaynabu.*

“Peace be upon you, O Zaynab.”

There are different rules regarding the state markings of the noun following يَا *yā* and we will describe them in the following sections.

#### 15.2. Calling out to specific persons

##### 15.2.1. Using single word personal names

When a specific person is called out to, and the name used to call him consists of a single word, then that word shall be in the u-state. The sentence above is an example of this rule where the name زَيْنَبُ *zaynabu* “Zaynab” is in the u-state.

If the word would be nūnated, then the nūnation is dropped. So, for example, the name زَيْدٌ *zaydun* “Zayd” usually is nūnated. But when used for being called out to, the nūnation is dropped and it becomes:

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا زَيْدُ.

*ʾassalāmu ʿalaykum yā zaydu.*

“Peace be upon you, O Zayd.”

##### 15.2.2. Using single word indefinite common nouns

The examples above show the person being called out to using a personal name. Instead of a personal name, a common noun can also be used with the same rule. Examples:

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا غُلَامٌ.

*ʾassalāmu ʿalaykum yā ghulāmu.*

“Peace be upon you, O you boy.”

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَیْکُمْ یَا جَارِیَةُ.  
 'assalāmu ealaykum yā jāriyatu.  
 "Peace be upon you, O you girl."

In English, we have shown that a specific person is being called using the word "you", e.g., "O you boy". Duals and plurals are also allowed, again with the same rule:

یَا رِجَالُ، قَدْ حَدَثَ أَمْرٌ.  
 yā rijālu qad ḥadaṭha 'amrun.  
 "O you men, a matter has occurred."

Note how the word رِجَالُ *rijālu* "men" is not nūnated because the word is used to call out to the specific persons.

Similarly,

یَا لَاعِبَانِ بَدَأْتُمَا اللَّعِبَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُمَا الْعَمَلَ.  
 yā lāeibāni bada'tuma -llaeiba wamā faealtuma -leamal.  
 "O you players<sub>2</sub>, you have started playing and you have not done the work."

### 15.2.3. Using single word definite common nouns

When using a common noun to call out to a person, especially if the common noun is a title, it is often desired to make the common noun definite with ال. In this case, the particle یَا *yā* is modified to أَيْيُهَا *'ayyuhā*, or sometimes یَا أَيْيُهَا *yā 'ayyuhā*. Examples:

یَا أَيْيُهَا الْأُسْتَاذُ، قَدْ فَعَلْتُ الْوَاجِبَ.  
 yā 'ayyuha -l'ustādḥu, qad faealtu -lwājiba  
 "O you the Professor, I have done the obligatory [work]."

أَنَا سَقِیمٌ أَيْيُهَا الطَّبِیبُ.  
 'anā saqīmun, 'ayyuha -ṭṭabību.  
 "I am ill, O you the Doctor."

If the person being called out to is feminine, then أَيْيُهَا *'ayyuhā* is modified to أَيْيَاتُهَا *'ayyatuhā*. For example:

أَيْيَاتُهَا الْمُعَلِّمَةُ، هَذَا كِتَابِي.  
 'ayyatuha -lmueallīmatu, hādḥā kitābi.  
 "O you the teacher<sub>f</sub>, this is my book."

### 15.2.4. Using multiple words

The above discussion pertains to calling out to the addressed person with a single word. Often times a person's name may consist of multiple words. For example:

- عَبْدُ اللَّهِ  
*ʿabdu -llāhi*  
“ʿabd Allāh”
- أَبُو بَكْرٍ  
*ʾabū bakrīn*  
“Abū Bakr”
- صَلَاحُ الدِّينِ  
*ṣalāḥu -ddīni*  
“Salāḥ ad-Dīn”

In this case, then instead of the u-state, the word is put into the a-state. Furthermore, the nūnation, if any, is preserved. Examples:

مَا عَرَفْتُ ذَٰلِكَ الرَّجُلَ، يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ.  
*mā ʿaraftu dhālika -rrajula, yā ʿabda -llāhi.*  
“I have not recognized that man, O ʿabd Allāh.”

يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، أَنْتَ رَجُلٌ كَرِيمٌ.  
*yā ʾabā bakrīn, ʾanta rajulun karīmun*  
“O Abū Bakr, You are a noble man.”

يَا صَلَاحُ الدِّينِ، صَبَرْتَ فَتَنَصَّرَكَ اللَّهُ.  
*yā ṣalāḥa -ddīni, ṣabarta fanaṣsaraka -llāhu.*  
“O Salāḥ ad-Dīn, you were patient so Allāh gave you victory.”

If, instead of a personal name, a noun phrase consisting of multiple words is used to call out to a person, then in this case as well, the first noun shall be in the a-state. Examples:

يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، قَدْ حَضَرَ الْقَوْمُ.  
*yā ʾamīra -lmuʾminīna, qad ḥaḍara -lqawmu.*  
“O Commander of the Believers, the people are present.”

يَا ابْنَ أَخِي، قَدْ سَقَطَ قَلَمُكَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ.  
*ya -bna ʾakḥī, qad saqaṭa qalamuka.*  
“O my nephew, your pen has fallen on the ground.”

يَا تَلَامِيذَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ، الْعِلْمُ أَمَانَةٌ.  
*yā talāmīdha -lmaḍrasati, -lʿilmu ʾamānatun.*  
“O pupils of the school, knowledge is a trust.”

When multiple words are used to call out to a person, the second word in the noun-chain may be a pronoun. Here too, the first noun shall be in the a-state. Examples:

يَا أَبَانَا  
*yā ʾabānā*  
“O our father”

### 15.3. Calling out to unspecified persons

All the discussion so far has pertained to calling out to specific persons. So for example, when you say,

يَا مُسْلِمُ، نَصْرُ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ.  
*yā muslimu, naṣru -llāhi qarībun.*  
 “O you Muslim, the victory of Allāh is near.”

then you are addressing a specific Muslim, who is perhaps in front of you.

If an unspecified person or persons are being called out, then the word used to call out is put into the a-state. Furthermore, the nūnation, if any, is preserved. So if you want to address any unspecified Muslim, you will say:

يَا مُسْلِمًا، نَصْرُ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ.  
*yā musliman, naṣru -llāhi qarībun.*  
 “O [any] Muslim, the victory of Allāh is near.”

If multiple words are used, whether or not the person called out to is specific or unspecified, then too the first noun is put in the a-state.

يَا لَاعِبِي لُعْبٍ، الْوَقْتُ ثَمِينٌ.  
*yā lāʿibi lueabini, -lwaqtu thamīnun.*  
 “O [any] players of games, time is precious.”

### 15.4. Omitting يَا yā

When calling out to someone, it is permissible to omit the يَا yā, especially when the person being called is very near. So, instead of saying,

يَا زَيْدُ، سُؤْالُكَ جَيِّدٌ.  
*yā zaydu, suʾāluka jayyidun.*  
 “O Zayd, your question is excellent.”

it is permissible to say:

زَيْدُ، سُؤْالُكَ جَيِّدٌ.  
*zaydu, suʾāluka jayyidun.*  
 “Zayd, your question is excellent.”

Note that even when يَا yā is omitted the name زَيْدٌ zaydu “Zayd” is in the u-state without any nūnation.

This usage is especially common when supplicating to Allāh with the word رَبِّ rabbun “lord”, to emphasize the closeness of Allāh to the supplicator. For example,

رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ.  
*rabbānā laka -lḥamdu.*  
 “Our Lord, for you is [all] praise.”



## 15.5. Shortening the attached pronoun يَ ī “my”

When calling someone with the pronoun “my”, for example “O my people”, it is common to shorten the attached pronoun يَ ī “my” to an *i*-mark ِ. So while the following is permissible,

يَا قَوْمِي  
yā qawmī  
“O my people”

it is more common to say:

يَا قَوْمِ  
yā qawmi  
“O my people”

This usage is especially common when supplicating to Allāh with the phrase رَبِّ rabbi “my Lord”.

## 15.6. Calling out to Allāh by name

When calling out to Allāh by name, it is permissible to prefix the name Allāh with يَا. So we can say:

يَا اللَّهُ  
yā ‘allāhu  
“O Allāh”

Note that the word اللَّهُ ‘allāhu now has a regular hamzah أ instead of a connecting hamzah ا.

However, instead of saying يَا اللَّهُ yā ‘allāhu for “O Allāh”, it is in fact more common to use a special word:

اللَّهُمَّ  
‘allāhumma  
“O Allāh”

Examples:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ.  
‘allāhumma ‘anta -ssalāmu waminka -ssalāmu.  
“O Allāh, You are Peace and from You is peace.”

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ.  
‘allāhumma ‘anta -ṣṣāhibu fi -ssafari.  
“O Allāh, You are the companion in the journey.”

Work in progress

Chapter 16.

Pointing nouns

16.1. Introduction

Consider the following expression:



The word “this” is what we will call a *pointing noun*. We call it this because we can imagine standing next to a book and pointing to it and saying “this book”.

The word “book” here is similarly called the *pointed-to* noun. It refers to the object being pointed to.

16.2. The pointing nouns in Arabic

There are two types of pointing nouns:

- i. Near pointing nouns: “this-one” (singular) and “these-ones” (dual and plural).
- ii. Far pointing nouns: “that-one” (singular) and “those-ones” (dual and plural).

The following are the pointing nouns in Arabic:

		Near point- ing noun	Far point- ing noun
Participant	State		
sing. masc.	all	هَذَا	this one <sub>m</sub> ذَٰلِكَ
sing. fem.	all	هَذِهِ	this one <sub>f</sub> تِلْكَ
dual masc.	u	هَٰذَانِ	these ones <sub>2,m</sub> ذَٰنِكَ
dual masc.	a,i	هَٰذَيْنِ	these ones <sub>2,m</sub> ذَٰئِنِكَ
			that one <sub>m</sub> that one <sub>f</sub> those ones <sub>2,m</sub> those ones <sub>2,m</sub>

Participant	State	Near point- ing noun	Far point- ing noun
dual fem.	u	هَاتَانِ these ones <sub>2,f</sub>	تَابِكَ those ones <sub>2,f</sub>
dual fem.	a,i	هَاتَيْنِ these ones <sub>2,f</sub>	تَبَيْكَ those ones <sub>2,f</sub>
plural	all	هَؤُلَاءِ these ones <sub>3</sub>	أُولَئِكَ those ones <sub>3</sub>

Note the following:

- Many of the pointing nouns contain small alif َ. For most of them, this is how they must be written. It would be incorrect to write هَذَا *hādḥā* as هَاذَا.
- All the near pointing nouns begin with a ه. And all the far pointing nouns end with ك.
- The و in أُولَئِكَ *ulā'ika* is silent and not pronounced. That is, the first syllable has a short vowel *u*, not the long vowel *ū*.
- Most of the pointing nouns are rigid nouns. That is: their endings are not modified for their state.

The dual pointing nouns, however, are flexible nouns, for example: هَذَانِ (u-state) / هَذَيْنِ *hādḥayni* (a- and i-states).

- The pointing nouns for the plural are the same for both masculine and feminine genders.

### 16.3. Definiteness of pointing nouns

The pointing nouns share some similarities with pronouns هُوَ, هِيَ, etc. Just like pronouns, pointing nouns, too, are definite nouns even though they don't have ال.

Remember, however, from section @ref(describers-with-annexations-to-pronouns), that pronouns may not be describees. Pointing nouns are different from pronouns in this regard. It is allowed to describe a pointing noun with a describer in a noun phrase.

Both these facts will prove useful in the next section.

16.4. Pointing noun for plurals of non-intelligent beings

Consistent with how we have been dealing with the so far, , we can choose between the following pointing nouns for the plurals of non-intelligent beings:

	Near point- ing noun	Far point- ing noun			
sing. fem.	all	هَذِهِ	this one <sub>f</sub>	تِلْكَ	that one <sub>f</sub>
plural	all	هَؤُلَاءِ	these ones <sub>3</sub>	أُولَئِكَ	those ones <sub>3</sub>

The singular feminine pointing noun is usually preferred, unless the plural plural pointing noun is needed to indicate that there is more than one. We will be giving examples throughout this chapter.

16.5. The pointing noun phrase

Remember from chapter @ref(adjectival-nouns-and-descriptive-noun-phrases) that a descriptive noun-phrase consists of a describer and a describee. The describer follows the describee and matches it in definiteness, state, gender, and number.

Here is an example of a descriptive noun-phrase in a sentence.

describer

describee

قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَيْنِ الصَّغِيرَيْنِ.

descriptive noun-phrase

“I read the small books.”)

We will now see how this same descriptive noun-phrase can be used with pointing nouns.

16.5.1. Pointing to a single noun

We will first deal with nouns that are single words, like الْكِتَابَيْنِ above. In section @ref(pointing-to-an-annexation) below, we will deal with nouns that are part of an annexation, like كِتَابِي الرَّجُلِ.

## 16.5.1.1. The pointed-to noun is definite with اَلْ

Just like an adjectival noun, a pointing noun can be a describer in a noun-phrase. But remember from section @ref(definiteness-of-pointing-nouns) above that pointing nouns are definite. So, if a pointing noun is a describer in a noun-phrase, the describee has to be definite too. Example:



“I read these books.”

(literally: “I read the these-ones books.”)

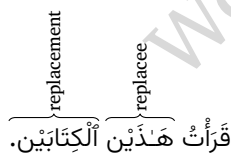
In the above example, the pointed-to noun الْكِتَابَيْنِ is the describee in a descriptive noun-phrase. It is definite, in the a-state, masculine, and dual.

The pointing noun هَذَيْنِ is its describer. It follows the describee and matches it being dual, in the a-state, masculine, and dual.

As a special case, when the pointed-to noun has اَلْ (as in this case: اَلْكِتَابَيْنِ), then the order of the pointing noun and the pointed to noun is permitted to be reversed.

The pointing noun is then a replacee (see section @ref(the-replacement)), and the pointed-to noun is its replacement.

Example:



“I read these books.”

(literally: “I read the books: these-ones.”)

In the above example, the pointing noun هَذَيْنِ is a replacee. It is definite, in the a-state, masculine, and dual.

The pointed-to noun اَلْكِتَابَيْنِ is its replacement. It follows the replacee and matches it being dual, in the a-state, masculine, and dual.

As a matter of fact, even though both orders are permitted, this reverse order of placing the pointing noun first and following it with the pointed-to noun is more common.

Here are some more examples of pointing noun phrases when the pointed-to noun is definite with **الْ**:

هَذَا الرَّجُلُ الْكَرِيمُ إِمَامٌ.  
الرَّجُلُ الْكَرِيمُ هَذَا إِمَامٌ.  
“This noble man is an imām.”

#### 16.5.1.2. The pointed-to noun is a proper noun

Remember that proper nouns are definite nouns, even though they usually don't begin with **الْ**. For example:

زَيْدٌ	Zayd	الْحَارِثُ	al-Ḥārith
زَيْنَبٌ <sup>2</sup>	Zaynab	قُرَيْشٌ	Quraysh

Such names may also be part of a pointing noun phrase. If they don't begin with **الْ** then only the [pointed-to noun first, then pointing noun] order is permitted. Example:

زَيْدٌ هَذَا أَخُو زَيْنَبَ تِلْكَ.  
“This Zayd is that Zaynab's brother.”

قُرَيْشٌ هَؤُلَاءِ سَكَنُوا بِمَكَّةَ.  
“These Quraysh dwelled in Makkah.”

If the name begins with **الْ** then both orders are permitted.

هَذَا الْحَارِثُ  
الْحَارِثُ هَذَا  
“this al-Ḥārith”

#### 16.5.2. Pointing to an annexation

Consider the following expression:

“the man's book”

We can apply the pointing noun “this” to either “the book” or to “the man” in a pointing noun phrase. So we have two options:

- i. “the book of this man”
- ii. “this book of the man”

Similarly, consider the following expression:

“Zayd's book”

We can, again, apply the pointing noun “this” to either “the book” or to “Zayd”:

- i. “the book of this Zayd”
- ii. “this book of Zayd”

In this section we will learn how to construct these pointing noun phrases in Arabic. Arabic uses annexations to express the above meanings. So we will discuss annexations like:

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ  
“the book of the man”

and

كِتَابُ زَيْدٍ  
“the book of Zayd”

Note that both the above annexations are definite because their base nouns are definite.

Indefinite annexations like كِتَابُ رَجُلٍ “a man’s book” cannot be used in pointing noun phrases.

#### 16.5.2.1. The definite base noun begins with اَلْ

We will first consider annexations where the definite base noun begins with اَلْ, like:

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ  
“the book of the man”

##### 16.5.2.1.1. Pointing to the base noun

We would like to express the phrase:

“the book of this man”

In order to point to the base noun اَلرَّجُلُ “the man” with the pointing noun هَذَا “this-one<sub>m</sub>”, we can put the pointing noun either before or after the base noun, thus:

كِتَابُ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ  
كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا  
“the book of this man”

Both these pointing noun phrases give the same meaning: “the book of this man”. However, the first phrase كِتَابُ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ is preferred, consistent with what we learned in section @ref(phrase-single-pointed-to-noun-with-al), above.

The second phrase كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا, although correct, would only rarely be used with this meaning. (In fact, it has another meaning: “this book of the man” which we will learn in section @ref(pointing-to-the-annexe-noun), below.)

Here is how these phrases could be used in complete sentences:



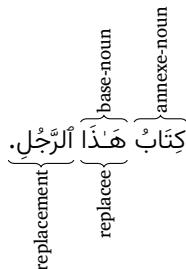
كِتَابُ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ جَدِيدٌ.

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا جَدِيدٌ.

“The book of this man is new.”

Before we give more examples, let’s analyze these phrases in detail.

Consider the first pointing noun phrase:



“the book of this man”

(literally: “the book of this-one: the man”)

As you can see the pointing noun هَذَا has taken the place of الرَّجُلِ as the base noun in the annexation. In addition to being the base noun, هَذَا is also a replacee, whose replacement is الرَّجُلِ. The literal, word-for-word, translation of this phrase is:

“the book of this-one: the man”

The more natural translation is:

“the book of this man”

Consider, now, the second pointing noun phrase:



“the book of this man”

(literally: “the book of the this-one man”)

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ, here, keeps its place as the base noun in the annexation. In addition to being the base noun, الرَّجُلِ is also a describer, whose describer is the pointing noun هَذَا. The literal, word-for-word, translation of this phrase is:

“the book of the this-one man”

The more natural translation is:

“the book of this man”

#### 16.5.2.1.2. Pointing to the annexe noun

Consider, again, the annexation:

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ

“the book of the man”

We have already discussed how to point to the base noun الرَّجُلِ in a pointing noun phrase. Now, we would like to point to the annexe noun كِتَابُ in a pointing noun phrase.

In other words, we would like to express the meaning:

“this book of the man”

The way to express this in Arabic is

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا

“this book of the man”

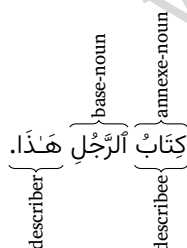
But wait! Didn't we see in section @ref(pointing-to-the-base-noun) above that this expression has the meaning “the book of this man”?

It turns out that this expression supports both meanings.

But it will generally only be used for the meaning: “this book of the man”

In order to express “the book of this man” we will typically use the expression كِتَابُ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ.

Let's analyze the expression كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا “this book of the man” in detail:



“this book of the man”

(literally: “the this-one book of the man”)

كِتَابُ, here, is both an annexe noun and a describee. Its describer is the pointing noun هَذَا. The literal, word-for-word, translation of this phrase is:

“the this-one book of the man”

The more natural translation is:

“this book of the man”

Here is this pointing noun phrase in a complete sentence:

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا أَخْضَرُ.

“This book of the man is green.”

Ambiguity of this phrase

A quick note about the ambiguity of this expression:

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا

“this book of the man” (usual)

“the book of this man” (rare)

The ambiguity of whether the pointing noun هَذَا points to the annexe noun كِتَابُ or the base noun الرَّجُلِ only exists because the annexe noun and the base noun match each other in gender and number: singular masculine. If the annexe noun and the base noun were different in gender and number, then there would be no ambiguity. Examples:

كِتَابَا الرَّجُلِ هَذَانِ

“these books<sub>2</sub> of the man”

كِتَابُ الرَّجُلَيْنِ هَذَا

“this book of the men<sub>2</sub>”

كِتَابُ الْمَرْأَةِ هَذَا

“this book of the woman”

كِتَابُ الْمَرْأَةِ هَذِهِ

“the book of this woman”

Here are some more examples of pointing to annexe nouns:

#### 16.5.2.1.3. The base noun is a proper noun beginning with ألْ

Consider the annexation:

كِتَابُ الزُّبَيْرِ

“the book of al-Zubayr”

We can apply the preceding discussion of pointing to the annexe noun and base noun to this annexation as well. So we get:

كِتَابُ هَذَا الزُّبَيْرِ

“the book of this al-Zubayr”

كِتَابُ الزُّبَيْرِ هَذَا

“this book of al-Zubayr” (usual)

“the book of this al-Zubayr” (rare)

### 16.5.2.2. The definite base noun does not begin with أَ

Consider, now, that the base noun is definite but does not begin with أَ. There are two such types of nouns that we will discuss:

- i. Proper nouns not beginning with أَ
- ii. Pronouns

#### 16.5.2.2.1. The base noun is a proper noun not beginning with أَ

We will first deal with proper nouns that don't begin with أَ. Consider the annexation:

كِتَابُ زَيْدٍ  
“the book of Zayd”

Because the base noun زَيْدٍ does not begin with أَ, any pointing nouns can come only after the entire annexation, thus:

كِتَابُ زَيْدٍ هَذَا

In theory, this supports two meanings:

- i. “this book of Zayd”
- ii. “the book of this Zayd”

In practice, however, the first meaning (“this book of Zayd”) is much more likely. Pointing to a proper noun in a pointing noun phrase (“the book of this Zayd”) is uncommon, generally.

#### 16.5.2.2.2. The base noun is a pronoun

We have learned, in section @ref(definiteness-of-pronouns), that pronouns are always definite, despite not beginning with أَ.

We have also learned, in section @ref(pronouns-as-base-nouns), that a pronoun may be a base noun in an annexation. Example:

كِتَابُهُ  
“his book”

Neither the annexe noun كِتَابُ, nor the attached pronoun هُ begin with أَ. So if we want to add the pointing noun هَذَا to this annexation to form a pointing noun phrase, then we have to place it at the end, after the annexation, thus:

كِتَابُهُ هَذَا

The pointing noun هَذَا, here, is a describee. But what is its describer?

We have also learned, in section @ref(describers-with-annexations-to-pronouns) that pronouns may not be describees in a descriptive noun phrase.

So, we are left with only one option: the annexe noun كِتَابُ is the describee. And the meaning of the phrase is:

كِتَابُهُ هَذَا

“this book of his”

{ describer }      { base-noun }  
 هَذَا      هُ  
 { describee }      { annexe-noun }  
 كِتَابُ

“this book of his”

Here are some more examples:

## 16.6. Pointing nouns as subjects

Besides their use in pointing noun phrases, pointing nouns are very often used as the subject of a sentence. For example:

{ information }      { subject }  
 هَذَا      رَجُلٌ.  
 { information }      { subject }

“This is a man.”

(literally: “This-one is a man.”)

The pointing noun is (usually) made to match the information in number and gender. Examples:

هَئَانِ جَارِيَّاتٍ.

“These are girls<sub>2</sub>.”

أُولَئِكَ مُعَلِّمُونَ.

“Those are teachers.”

هَؤُلَاءِ أَقْلَامٌ.

“These are pens.”

تِلْكَ بُيُوتٌ.

“Those are houses.”

هَؤُلَاءِ صَغِيرَانِ.

“These are small ones<sub>2</sub>.”

The information may be a single word (as above) or more complex (as below):

ذَلِكَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

“That is the commander of the believers.”

أُولَئِكَ أَكَلُوا الطَّعَامَ..

“Those-ones ate<sub>3,f</sub> the food.”

هَذَا ثَوْبُ رَجُلٍ.

“This is a man’s garment.”

هَذِهِ كُتُبُهُ.

“These are his books.”

هَذَانِ بَيْتَانِ كَبِيرَانِ..

“These are big houses<sub>2</sub>.”

If the information is a noun that begins with *أل* then it may be placed after the pointing noun subject in the same manner:

هَذَا الرَّجُلُ.

information  
subject

“This is the man.”

(literally: “This-one is the man.”)

While the this is permitted and correct, it may be sometimes confused with for the pointing noun phrase “this man”. So, in the same way that we learned in section @ref(chap-smp-sent-sec-def-info), we insert a detached pronoun between the subject and the information, thus:

هَذَا هُوَ الرَّجُلُ.

“This is the man.”

Here are some more examples:

هَاتَانِ هُمَا الْجَارِيَتَانِ.

“These are the girls<sub>2</sub>.”

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ.

“Those are the teachers.”

هَؤُلَاءِ هُنَّ الْأَقْلَامُ.

“These are the pens.”

تِلْكَ هِيَ الْبُيُوتُ.

“Those are the houses.”

هَذَانِ هُمُ الصَّغِيرَانِ.

“These are the small ones<sub>2</sub>.”

## 16.6.1. Mismatched pointing noun subject

When the pointing noun is a subject we usually match its number and gender with the number and gender of the information, as we have been doing so far. However, when the pointing noun subject refers to a noun in a previous sentence, then we may prefer to match to the previous noun than to the the following information. Example:

بَلَّغْنَا خَبَرَ الْمَطَرِ عَلَى الْجِبَالِ. ذَلِكَ بُشْرَى لِلزَّرَّاعِ.

“The news of the rain on the mountains has reached us. That is a good tiding for the sowers.”

Note that the second sentence’s subject and information mismatch:

ذَلِكَ بُشْرَى

“That is a good tiding.”

The information بُشْرَى “a good tiding” is a feminine noun but the subject ذَلِكَ is masculine. This is because ذَلِكَ is actually referring to خَبَر in the previous sentence which is a masculine noun.

## 16.7. Pointing nouns as other parts of speech

Besides their use in pointing noun phrases and as subjects, pointing nouns may be used as other parts of speech as well, typically where one would expect pronouns. Here are some examples:

أَخَذْتُ الْكِتَابَيْنِ مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ. قَرَأْتُ هَذَا وَمَا قَرَأْتُ ذَلِكَ.

“I took the books<sub>2</sub> from the library. I read this one and I didn’t read that one.”

شَغَلَنِي الْعَمَلُ الصَّعْبُ وَمَا فَرَغْتُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.

“The difficult work occupied me and I did not get done with that.”

Work in progress



## Chapter 17.

### u-state incomplete-action verbs

#### 17.1. Introduction

We had mentioned that there are approximately 10 commonly used verb forms. And we have already studied the completed-action verb for form 1. In this chapter we will study incomplete-action form 1 verbs. Incomplete-action verbs are used when the action of a verb is on-going at present or will occur in the future.

#### 17.2. Pattern for form 1

Using the root paradigm فَعَلَ, we have already seen that completed-action verbs for form 1 occur in the patterns فَعَلَ *faʿala*, فَعِلَ *faʿila*, and فَعُلَ *faʿula*. The patterns for form 1 incomplete-action verbs are يَفْعَلُ *yafʿalu*, يَفْعِلُ *yafʿilu*, and يَفْعُلُ *yafʿulu*.

Note that the incomplete-action verb forms add an extraneous يَ *ya-* to the beginning of the verb. This extra letter can change, as we will see soon, to the letters تَ *ta-*, نَ *na*, or أَ *a-* depending on the doer.

#### 17.3. Vowel-mark on the middle root letter

We have seen that vowel on the middle root letter in a completed-action verb can vary depending on the verb. So we can have,

- كَتَبَ *kataba* “he wrote”
- عَمَلَ *ʿamila* “he worked”
- كَبُرَ *kabura* “he became big”

Similarly, the vowel on the middle letter in an incomplete-action verb can also vary depending on the verb. Generally, this will need to be looked up in a dictionary and memorized. But there are the following rules which limit the variation:

1. If the completed-action verb has an *a*-mark on the middle letter, the incomplete-action verb's middle letter can have either an *a*-mark, *i*-mark, or an *u*-mark, depending on the verb. For example,
  - كَتَبَ يَكْتُبُ *kataba yaktubu* "he wrote, he writes"
  - ذَهَبَ يَذْهَبُ *dhahaba yadh-habu* "he went, he goes"
  - كَشَفَ يَكْشِفُ *kashafa yakshifu* "he uncovered, he uncovers"
2. If the completed-action verb has an *i*-mark on the middle letter, the incomplete-action verb's middle letter will usually have an *a*-mark. Rarely, for a few verbs, it may be an *i*-mark instead. For example,
  - عَمِلَ يَعْمَلُ *emila yaemalu* "he worked, he works"
  - حَسِبَ يَحْسِبُ *hasiba yahsibu* "he deemed, he deems"
3. If the completed-action verb has an *u*-mark on the middle letter, the incomplete-action verb's middle letter shall have a *u*-mark. For example,
  - كَبُرَ يَكْبُرُ *kabura yakburu* "he grew big, he grows big"

It is possible for some incomplete-action verbs to have more than option for the vowel mark on the middle letter. Both variants give the same meaning for the verb. For example, the completed-action verb حَسِبَ *hasiba* "he deemed" has as its incomplete-verb both يَحْسِبُ *yahsibu* and يَحْسَبُ *yahsabu*.

#### 17.4. Verb state

As you know, nouns in Arabic have a state that is determined by the function of the noun in the sentence. For example, consider the following sentence:

سَأَلَ الْغُلَامُ الرَّجُلَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ.  
*sa'ala -lghulāmu -rrajula 'an shay'in.*  
 "The boy asked the man about something."

In the above sentence, الْغُلَامُ *alghulāmu* is the doer of the verb so it is in the *u*-state and this is indicated by the *u*-mark on its final letter. الرَّجُلُ *arrajula* is the direct doee of the verb so it is in the *a*-state and this is indicated by the *a*-mark on its final letter. شَيْءٍ *shay'in* is directly preceded by a preposition so it is in the *i*-state and this is indicated by the nūnated *i*-mark ِ on its final letter. The ending of the completed-action verb سَأَلَ is not determined based on the function of the verb in the sentence, and therefore, it does not have any state. (Its ending can change depending on whether a pronoun is attached to it but this is not related to the function of the verb in the sentence and does not represent any state.)

As opposed to completed-action verbs, which don't have any state, incomplete-action verbs do have a state which is determined by the function of the verb in a sentence. Similar to nouns, the state of an incomplete-action verb is indicated by the vowel mark or suffix at the end of the verb.

Incomplete action verbs have three states, just like nouns. These states are called:

- i. The u-state
- ii. The a-state
- iii. The o-state

Two of the states have their names in common with nouns: the u-state and the a-state. The the o-state (null-state) is named differently.

The *u*-mark on the final letter of *يَفْعَلُ* *yafʿalu* indicates that it is in the u-state. We will study only the u-state of incomplete-action verbs in this chapter. And we will study the a-state and o-state in later chapters if Allāh wills.

### 17.5. With doer nouns

As with completed-action verbs, doer nouns are placed after the verb in sentence word order. However, the gender of the doer noun affects the beginning of the incomplete-action verb. If the doer noun is masculine, then the incomplete-action verb shall begin with *ya-*. And if the doer noun is feminine, then the incomplete-action verb shall begin with *ta-*. Examples:

يَكْتُبُ الْعُلَامُ فِي كِتَابِهِ.  
*yaktubu -lghulāmu fi kitābihi*  
 “The boy writes in his book.”

يَعْمَلُ الرِّجُلَانِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ.  
*yaemalu -rrajulāni fi -lmadinati.*  
 “The men<sub>dual</sub> work in the city.”

تَكْتُبُ الْجَارِيَةُ فِي كِتَابِهَا.  
*taktubu -ljāriyatu fi kitābihā.*  
 “The girl writes in her book.”

تَعْمَلُ النِّسَاءُ فِي بُيُوتِهِنَّ.  
*taemalu -nnisāʿu fi buyūtihinna.*  
 “The women work in their houses.”

### 17.6. With doee nouns and pronouns

Doee nouns and pronouns with incomplete-action verbs work exactly as with completed-action verbs.

يَسْأَلُ الْعُلَامُ الرِّجُلَ سُؤْلاً.  
*yasʿalu -lghulāmu -rrajula suʿālan.*  
 “The boy asks the man a question.”

يَسْأَلُهَا الْغُلَامُ سُؤْالًا.

yas'aluha -lghulāmu su'ālan.

“The boy asks her a question.”

## 17.7. With doer pronouns

When we studied completed-action verbs, we saw that doer pronouns are either visible or invisible. Visible doer pronouns are added to the end of the verb, modifying the end of the verb in the process.

The doer pronouns for incomplete-action verbs are different from the doer pronouns for completed-action verbs. Incomplete-action verbs' doer pronouns are also added to the end of the verb, but in addition to modifying the end of the verb, they modify the beginning of the verb as well. Furthermore, additional letters may be added after the doer pronoun to indicate the state of the verb.

We'll show what all this means in the table below of verbs with doer pronouns. Completed-action verbs are included as well so that you can contrast them with their incomplete-action counterparts.

Person	Completed-action doer pronoun	Completed-action verb with doer pronoun	Incomplete-action verb doer pronoun	Incomplete-action verb with doer pronoun in the u-state
he	<i>invisible</i>	فَعَلَ faʿala	<i>invisible</i>	يَفْعَلُ yafʿalu
she	<i>invisible</i>	فَعَلَتْ faʿalat	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ tafʿalu
you <sub>1,m</sub>	تَ -ta	فَعَلْتَ faʿalta	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ tafʿalu
you <sub>1,f</sub>	تِ -ti	فَعَلْتِ faʿalti	يَ -i	تَفْعَلِينَ tafʿalīna
I	أَ tu	فَعَلْتُ faʿaltu	<i>invisible</i>	أَفْعَلُ ʾafʿalu
they <sub>2,m</sub>	أَ -ā	فَعَلُوا faʿalā	أَ -ā	يَفْعَلَانِ yafʿalāni
they <sub>2,f</sub>	أَ -ā	فَعَلْنَ faʿalatā	أَ -ā	تَفْعَلَانِ tafʿalāni
you <sub>2</sub>	أَنْتُمْ -tumā	فَعَلْتُمْ faʿaltumā	أَ -ā	تَفْعَلَانِ tafʿalāni
they <sub>3+,m</sub>	وَ -ū	فَعَلُوا faʿalū	وَ -ū	يَفْعَلُونَ yafʿalūna
they <sub>3+,f</sub>	نَ -na	فَعَلْنَ faʿalna	نَ -na	يَفْعَلْنَ yafʿalna
you <sub>3+,m</sub>	أَنْتُمْ -tumā	فَعَلْتُمْ faʿaltum	وَ -ū	تَفْعَلُونَ tafʿalūna
you <sub>3+,f</sub>	أَنْتُنَّ -tunna	فَعَلْتُنَّ faʿaltunna	نَ na	تَفْعَلْنَ tafʿalna
we	نَا nā	فَعَلْنَا faʿalnā	<i>invisible</i>	نَفْعَلُ nafʿalu

Note the following:

- The verb تَفْعَلُ is used both for “she” and “you<sub>2m</sub>” doers. Only context will be able to help us differentiate between the two.
- In incomplete action verbs which have invisible doer pronouns, the u-state of the verb is indicated by the u-mark ُ on the final letter of the verb.

- For incomplete-action verbs that have ا, و, or ي as the doer pronoun, the u-state is indicated by an extraneous ن added to the end of the verb.
- And for the remaining incomplete action verbs whose doer pronoun is ن, there is no indication of the state of the verb.

Here are some examples of the usage of the doer pronouns:

Remember that in Arabic, each verb must have its own doer, so when there are multiple verbs associated with the same doer, the first verb can be used with the doer noun and the rest with doer pronouns. This is the same behavior as with completed-action verbs. For example:

يَجْلِسُ الرَّجَالُ وَيَأْكُلُونَ وَيَشْرَبُونَ.  
*yajlisu -rrijālu wa ya'kulūna wa yashrabūna.*  
 "The men sit and (they) eat and (they) drink."

## 17.8. Future

The incomplete-action verb is used to express both the present (habitual and progressive) and future tenses. Sometimes all meanings are meant in the same expression. And if only one of the meanings is intended, context can be sufficient to determine which is intended. So, for example,

يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ  
*yadh-habu -rrajulu.*

can mean, either one, or even all, of:

"The man goes." or  
 "The man is going." or  
 "The man will go."

Arabic does provide a mechanism for specifying that the use of an incomplete-action verb is solely to intend a future action. This is by means of the particles سَـ *sa-* and سَوْفَ *sawfa* that can be placed before the verb. They provide a meaning of "will" or "will soon". سَـ *sa-*, being a single letter particle, is attached to the verb.

For example,

سَيَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ  
*sayadh-habu -rrajulu.*  
 and  
 سَوْفَ يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ  
*sawfa yadh-habu -rrajulu.*  
 "The man will go." or  
 "Soon the man will go."

The difference in usage of سَـ *sa-* and سَوْفَ *sawfa* can be thought of as one of emphasis. سَوْفَ *sawfa* is more emphatic than سَـ *sa-*. This emphasis can translate to more definiteness in the action or even that the action is farther in the future.

## 17.9. Negation

### 17.9.1. Negation using مَا *mā*

As with completed-action verbs, incomplete-action verbs too can be negated by placing the particle مَا before them. This negates the meaning of the verb usually for the present tense. For example,

مَا يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ

*mā yadh-habu -rrajulu.*

“The man does not go.” or,

“The man is not going.”

### 17.9.2. Negation using لَا *lā*

In addition to مَا *mā*, incomplete-action verbs can be negated using لَا *lā* in the same manner. In addition to negating the meaning of the verb for the present tense, it can also negate the meaning for the future tense.

لَا يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ

*lā yadh-habu -rrajulu.*

“The man does not go.” or,

“The man is not going.” or,

“The man will not go.”

The particles سَ *sa-* and سَوْفَ *sawfa* may not be combined with مَا *mā* and لَا *lā* when negating verbs.

## 17.10. With قَدْ *qad*

### TODO

When negating a resembling verb preceded by قَدْ there is some question about whether قَدْ is retained or dropped, but the stronger opinion seems to be that it may be kept, as proven by the following verse of poetry:

وَقَدْ لَا تَعْدَمُ الْحَسَنَاءُ دَآمًا

“And [it] may be [that] the beautiful female does not lack a defect.”

(دَآمَ means “defect”).

## Chapter 18.

### The verbal-noun of doing

#### 18.1. Introduction

Every verb has a set of *verbal-nouns* derived from it that, despite being nouns, have a verbal meaning to them. One of these verbal-nouns is the “doing” verbal-noun, that we shall study in this chapter.

Consider the following form 1 verb:

Root	Completed-action verb	Incomplete-action verb (u-state)	Doing verbal-noun
ذهب	ذَهَبَ “he went”	يَذْهَبُ “he goes”	ذَهَابٌ “going”

The doing verbal-noun associated with this verb is ذَهَابٌ *d̥hahāb*. It denotes “the action of going”, or simply “going”. In this section we shall learn how this and other verbal-nouns are used.

Before we proceed, we present a new method to present a verb and its meaning in this book. We will often give a new verb in the format:

ذَهَبَ يَذْهَبُ ذَهَابًا “to go”

The completed-action verb for the singular masculine absentee participant “he”, the corresponding incomplete-action verb, and their doing verbal-noun are given together, in sequence. The doing verbal-noun is given in the a-state, because of a usage that we shall learn in a later chapter, if Allāh wills. This is how verb definitions are traditionally found in Arabic dictionaries. And the English meaning is given using the dictionary definition, in this case, the phrase: “to go”.

#### 18.2. Patterns of the doing verbal-noun for form 1 verbs

The patterns of the doing verbal-noun for form 1 verbs are very variable. It is best to learn the doing verbal-noun when you learn a new verb. Having said that, there are some general trends which may be useful to keep in mind:

1. If the verb takes a direct doer, then the completed-action verb must necessarily be of the pattern *فَعَلَ faʿala* or *فَعِلَ faʿila* (because completed-action verbs of the pattern *فَعُلَ faʿula* never take a direct doer). In this case:
  - a. The doing verbal-noun for many verbs, in general, tends to be *فَعْل faʿl*. Examples:
    - فَتَحَ يَفْتَحُ فَتْحًا “to open (هـ s.th.)”
    - أَخَذَ يَأْخُذُ أَخْذًا “to take (هـ s.th.)”
    - حَمِدَ يَحْمَدُ حَمْدًا “to praise (هـ s.o.)”
2. If the verb does not take a direct doer, then:
  - a. If the completed-action verb is of the pattern *فَعِلَ faʿila*, then:
    - i. If the meaning of the verb does not fall under the cases ii., iii., and iv. (below), then the doing verbal-noun tends to be, in general, of the pattern *فَعْل faʿal*. Examples:
      - نَعِبَ يَنْعَبُ نَعَبًا “to become tired”
      - جَزَعَ يَجْزَعُ جَزَعًا “to be impatient”
      - أَسِفَ يَأْسِفُ أَسْفًا “to be sorrowful”
    - ii. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes being a color, then the doing verbal-noun is usually of the pattern *فُعِلَ fuʿilah*. Examples:
      - خَضِرَ يَخْضَرُ خَضَرَةً “to be green”
      - سَمِرَ يَسْمَرُ سَمَرَةً “to be brown”
    - iii. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes some work or effort, then the doing verbal-noun tends to be of the pattern *فُعُول fuʿūl*. Example:
      - قَدِمَ يَقْدُمُ قُدُومًا “to arrive”
    - iv. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes some static quality, then the doing verbal-noun tends to be of the pattern *فُعُولَة fuʿūlah*. Example:
      - يَبِسَ يَبْيَسُ يَبُوسَةً “to be dry”
  - b. If the completed-action verb is of the pattern *فَعَلَ faʿala*, then:
    - i. If the meaning of the verb does not fall under the cases ii., iii., and iv. (below), then the doing verbal-noun tends to be, in general, of the pattern *فُعُول fuʿūl*. Examples:
      - قَعَدَ يَقْعُدُ قُعُودًا “to sit, stay back”
      - سَجَدَ يَسْجُدُ سُجُودًا “to prostrate down”
      - خَضَعَ يَخْضَعُ خُضُوعًا “to be humble”
    - ii. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes an ailment, then the doing verbal-noun is usually of the pattern *فُعَال fuʿāl*. Examples:
      - سَعَلَ يَسْعَلُ سَعَالًا “to cough”
    - iii. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes travelling, then the doing verbal-noun is usually of the pattern *فَعِيل faʿīl*. Examples:



- رَحَلَ يَرْحُلُ رَحِيلًا “to depart”

iv. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes a sound, then the doing verbal-noun is usually of the pattern فَعِيل *faeīl* or فُعَال *fueāl*, or both. Examples:

- صَرَخَ يَصْرُخُ صَرِيحًا وَصَرَاحًا “to scream”

3. If the verb denotes a craft or a profession or a rank, then the doing verbal-noun is often of the pattern فِعَالَة *fiēālah*. Examples:

- تَجَرَ يَتَجَرُّ تِجَارَةً “to trade”
- أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ إِمَارَةً “to be a commander”

4. If the completed-action verb is of the pattern فَعَّلَ *faēlā*, then the doing verbal noun tends to be of the pattern فُعُولَة *fueūlah* or فَعَالَة *faēālah*. Examples:

- صَعَّبَ يَصْعَبُ صُعُوبَةً “to be difficult”
- شَجَّعَ يَشْجَعُ شَجَاعَةً “to be brave”

As mentioned earlier, these are only general trends and there are many verbs that have doing verbal-nouns which don't fall under the above rules.

## 18.3. Usage of the doing verbal-noun

### 18.3.1. State and definiteness

The doing verbal noun has properties of a noun, like state and definiteness. But it gives the meaning of a verb. For example, consider the verb أَكَلَ يَأْكُلُ أَكْلًا “to eat”. We can use its doing verbal noun in a sentence like this:

فَرَعَ زَيْدٌ مِنَ الْأَكْلِ.

*faragha zaydun mina -l'akli.*

“Zayd got done with eating.”

Note how the doing verbal noun الْأَكْلُ *al'akli* gives the meaning of the action of the verb “eating”. But since it is a noun, it obeys the rules for nouns, like being in the i-state when preceded by the preposition مِنْ *min*.

Another point worth noting is that we have made it definite by saying الْأَكْلُ *al'akli* instead of saying أَكْلٌ *aklin* for the meaning of “eating”. This is because, as we explained in section @ref(usage-of-definite-and-indefinite-nouns), the definite noun is usually used in Arabic to give a general meaning, where in English we would not use “the”. This may be a good time to re-read that section.

Having said that, the indefinite doing verbal-noun may be used too, and this will give the meaning of “a certain”, or “a specific”. For example, with the verb عَمَلَ يَعْمَلُ عَمَلًا “to work”, we can say:

فَرَعَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ صَعْبٍ.

*faragha min amalin şæbin.*

“He got done with a [certain] difficult work.”

### 18.3.2. With a doer

A doer may be used with the doing verbal-noun to show who is doing the action. In this case, the doing verbal-noun and the doer are usually placed in an annexation. The doing verbal-noun shall be the annexe noun and the doer shall be in the i-state as the base noun in the annexation. For example, consider the verb قَرَأَ يَقْرَأُ قِرَاءَةً “to read”. We can say:

سَمِعْتُ قِرَاءَةَ زَيْدٍ.

*samiṭu qirāʾata zaydin.*

“I heard Zayd’s reading.”

The doer may similarly be a pronoun, in which case, as usual, attached pronouns are used. So we can say:

سَمِعْتُ قِرَاءَتَهُ.

*samiṭu qirāʾatahu.*

“I heard his reading.”

### 18.3.3. With an indirect doer

If a verb uses a particular preposition with indirect does, and the doing verbal-noun of that verb is to be used with an indirect doer, then that same preposition is used with the doing verbal-noun.

For example the verb ذَهَبَ يَذْهَبُ ذَهَابًا “to go” is used with the preposition إِلَى *ʾilā* “to” with an indirect doer to give the place to which the doer is going. This same preposition is then used with the doing verbal noun, thus:

تَعَبْتُ مِنَ الذَّهَابِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ الْبَعِيدَةِ.

*taʿibtu mina -dhāḥābi ʾilā -lmaḍinati -lbaʿīdati.*

“I became tired from going to the far city.”

If a doer is used along with the indirect doer, then the doer shall be placed in a noun chain with the doer verbal-noun, as explained in the previous section. For example,

حَزَنْتُ مِنْ ذَهَابِ زَيْدٍ إِلَى مَدِينَةٍ بَعِيدَةٍ.

*ḥazintu min dhāḥābi zaydin ʾilā madīnatin baʿīdati.*

“I became sad from Zayd’s going to a far city.”

## 18.3.4. With a direct doee

If a verb takes a direct doee, and we wish to use the direct doee with the verb's doing verbal noun, then we may deal with it in one of three ways:

## 18.3.4.1. The direct doee in the i-state in an annexation with the doing verbal noun

In the first method, the direct doee is in the i-state as the base noun in an annexation with the doing verbal-noun. This method is used when the doer of the verbal noun is not mentioned with the doing verbal-noun, or when there is no other phrase between the doing verbal-noun and the direct doee. For example,

فَرَعَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْكِتَابِ.

*faragħa zaydun min qirā'ati -lkitābi.*

"Zayd got done with reading the book."

In this sentence, الْكِتَابُ 'alkitābi "the book" is the direct doee of the doing verbal-noun قِرَاءَةُ qirā'ati "reading". The doer زَيْدٌ zayd "Zayd" is only mentioned in the beginning of the sentence but not again with the doing verbal-noun. Therefore, the direct doee الْكِتَابُ 'alkitābi "the book" is allowed to be put in an annexation with the doing verbal noun thus: قِرَاءَةُ qirā'ati -lkitābi "reading the book".

Instead of a noun, the direct doee may be a pronoun instead. For example,

قَرَأَ زَيْدٌ الْكِتَابَ فَفَرَعَ مِنْ قِرَاءَتِهِ.

*qara'a zayduni -lkitāba fafaragħa min qirā'atihi*

"Zayd read the book, and then he got done with reading it."

Remember from the previous section, that a doer is handled in the same way with a doing verbal-noun by placing it in an annexation with the doing verbal-noun. So how do we know whether the base noun in an annexation with a doing verbal-noun is a doer or a doee? Well, for many verbs the meaning of the verbal-noun and the noun is sufficient. For example, in the phrase قِرَاءَةُ الْكِتَابِ qirā'ati -lkitābi "reading the book", the meaning of "reading" makes it clear that الْكِتَابُ 'alkitābi can only be a doee, because a book can't be the one doing the reading.

But there are some verbs, however, where the meaning of the verbal-noun itself is not sufficient to tell us whether the noun following it in an annexation is a doer or a doee. Consider the verb ضَرَبَ يَضْرِبُ ضَرْبًا "to beat (o s.o.)". If we form an annexation using its doing verbal-noun, thus: ضَرْبٌ زَيْدٍ ḍarbu zaydin, we cannot know whether Zayd is the doer (the one doing the beating), or the doee (the one getting beaten). In this case, we will need more context to help us determine whether Zayd is the doer or the doee. Here are a few sentences that may help illustrate this point:

صَرَبَ زَيْدٌ عَمْرًا. سَمِعَ الْأَبُ صَرَبَ زَيْدٍ فَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ. فَتَدِمَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ صَرَبِ عَمْرٍو.

*ḍaraba zaydun ʿamran. samīʿa -lʾabu ḍarba zaydin faḡhaḍiba ʿalayhi. fa nadima zaydun min ḍarbi ʿamrin.*

“Zayd beat ʿAmr. The father heard Zayd’s beating so he became angry with him. So, Zayd became remorseful of beating ʿAmr.”

We can see that the meaning of the sentences help us determine that in the phrase صَرَبَ زَيْدٌ *ḍarba zaydin*, Zayd is the doer, and in صَرَبِ عَمْرٍو *ḍarbi ʿamrin*, ʿAmr is the doee.

#### 18.3.4.2. The direct doee in a-state following the doing verbal-noun

The second way to deal with a direct doee and a doing-verbal noun is to put it in the a-state after the doing verbal-noun. This is usually done when the doer is mentioned with the doing verbal-noun in an annexation with it. The direct doee is then placed after the doer in the a-state. For example, we can re-word the previous example:

صَرَبَ زَيْدٌ عَمْرًا. سَمِعَ الْأَبُ صَرَبَ زَيْدٍ عَمْرًا فَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ. فَتَدِمَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ صَرَبِهِ عَمْرًا.

*ḍaraba zaydun ʿamran. samīʿa -lʾabu ḍarba zaydin ʿamran faḡhaḍiba ʿalayhi. fa nadima zaydun min ḍarbihi ʿamran.*

“Zayd beat ʿAmr. The father heard Zayd’s beating ʿAmr so he became angry with him. So, Zayd became remorseful of his beating ʿAmr.”

Notice that in صَرَبِهِ عَمْرًا *ḍarbihi ʿamran* “his beating ʿAmr”, the doer is a pronoun instead of a noun. This is permissible, and is in line with other usages we have learned so far.

The doee noun in the a-state, too, may be replaced with a pronoun, but just like when the attached doee pronoun is separated from its verb it has to instead be attached to the prefix *يَا* *ʾiyyā*, here too this prefix is used. For example,

أَلِمَ عَمْرٌو مِنْ صَرَبِ زَيْدٍ إِيَّاهُ.

*ʾalima ʿamrun min ḍarbi zaydin ʾiyyāhu.*

“ʿAmr was in pain from Zayd’s beating him.”

This usage of putting the direct doee in the a-state after the doing verbal noun is not only done when the doer is mentioned with the doing verbal-noun. But it is also done when the direct doee is separated from the doing verbal-noun by some other words, like a prepositional phrase. For example,

فَرَعْتُ مِنَ الْقِرَاءَةِ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ كِتَابًا.

*faraghtu mina -lqirʾati fi -lmaktabati kitāban.*

“I got done with reading, in the library, a book.”

The prepositional phrase *فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ* *fi -lmaktabati* in the above example is placed between the doing verbal-noun and the doee for effect. It could, of course, also have been placed after the doee, in a more normal fashion. In this case, it would be preferred for the doing verbal-noun and the doee to be placed in an annexation, in the manner we have already learned.

فَرَعْتُ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ كِتَابٍ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ .

*faraghtu min qirā'ati kitābin fi -lmaktabati.*

"I got done with reading a book in the library."

#### 18.3.4.3. The direct doer in i-state preceded by the preposition لـ *li*

The third way to deal with a direct doer and a doing-verbal noun is to put it in the i-state preceded by the preposition لـ *li*. This is usually done in one of the following scenarios:

1. When the doing verbal-noun is indefinite and immediately precedes the direct doer. Example:

فَرَعْتُ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ لِكُتُبٍ .

*faraghtu min qirā'atin lilkutubi.*

"I got done with a reading of the books."

This sentence can be used to indicate one particular instance of reading the books. As opposed to saying قِرَاءَةِ الْكُتُبِ *qirā'ati -lkutubi* which would indicate that the reading was general or complete.

2. When the doer comes between the doing verbal-noun and the doer. Example,

أَلِمَ عَمْرُو مِنْ صَرْبِ زَيْدٍ لَهُ .

*'alima 'amrun min ḍarbi zaydin lahu.*

"'Amr was in pain from Zayd's beating him."

This is as an optional alternative to putting the doer in the a-state, in the manner we have already learned in the previous section:

أَلِمَ عَمْرُو مِنْ صَرْبِ زَيْدٍ إِيَّاهُ .

*'alima 'amrun min ḍarbi zaydin 'iyyāhu.*

"'Amr was in pain from Zayd's beating him."

#### 18.4. Multiple doing verbal-nouns for the same verb

It is possible, and fairly common, for verbs to have more than one doing verbal-noun. Usually, each of the doing verbal-nouns has its own meaning, distinct from each other.

For example, the verb حَمَلَ يَحْمِلُ حَمْلًا means "to carry (هـ s.th.)" Here is an example of its doing verbal noun in a sentence:

تَجِبَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ حَمَلِهِ لِكُتُبِ الثَّقِيلَةِ .

*ta'iba zaydun min ḥamlihi lilkutubi -thithaqilati.*

"Zayd became tired from his carrying the heavy books."

There exists another meaning for this verb with its own doing verbal-noun: حَمَلَ حَمْلَةً which means “to launch an attack (على on s.o.)” Here is an example of its doing verbal noun in a sentence:

دَهَشَ الْقَوْمُ مِنْ حَمَلَةِ الْعَدُوِّ عَلَيْهِمْ.

*dahisha -lqawmu min hamlati -leaduwwi calayhim.*

“The people were astonished at the attack launched by the enemy on them.”

Sometimes the meaning between the multiple doing verbal-nouns is only slight. Consider, for example, the verb جَهَلَ يَجْهَلُ “to not know, or to be ignorant (ه of s.th.)”

It has two doing verbal-nouns: جَهْلٌ *jahl* and جَهَالَةٌ *jahālah* which have meanings that are close to each other.

جَهْلٌ *jahl* is the more simple doing verbal-noun used for not knowing something. For example,

مَا فَعَلَ زَيْدٌ الْوَاجِبَ لِجَهْلِهِ إِيَّاهُ.

*mā faʿala zaydunī -lwājiba lijahlihi ʿiyyāhu.*

“Zayd did not do the obligatory [work] because of his not knowing it.”

جَهَالَةٌ *jahālah* has the more abstract meaning of “ignorance”. For example,

نَفَرَ الْمُسْلِمُ مِنْ جَهَالَةِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ.

*nafara -lmuslimu min jahālati -lmushrikina.*

“The Muslim was repulsed by the ignorance of the pagans.”

As a general rule of thumb, the fewer letters in a doing verbal-noun, the simpler its meaning. And doing verbal-nouns of the pattern فَعَالَةٌ *faʿālah* tend to have an abstract meaning.

## 18.5. Doing verbal-nouns re-used as common nouns

There are many doing verbal-nouns, that in addition to their verbal meaning, are also re-used as common nouns. Their common noun meaning is typically associated, in some manner, with their verbal meaning.

For example, the verb سَأَلَ يَسْأَلُ سُؤَالًا means “to question or ask (عن s.o. about s.th.)”. The doing verbal-noun سُؤَالٌ *suʾālun* can be used with its verbal meaning: “questioning”. For example,

سَئِمَ الْأَبُ مِنْ كَثْرَةِ سُؤَالِ ابْنِهِ إِيَّاهُ.

*saʿima -lʾabu min kathrati suʾālī -bnihi ʿiyyāhu.*

“The father became weary from the excessiveness of his son’s questioning him.”

سُؤَالٌ *suʾālun*, in addition to being a doing verbal-noun “questioning” is re-used as a common noun with the meaning “a question” and the broken plural أَسْئَلَةٌ *ʾasʾilah* “questions”. So, for example, we can say:

كَتَبَ الْأُسْتَاذُ سُؤَالَ عَلَى السَّبُّورَةِ.

*kataba -lʾustādhu suʾālan ʿala -ssabbūratī.*

“The professor wrote a question on the board.”

## 18.6. Common nouns re-used as doing verbal-nouns

Just as some doing verbal-nouns are re-used as common nouns, there are some common nouns that may be re-used as doing verbal-nouns. For example, the verb فَعَلَ *faʿala* “to do (هـ an action)” has the doing verbal-noun فَعْلٌ *faʿlun*.

There is an associated common noun from this root: فِعْلٌ *fiʿlun* “an act”. This common noun is frequently used in place of the doing verbal-noun فَعْلٌ *faʿlun*. For example:

طَلَبَ الْأُسْتَاذُ مِنَ التَّلَامِيذِ فِعْلَ الْوَاجِبِ.

*ṭalaba -lʾustādhu mina -ttalāmīdhā fiʿla -lwājibi.*

“The professor wanted from his students the doing of the obligatory [work].”

## 18.7. TODO

Add multiple doeses with masdar

Work in progress



## Chapter 19.

### a-state incomplete-action verbs

#### 19.1. Introduction

In chapter @ref(u-state-incomplete-action-verbs) we mentioned that incomplete action verbs have three states (like nouns). These states are called:

- i. The u-state
- ii. The a-state
- iii. The o-state

We introduced the u-state incomplete-action verb in chapter @ref(u-state-incomplete-action-verbs). In this chapter we will study the a-state incomplete-action verb.

The u-state incomplete-action verb makes a plain statement. The a-state incomplete-action verb implies a wish or purpose. The a-state incomplete-action verb is used after the following articles:

- أَنْ 'an
- لَنْ lan
- لِي li
- كَيْ kay
- حَتَّى hattā
- إِذَنْ 'idhan

We will go over these cases in this chapter.

#### 19.2. Forming the a-state incomplete-action verb

Here is the u-state incomplete action verb for the singular masculine absentee participant doer “he”:

يَفْعَلُ  
yafealu  
“he does”

Note that, because it is in the u-state, the its final letter ends with a *u*-mark ُ. In order to form the a-state incomplete-action verb, we change the *u*-mark into a *a*-mark َ, thus:

يَفْعَلْ  
yafeʿala

This is done for all participants whose doer pronoun is invisible and u-state verb ends with a *u*-mark ُ.

For participants whose doer pronoun is followed by an extra ِ in the u-state verb, this final ِ is dropped in order to form the a-state incomplete-action verb. So, for example, the u-state incomplete-action verb:

يَفْعَلَانِ  
yafeʿalāni  
“they<sub>2,m</sub> do”

becomes, for the a-state:

يَفْعَلَا  
yafeʿalā

Here is the complete table of the a-state incomplete-action verb for all doer participants.

Participant	Incomplete-action verb doer pronoun	u-state incomplete-action verb	a-state incomplete-action verb
he	<i>invisible</i>	يَفْعَلْ	يَفْعَلْ
she	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلْ	تَفْعَلْ
you <sub>1m</sub>	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلْ	تَفْعَلْ
you <sub>1f</sub>	ي	تَفْعَلِينَ	تَفْعَلِي
I	<i>invisible</i>	أَفْعَلْ	أَفْعَلْ
they <sub>2m</sub>	ا	يَفْعَلَانِ	يَفْعَلَا
they <sub>2f</sub>	ا	تَفْعَلَانِ	تَفْعَلَا
you <sub>2</sub>	ا	تَفْعَلَانِ	تَفْعَلَا
they <sub>3m</sub>	و	يَفْعَلُونَ	يَفْعَلُوا
they <sub>3f</sub>	نَ	يَفْعَلْنَ	يَفْعَلْنَ (same)
you <sub>3m</sub>	و	تَفْعَلُونَ	تَفْعَلُوا
you <sub>3f</sub>	نَ	تَفْعَلْنَ	تَفْعَلْنَ (same)
we	<i>invisible</i>	نَفْعَلْ	نَفْعَلْ

Take note the following:

- The u-state and a-state verbs are the same for the feminine plural absentee and addressee participants:
  - يَفْعَلْنَ (they<sub>3f</sub>)
  - تَفْعَلْنَ (you<sub>3f</sub>)
- The a-state verbs for the masculine plural absentee and addressee participants have a final silent alif:

- يَفْعَلُوا (they<sub>3m</sub>)
- تَفْعَلُوا (you<sub>3m</sub>)

### 19.3. After أَنْ 'an

أَنْ 'an “that” is the main article which causes the following incomplete-action verb to be in the a-state. The other articles that we listed in the introduction are all either derived from أَنْ or include its meaning implicitly without expressing it.

#### 19.3.1. Basic usage of أَنْ 'an with the a-state incomplete-action verb

أَنْ often follows verbs that have a meaning of wishing or hoping. For example,

أَمَلَ الطَّالِبُ أَنْ يَنْجَحَ.

'amala -ṭṭālibu 'an yanjah.

“The student hoped that he succeed.”

لَا can be used to negate the following a-state incomplete-action verb. لَا combines with أَنْ and assimilates with it to form أَلَّا 'allā “that not”. For example,

أَمَرَ الْأَبُ الْإِبْنَ أَلَّا يَكْسَلَ.

'amara -l'abu li-bna 'allā yaksal.

“The father ordered the son that he not be lazy.”

Other than this لَا, أَنْ must directly precede the following a-state incomplete-action verb and must not be separated from it.

#### 19.3.2. Grammatical equivalence of أَنْ clause with a doing verbal noun

In grammatical theory, أَنْ and the following verb form a clause that is equivalent in meaning to the doing verbal-noun of the verb. So in the example, أَمَلَ الطَّالِبُ النَّجَاحَ. أَنْ يَنْجَحَ, the أَنْ clause is أَنْ يَنْجَحَ. It is equivalent to the doing verbal noun النَّجَاح. So the sentence is grammatically equivalent to

أَمَلَ الطَّالِبُ النَّجَاحَ.

'amala -ṭṭālibu -nnajāh.

“The student hoped [for] success.”

This grammatical equivalence of the أَنْ clause with a noun allows the أَنْ clause to take the place of a noun in various positions in a sentence. So, in the above example, the أَنْ clause is in place of the direct object of the verb أَمَلَ:

أَمَلَ الطَّالِبُ أَنْ يَنْجَحَ.

direct doer

“The student hoped that he succeed.”

We show other examples below where the أَنْ clause occurs in place of other noun positions.

As the subject:

أَنْ تَنْجَحَ هُوَ الْمَقْصِدُ.

subject

“That you succeed is the purpose.”

which is grammatically equivalent to: نَجَاحَكَ هُوَ الْمَقْصِدُ.

As the information:

الْمَقْصِدُ أَنْ تَنْجَحَ.

information

“The purpose is that you succeed.”

which is grammatically equivalent to: الْمَقْصِدُ نَجَاحَكَ.

As a doer noun:

يَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ يَذْهَبَ.

doer

“That he [should] go saddens me.”

which is grammatically equivalent to: يَحْزُنُنِي ذَهَابُهُ.

In the i-state as the base noun in an annexation:

سَكَتَتْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ أَنْ يَغْضَبَ عَلَيْهَا.

i-state base noun

“She stayed quiet from fear of that he be angry at her.”

which is grammatically equivalent to: سَكَتَتْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ غَضَبِهِ عَلَيْهَا.

In the i-state after a preposition:

رَغِبَ الْغُلَامُ فِي أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الطَّعَامَ.

i-state after preposition

“The boy desired that he eat the food.”

which is grammatically equivalent to: رَغِبَ الْغُلَامُ فِي أَكْلِ الطَّعَامِ.

## 19.3.3. Option to drop the preposition before أَنْ

In the above example the verb رَغِبَ يَرْغِبُ takes an indirect doer after the preposition فِي. In such cases, where the أَنْ clause occurs after a preposition, it is common to drop the preposition as long as there is not resulting confusion in meaning. So, we can also say (without the preposition فِي) for the same meaning:

رَغِبَ الْغُلَامُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الطَّعَامَ.  
 “The boy desired that he eat the food.”

## 19.3.4. أَنْ meaning “lest”

Occasionally, أَنْ is used with the meaning “lest”. For example:

قَتَلْتُ السُّعْبَانَ أَنْ يَقْتُلَنِي.  
 “I killed the serpent lest it kill me.”

## 19.3.5. أَنْ with the completed-action verb

أَنْ may also occur before a completed-action verb. Example:

بَلَغَنِي أَنْ رَجَعْتَ.  
 “That you have returned has reached me.”

## 19.3.6. Other types of أَنْ

There are other types of أَنْ in the Arabic language. They all have the basic meaning “that”. But they are used in different grammatical ways.

The أَنْ we have learned here is called the *verbal noun* أَنْ because of the equivalence of its clause with a doing verbal noun.

There is also another type of أَنْ called the *lightened* أَنْ that we will learn in section @ref(lightened-an).

There is also the *explanatory* أَنْ and the *extra* أَنْ that we will cover in chapter @ref(types-of-an).

## 19.4. After لِ li

### 19.4.1. The لِ of purpose

The article اَنَّ may be attached to the preposition لِ li thus: لِاَنَّ li'an to give the purpose of the following verb. This لِ may be translated as “so that”. For example:

أَكَلَ لِأَنَّ يَشْبَعَ.

“He ate so that he be sated.”

When لِ is thus used, اَنَّ is optionally allowed to be dropped while its meaning is retained. لِ is then attached to the verb. So we can say, for the same meaning:

أَكَلَ لِيَشْبَعَ.

“He ate so that he be sated.”

But when using لَا to negate the verb, then اَنَّ must be expressed, and the combination of لِ, اَنَّ, and لَا is written as لِئَلَّا li'allā. For example,

شَرَبَ الْمَاءَ لِئَلَّا يَعْطَشَ.

“He drank the water so that he not be thirsty.”

By the way, the grammatical equivalence of اَنَّ and a following a-state incomplete-action verb with a verbal noun of doing applies also to when لِ is used before (either an expressed or an implied) اَنَّ. So, for example, if we have a sentence:

قَرَأَ الْكِتَابَ لِيَعْلَمَ مَفْهُومَهُ.

or

قَرَأَ الْكِتَابَ لِأَنَّ يَعْلَمَ مَفْهُومَهُ.

“He read the book so that he know its meaning.”

Then, grammatically, اَنَّ and what follows it may be expressed with the verbal noun of doing عِلْم thus:

قَرَأَ الْكِتَابَ لِعِلْمِ مَفْهُومِهِ.

“He read the book for the knowledge of its meaning.”

### 19.4.2. The لِ of denial

There is a specific لِ, called the لِ of denial, which is used with a-state incomplete-action verbs and the verb كَانَ that we will discuss in section (TODO in كَانَ chapter).

19.5. After *kay*

*kay* is a preposition similar to *ل* in meaning. It may be translated as “in order that”, or also as “so that”. It is also used before the a-state incomplete-action verb. The difference from *ل* is that, when *ل* is used with the a-state incomplete-action verb, expressing or dropping the *أَنْ* was optional. But with *kay*, dropping the *أَنْ* is mandatory, while its meaning is retained. For example:

أَكَلَ كَيْ يَشْبَعَ.

“He ate in order that he be sated.”

*لَا* is used, as usual, to negate the verb and is attached to *kay* thus: *kaylā*. Example:

شَرِبَ الْمَاءَ كَيْلَا يَعْطَشَ.

“He drank the water in order that he not be thirsty.”

The preposition *ل* may be combined with *kay* thus: *likay*, for more or less the same meaning. For example:

أَكَلَ لِكَيْ يَشْبَعَ.

“He ate in order that he be sated.”

With *لَا* the whole combination is written as *likaylā*. *أَنْ* must again be not be expressed.

Example:

شَرِبَ الْمَاءَ لِكَيْلَا يَعْطَشَ.

“He drank the water in order that he not be thirsty.”

By the way, *kay* and a following a-state incomplete-action verb are not *directly* replaced by a verbal noun of doing. So, for example, if we have a sentence:

قَرَأَ الْكِتَابَ كَيْ يَعْلَمَ مَقْهُومَهُ.

“He read the book in order that he know its meaning.”

Then *ل* is to be used in place of *kay* if we wish to replace it and what follows with the verbal noun of doing *عِلْم* thus:

قَرَأَ الْكِتَابَ لِعِلْمِ مَقْهُومِهِ.

“He read the book for the knowledge of its meaning.”

19.6. After *hattā*

*hattā* is a particle that can be used in multiple ways. Its basic meaning is “until” or “to the point of” or “even” where it indicates an extreme limit.

Before we discuss its use with a verb following it, we will take a short digression to discuss its use with a following noun.

19.6.1. *hattā* حَتَّى with a following noun

Consider the following sentence:

أَكَلْتُ السَّمَكَةَ حَتَّى رَأْسِهَا.  
“I ate the fish until its head.”

حَتَّى “until”, here, is used as a preposition. Therefore, رَأْسُ is in the i-state, as the noun following a preposition. The meaning of the sentence is that the fish was eaten all the way to its head. (Whether the head itself was eaten or not is ambiguous. The sentence itself admits both meanings.)

Consider now a variant of this sentence:

أَكَلْتُ السَّمَكَةَ حَتَّى رَأْسِهَا.  
“I ate the fish, even its head.”

رَأْسُ, here, is in the a-state because it is a direct doer of the verb أَكَلَ “ate”. The particle حَتَّى “even”, here, is only a connector between the direct doers in much the same way as وَ “and”. (أَكَلْتُ السَّمَكَةَ وَرَأْسِهَا. “I ate the fish and its head.”)

Consider now yet another variant of this sentence:

أَكَلْتُ السَّمَكَةَ. حَتَّى رَأْسُهَا [أَكَلْتُهَا].  
“I ate the fish. Even its head [I ate].”

Now رَأْسُ is in the u-state because it is actually the subject of a new sentence, whose information is (an either expressed or implied) أَكَلْتُهَا “I ate it”. حَتَّى, here, serves as an introductory particle to the second subject and does not affect the state of the following noun.

19.6.2. *hattā* حَتَّى with a following verb

Just as حَتَّى is used for different purposes with a following noun, so too is it used with different purposes with a verb following it.

## 19.6.2.1. حَتَّى with a following a-state incomplete-action verb

When حَتَّى is used with an expectation or purpose of a future action of the verb following it, then the verb following it is an a-state incomplete-action verb. This is done in the following two scenarios:

1. When حَتَّى is used to indicate an extreme point at which the action of the following verb would occur, or is meant to occur. Here, حَتَّى may be translated as “to the point of” and the verb following it is translated using “-ing”. For example,

قَرَأْتُ الْقُرْآنَ حَتَّى أَخْتِمَهُ.  
“I read the Qur’ān to the point of finishing it.”



يَغْضَبُ حَتَّى يَهْرَبُوا مِنْهُ.

“He becomes angry to the point of their fleeing from him.”

غَضِبَ حَتَّى لَا يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ.

“He became angry to the point of not controlling himself.”

It is noteworthy that the use of حَتَّى, here, implies only that the following action is meant to occur, or is at the point of being expected to occur. It doesn't actually state that the action will actually occur, for something may prevent it from occurring in reality.<sup>1</sup>

Note, also, that لَا is not attached to حَتَّى in حَتَّى لَا.

Also, similar to the case of كَيْ, there is an assumed (but mandatorily unexpressed) أَنَّ which is the real cause of the following incomplete-action verb being in the a-state. In fact, حَتَّى, here, can be considered synonymous to إِلَى أَنَّ “to [the point] that”. So the above examples can be considered similar in meaning to:

قَرَأْتُ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَى أَنْ أَخْتِمَهُ.

يَغْضَبُ إِلَى أَنْ يَهْرَبُوا مِنْهُ.

غَضِبَ إِلَى أَنَّ لَا يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ.

2. When حَتَّى is used with the meaning “to such a purpose that”. This is a similar meaning to كَيْ “in order that”. For example,

أَذْهَبُ إِلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَأْمُرَنِي بِشَيْءٍ.

“I go to him to such a purpose that he order me [to do] something.”

وَعَظَ الْآبُ ابْنَهُ حَتَّى يَصْلَحَ.

“The father admonished his son to such a purpose that he be righteous.”

Again, there is an assumed (but mandatorily unexpressed) أَنَّ which is the real cause of the following incomplete-action verb being in the a-state.

Sometimes, the sentence itself may admit both of the above meanings. For example:

يَأْكُلُ حَتَّى يَشْبَعَ.

“He eats to the point of being full.”

and/or

“He eats to the purpose that he be full.”

Context would be needed to determine which meaning or whether both meanings are intended.

<sup>1</sup>Sadan, Arik, *The subjunctive mood in Arabic grammatical thought*, 2012, p. 201

## 19.6.2.2. حَتَّى with no effect on the following verb

If حَتَّى is not used with any expectation or purpose of a future action of the verb following it, then it has no effect on this verb. (It goes without saying that an implicit أَنْ is not assumed with حَتَّى in this case.)

The verb following حَتَّى in this case may even be a completed-action verb. For example:

أَكَلْتُ الطَّعَامَ حَتَّى شَبِعْتُ.

“I ate the food until I became full.”

When used with a following incomplete-action verb, the verb is put in the u-state and the meaning is that the action of the verb *before* حَتَّى was done to such an extent that it caused the action of the verb *following* حَتَّى to definitely occur. The action before حَتَّى must necessarily be a past action, and the action following حَتَّى must necessarily be a present (not a future) action. For example,

أَكَلْتُ الطَّعَامَ حَتَّى أَشْبَعُ.

“I ate the food to such an extent that I am (being) full.”

غَضِبَ حَتَّى يَهْرَبُونَ مِنْهُ.

“He became so angry that they are fleeing from him.”

غَضِبَ حَتَّى لَا يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ.

“He became so angry that he is not controlling himself.”

Compare these examples with the corresponding ones in the previous subsection that have an a-state incomplete action verb.

## 19.7. After لَنْ lan

لَا and أَنْ are combined to form لَنْ lan with the meaning “shall not”. لَنْ is used with the a-state incomplete-action verb to emphatically negate the future.

لَنْ تَذْهَبَ.

“You<sub>1m</sub> shall not go.”

## 19.8. After إِذَنْ idhan

TODO

## 19.9. After وَ, فَ, أَوْ, and ثُمَّ

## 19.9.1. As connectors

If the connectors وَ, فَ, أَوْ, and ثُمَّ occur after an a-state incomplete-action verb, then a second a-state incomplete-action verb (that doesn't have its own اُنْ, etc.) may be either in the a-state or the u-state. For example,

أَسْمَعُ أَزْعِبُ أَنْ أَحْضَرَ الْمَجْلِسَ وَأَسْمَعُ.  
 “I desire that I attend the session and [that] I listen.”

or

أَسْمَعُ أَزْعِبُ أَنْ أَحْضَرَ الْمَجْلِسَ وَأَسْمَعُ.  
 “I desire that I attend the session and I will listen.”

## 19.9.2. With special meanings

وَ, فَ, أَوْ, and ثُمَّ also cause the following incomplete-action verb to be in the a-state in their own right, not simply as connectors. This is discussed in more detail in chapter TODO.

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## Chapter 20.

### o-state incomplete-action verbs

#### 20.1. Introduction

In chapter @ref(u-state-incomplete-action-verbs) we mentioned that incomplete action verbs have three states (like nouns). These states are called:

- i. The u-state
- ii. The a-state
- iii. The o-state

We have already studied the u-state of incomplete-action verbs in chapter @ref(u-state-incomplete-action-verbs). And we will defer the study of a-state of incomplete-action verbs to chapter @ref(a-state-incomplete-action-verbs). In this chapter we will study the o-state incomplete-action verb.

We will also study the *verb of command* which is very similar to the o-state incomplete-action verb.

#### 20.2. Forming the o-state incomplete-action verb

Here is the u-state incomplete action verb for the singular masculine absentee participant doer “he”:

يَفْعَلُ  
yafʿalu  
“he does”

Note that, because it is in the u-state, the its final letter ends with a *u*-mark ُ. In order to form the o-state incomplete-action verb, we change the *u*-mark into a *o*-mark ُ, thus:

يَفْعَالُ  
yafʿal

This is done for all participants whose doer pronoun is invisible and u-state verb ends with a *u*-mark ُ.

For participants whose doer pronoun is followed by an extra ِ in the u-state verb, this final ِ is dropped in order to form the o-state incomplete-action verb. So, for example, the u-state incomplete-action verb:

يَفْعَلَانِ  
yafʿalāni  
“they<sub>2,m</sub> do”

becomes, for the O-state:

يَفْعَلَا  
yafʿalā

Here is the complete table of the O-state incomplete-action verb for all doer participants.

Participant	Incomplete-action verb doer pronoun	u-state incomplete-action verb	O-state incomplete-action verb
he	<i>invisible</i>	يَفْعَلُ	يَفْعَلُ
she	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ	تَفْعَلُ
you <sub>1,m</sub>	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ	تَفْعَلُ
you <sub>1,f</sub>	ي	تَفْعَلِينَ	تَفْعَلِي
I	<i>invisible</i>	أَفْعَلُ	أَفْعَلُ
they <sub>2,m</sub>	ا	يَفْعَلَانِ	يَفْعَلَا
they <sub>2,f</sub>	ا	تَفْعَلَانِ	تَفْعَلَا
you <sub>2</sub>	ا	تَفْعَلَانِ	تَفْعَلَا
they <sub>3+,m</sub>	9	يَفْعَلُونَ	يَفْعَلُوا
they <sub>3+,f</sub>	نَ	يَفْعَلْنَ	يَفْعَلْنَ (same)
you <sub>3+,m</sub>	9	تَفْعَلُونَ	تَفْعَلُوا
you <sub>3+,f</sub>	نَ	تَفْعَلْنَ	تَفْعَلْنَ (same)
we	<i>invisible</i>	نَفْعَلُ	نَفْعَلُ

Take note the following:

- The u-state and O-state verbs are the same for the feminine plural absentee and addressee participants:
  - يَفْعَلْنَ (they<sub>3+,f</sub>)
  - تَفْعَلْنَ (you<sub>3+,f</sub>)
- The u-state and O-state verbs for the masculine plural absentee and addressee participants have a final silent alif:
  - يَفْعَلُوا (they<sub>3+,m</sub>)
  - تَفْعَلُوا (you<sub>3+,m</sub>)
- When the O-state incomplete-action verb ends with a O-mark ُ, and the next word begins with a connecting hamzah ا then the O-mark ُ is converted to an i mark ِ. For example:
  - يَفْعَلُ + اَلرَّجُلُ = يَفْعَلِ اَلرَّجُلُ

### 20.3. With ل for indirect commands

The particle ل when connected to the front of a incomplete-action verb causes it to be in the O-state and gives it the meaning of an indirect command. In English this can be translated using “should” or “let”:

لِيَذْهَبِ الرَّجُلُ

“The man should go!”

or

“Let the man go!”

(“Let” is being used here as a command for the man, not for the addressee of this speech.)

لِنَذْهَبْ!

“Let’s go!”

The indirect command is only rarely used for the addressee participant. Instead, the verb of command is used which we will study in section @ref(verb-of-command) later in this chapter.

The particles فَ “so” and وَ “and” are frequently used before this ل. The ل then loses its *i*-mark and gets a *O*-mark. Examples:

فَلْنَأْكُلْ طَعَامَنَا وَلِنَشْرَبْ شَرَابَنَا.

“So let us eat our food and drink our drink!”

لِتَجْلِسُوا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ.

“You should sit on the ground!”

### 20.4. With لَا for prohibitions

The word لَا when in front of a *O*-state incomplete-action verb gives the meaning of a prohibition. In English this can be translated using “Don’t”.

For example,

لَا تَكْتُبُوا

“Don’t write<sub>3,m</sub>!”

يَا زَيْدُ، لَا تَدْخُلْ الْبَيْتَ!

“Don’t<sub>1,m</sub> enter the house!”

The particles فَ “so” and وَ “and” may be used before this لَا. Example:

فَلَا تَأْكُلْ وَلَا تَشْرَبْ!

“So don’t eat<sub>1,m</sub> and don’t drink<sub>1,m</sub>!”

Such prohibitions are generally for the addressee participant. However, rarely, they may be issued for the absentee participant as well. Example:

لَا يَمْنَعُ زَيْدًا الدُّخُولَ.

“Let him not prevent Zayd from entering!”

By the way, لَا does not force a verb to be in the u-state o-state. We have already seen in section @ref(u-state-verb-negation-la) that لَا can be used to negate a u-state incomplete-action verb for the present and future tense. Example:

لَا يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ

*lā yadh-habu -rrajulu.*

“The man does not go.” or,

“The man is not going.” or,

“The man will not go.”

## 20.5. With لَمْ for “did not”

The particle لَمْ when in front of an incomplete-action verb causes it to be in the o-state and gives it the meaning of negating the past tense. In English this can be translated using “did not”. For example,

لَمْ يَذْهَبِ الرَّجُلُ.

“The man did not go.”

We have already learned in section @ref(negating-completed-action-verbs) that the completed-action verb is negated using the particle مَا. For example:

مَا ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ.

*mā dhahaba -rrajulu.*

“The man did not go.”

or,

“The man has not gone.”

Both لَمْ and مَا are used commonly to negate the past tense. مَا has a more emphatic meaning than لَمْ.

Here are some more examples:

## 20.6. With لَمَّا for “did not yet”

The word لَمَّا when in front of a o-state incomplete-action verb gives the meaning “did not yet”. For example,

لَمَّا يَذْهَبُ زَيْدٌ.

“Zayd did not go yet.”

## 20.7. Other uses of the o-state incomplete-action verb

The o-state incomplete-action verb is also used for *consequential actions* and in *conditional statements*. We will deal with these in chapters @ref(the-consequential-action) and @ref(conditional-statements) respectively



## 20.8. The verb of command

In order to give a direct command to an addressee, Arabic uses the verb of command. The verb of command is very similar to the o-state incomplete-action verb. The verb of command is only available for the addressee participant.

### 20.8.1. Forming the verb of command

Here is the verb of command for the addressee participants:

Participant	Verb of command
you <sub>1,m</sub>	أَفْعَلْ
you <sub>1,f</sub>	أَفْعَلِي
you <sub>2</sub>	أَفْعَلَا
you <sub>3+,m</sub>	أَفْعَلُوا
you <sub>3+,f</sub>	أَفْعَلْنَ

In order to form the verb of command, we remove the initial ت from the addressee participant verb. The verb then begins with an o-mark so we place a connecting hamzah in front of it.

When the verb of command occurs in the beginning of a sentence, then the vowel mark for the connecting hamzah is selected according to the following criteria:

- i. When the middle root letter of the verb of command has an *u*-mark ُ, then the connecting hamzah gets an *u*-mark too. Examples:

Verb	Verb of command for “he”
نَظَرَ يَنْظُرُ نَظْرًا	اُنْظُرْ “Look!”
قَتَلَ يَقْتُلُ قَتْلًا	اُقْتُلْ “Kill!”
مَكَثَ يَمْكُثُ مَكُوثًا	اُمْكُثْ “Stay!”

- ii. Otherwise, when the middle root letter of the verb of command has an *a*-mark َ or an *i*-mark ِ, then the connecting hamzah gets an *i*-mark ِ. Examples:

Verb	Verb of command for “he”
عَمَلَ يَعْمَلُ عَمَلًا	اِعْمَلْ “Work!”
ذَهَبَ يَذْهَبُ ذَهَابًا	اِذْهَبْ “Go!”
جَلَسَ يَجْلِسُ جُلُوسًا	اِجْلِسْ “Sit!”

Here are some examples of using the verb of command:

The verb of command is not used to issue negative commands, like “Don’t go!”. Instead, the O-state verb is used with لَا as described in section @ref(la-of-prohibition) above.

لَا تَذْهَبْ  
“Don’t go!”

### 20.8.2. The verb of command for roots begin with hamzah

Appendix @ref(hamzarules) details the rules for spelling words that contain hamzah generally. In addition to those rules, the verb of command for roots that begin with hamzah warrant additional discussion.

Consider the following form 1 verbs and their verbs of command for the singular masculine addressee doer “he”:

Root	Verb	Verb of command
أَمَلَ	أَمَلَ يَأْمُلُ أَمَلًا “to hope”	أَوْمُلْ
أَذِنَ	أَذِنَ يَأْذِنُ أَذْنًا “to permit”	أُذِّنْ

Here are examples of these verbs of commands in the middle of a sentence:

يَا أُمِّي أَتُذِّنِي لِي أَلْعَبُ!  
yā ‘ummi -’dhanī li -llaeib!  
“O my mother, permit me to play!”

يَا زَيْدُ أَوْمِلْ الْخَيْرَ!  
yā zaydu -’mulī -lkhayr!  
“O Zayd, hope for good!”

When these verbs of command occur in the beginning of the sentence, then there would be two hamzahs occurring next to each other which is not permitted. So the second hamzah is pronounced as a long vowel, though it may still be written as a hamzah. Examples:

أَوْمِلْ الْخَيْرَ يَا زَيْدُ!  
’ūmul  
not  
× ’u’mul

أُذِّنِي لِي أَلْعَبُ يَا أُمِّي!  
’idhanī  
not  
× ’i’dhanī

As a further complication, when the verb of command is preceded by وَ “and” or فَ “so” then the connecting *hamza* is not written and the hamzah of the first root letter is written seated on an alif. Examples:

وَأْمُلْ  
wa'mul  
“And hope!”

فَإْذَنْ  
fa'dhan  
“So permit!”

### 20.8.3. Irregular verbs of command

In addition to the rules states above there are four verbs of command (all containing hamzah) that are irregular. We will discuss them below:

#### 20.8.3.1. The verbs أَكَلَ , أَخَذَ , and أَمَرَ

The verbs of command for the following three verbs are irregular:

Root	Verb	Verb of command
أَكَلَ	أَكَلَ يَأْكُلُ أَكْلًا “to eat”	كُلْ
أَخَذَ	أَخَذَ يَأْخُذُ أَخْذًا “to take”	خُذْ
أَمَرَ	أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ أَمْرًا “to order”	مُرْ

As you can see, the initial hamzah has been completely deleted for the verbs of command. However, of these verbs, the verb of command for أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ أَمْرًا is permitted to retain its initial hamzah when preceded by وَ “and” or فَ “so”. Then, it becomes

وَأْمُرْ wa'mur  
and  
فَأْمُرْ fa'mur

This retaining of the initial hamzah is not done for the other two verbs.

Here are some examples of these verbs of command:

## 20.8.3.2. The verb سَأَلَ

The verb سَأَلَ يَسْأَلُ سُؤَالًا “to question” forms its verb of command both regularly, and irregularly:

- i. Regular: اسْأَلْ *al*
- ii. Irregular: سَلْ *sal*

If the verb of command is preceded by وَ “and” or فَ “so”, then the regular verb of command اسْأَلْ *al* is often preferred.

Otherwise, the irregular verb of command سَلْ *sal* is often preferred.

Examples of usage:

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## Chapter 21.

### The unknown-doer verb

#### 21.1. Introduction

Consider the sentence:

شَرِبَ زَيْدٌ الْمَاءَ.

*shariba zayduni -lmāʾ*ʾ.

“Zayd drank the water.”

In this sentence, زَيْدٌ “Zayd” is the doer of the verb شَرِبَ “drank”. This construction of the verb, which we have been using so far, is called the *known-doer verb* construction, because the doer of the verb, in this case “Zayd” is known. Now consider the following sentence:

شُرِبَ الْمَاءُ.

*shuriba -lmāʾ*ʾ.

“The water was drunk.”

In this sentence, the doer of the verb, i.e. the person who is doing the action of the verb “to drink”, is not mentioned. From the sentence itself it is unknown who the doer is. This construction of the verb is called the *unknown-doer verb* construction.

#### 21.2. Forming the unknown-doer verb

So far we have been studying form 1 verbs, which use only the three root letters. As we know, the vowel on the middle root letter is variable for known-doer verbs, for example:

- شَرِبَ يَشْرِبُ “to drink”.
- فَتَحَ يَفْتَحُ “to open”
- كَبُرَ يَكْبُرُ “to become big”
- etc.

The pattern of unknown-doer verb for form 1 verbs is always:

فُعِلَ يُفْعَلُ

*fucila yufʿalu*

This is regardless of the vowel on the middle root letter in the known-doer verb. If there is more than one verb from the same root, with different middle root letter vowels for the known-doer verb, then they will share the same unknown-doer verb. For example, the known-doer verbs: حَسِبَ يَحْسِبُ “to reckon” and حَسِبَ يَحْسِبُ “to deem” share the same unknown-doer verb: حُسِبَ يُحْسَبُ.

The same doer pronouns are used for the unknown-doer verb as for the known-doer verb. And the incomplete-action unknown-doer verb has the same three states as the incomplete-action known-doer verb. For example:

- فُعِلُوا *fueilū* “they<sub>3m</sub>” (completed-action)
- تُفْعَلَانِ *tufēalāni* “you<sub>2</sub>” or “they<sub>2f</sub>” (u-state incomplete-action)
- أُفْعِلَ *ufēala* “I” (a-state incomplete-action)
- etc.

The complete table showing the doer pronouns is given in appendix @ref(verb-tables).

### 21.3. The deputy doer

Consider again this sentence with an unknown-doer verb construction:

شَرِبَ الْمَاءُ.  
deputy doer

“The water was drunk.”

Note that the noun الْمَاءُ *almā’u* “the water” is in the u-state. This is because, in the absence of the doer, the direct-doe of the known-doer verb (شَرِبَ) is deputized to take doer’s place in the u-state. It is then known as the *deputy doer*.

The doer pronouns for the unknown-doer verb shall therefore match the gender and number of the deputy doer. Here are some examples:

شُكِّرَتِ الْأُمّهَاتُ وَمُذِخِنَ.  
*shukirati -l’ummahātu wamudiḥn.*  
“The mothers were thanked and praised.”

أَنْتُمَا تُغَيَّبَانِ وَتُخَدَعَانِ.  
*ʾantumā tuḡḥbanāni watukḥdaeān.*  
“You<sub>2</sub> are being cheated and deceived.”

مَا قُطِعَتِ الشَّجَرَةُ.  
*mā quṭiʿati -shshajarah.*  
“The tree was not cut.”

## 21.3.1. The deputy doer for multiple direct doees

Some verbs, in the known-doer construction, take multiple doees. These verbs can be classified into two classes:

- a. Verbs that cause the first direct doee to be affected by, or asked for, the second direct doee. Examples:

مَلَأَ الْغُلَامُ الدَّلْوُ مَاءً.

“The boy filled the bucket (with) water.”

مَنَعَ الْمَرَضُ الرَّجُلَ الْعَمَلَ.

“Sickness prevented the man (from) work.”

سَأَلَ الْفَقِيرُ الْغَنِيَّ دِرْهَمًا.

“The poor [man] asked the rich [man] (for) a dirham.”

- b. Verbs that signify an action of the heart or of intention, like thinking, deeming, making, etc. Examples:

حَسِبْتُ زَيْدًا صَدِيقًا.

“I deemed Zayd [to be] a friend”

وَجَدْتُ الطَّالِبَةَ الْأُسْتَاذَةَ حَلِيمَةً.

“The student<sub>f</sub> found the professor<sub>f</sub> [to be] forbearing.”

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْمَاءَ بَرَكَهً.

“Allāh has made the water a blessing.”

When such verbs are converted to the unknown-doer verb construction, then one, and only one, direct doee shall be chosen to be the deputy doer. It is generally preferred to make the first direct doee the deputy-doer, and leave the second direct doee, as is, in the a-state. Here are the same sentences in the unknown-doer construction:

مِلئتُ الدَّلْوُ مَاءً. (دَلْوُ “bucket” is feminine.)

“The bucket was filled (with) water.”

مُنِعَ الرَّجُلُ الْعَمَلَ.

“The man was prevented (from) work.”

سُئِلَ الْغَنِيُّ دِرْهَمًا.

“The rich [man] was asked for a dirham.”

حُسِبَ زَيْدٌ صَدِيقًا.

“Zayd was deemed [to be] a friend”

وُجِدَتِ الْأُسْتَاذَةُ حَلِيمَةً.

“The professor<sub>f</sub> was found [to be] forbearing.”

جُعِلَ الْمَاءُ بَرَكَهً.

“Water has been made a blessing.”

## 21.4. Impersonal use

When verbs are used without a direct doer, then their unknown-doer construction gives in an impersonal meaning. There are a few such usages that we will explain in the following subsections.

### 21.4.1. With prepositional phrases

Some verbs take no direct doers, but are used with prepositional phrases. For example,

جَلَسَ النَّاسُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ.

“The people sat upon the ground.”

Other verbs, which can take a direct doer, may be used without one, and again with a prepositional phrase instead. For example:

كَتَبَ الْكَاتِبُ بِالْقَلَمِ.

“The scribe wrote with the pen.”

When such sentences are converted to the unknown-doer verb construction then the prepositional phrase may be taken as the deputy doer. However, the preposition causes the noun following it to remain in the i-state. So the deputy doer is not indicated by an apparent *u*-mark (or by the other indicators of the *u*-state). The verb then appears to be in the singular masculine, with its deputy doer following it. For example:

جُلِسَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ.

deputy doer

“The ground was sat upon.”

كُتِبَ بِالْقَلَمِ.

“The pen was written with.”

### 21.4.2. With adverbs of time or place

Other verbs don't take a direct doer but may be used with an adverb of time or place in the *a*-state. (We will study adverbs of time and place in chapter @ref(adverbs-of-time-and-place), if Allāh wills.) Here is an example:

سَهَرَتِ الْأُمُّ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ.

*a*-state adverb of time

“The mother stayed up the Night of Power.”

When this sentence is converted to an unknown-doer construction then the adverb of time or place can be taken as the deputy doer in the *u*-state:



سَهَرَتْ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ.

“The Night of Power was stayed up [in].”

Note the u-state of لَيْلَةُ *laylatu* as the deputy doer.

### 21.4.3. With the verbal noun of doing

The verbal noun of doing, because it is the action being done may be considered a kind of direct doer. (We will study the use of the verbal noun of doing as a doer in chapter @ref(absolute-doe), if Allāh wills.) For example:

فَهُمُ الشَّيْخُ فَهَمًا عَمِيْقًا.

“The old man understood, a deep understanding.”

When such sentences are converted to the unknown-doer verb construction, then the verbal noun of doing may be taken as the deputy doer in the u-state.

فُهُمُ فَهَمٌ عَمِيْقٌ.

“A deep understanding was understood.”

### 21.4.4. Requirement of specialization

When a prepositional phrase, or an adverb of time or place, or a verbal noun of doing is to be used as a deputy doer in an unknown-doer verb construction, then it is required that they be specialized in meaning, and not used in a general sense. So for example, if we have the sentence:

سَهَرَتْ الْأُمُّ لَيْلَةً.

“The mother stayed up a night.”

then because of the non-specialized meaning of لَيْلَةً, such a sentence is typically not suitable for being converted to a unknown-doer verb construction.

### 21.4.5. Choosing the deputy doer

If a sentence is to be converted to an unknown-doer verb construction and it has more than one of the following:

- a direct doer
- a specialized prepositional phrase
- a specialized adverb of time or place
- a specialized verbal noun of doing

Then only one shall be chosen as the deputy doer. If a direct doer exists, then it is typically chosen. If a direct doer does not exist, then the one desired to be emphasized may be chosen as the deputy doer. For example:

سَهَرَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ.

“The mosque was stayed up in [on] the Night of Power.”

In the above sentence the prepositional phrase *فِي الْمَسْجِدِ* was chosen as the deputy doer, and the adverb of time *لَيْلَةً* remains, as is, in the a-state.

## 21.5. States of the incomplete-action unknown-doer verb

The incomplete-action verb unknown-doer verb has three states, just like the incomplete-action verb known-doer verb: The u-state, the a-state, and the o-state. The three states are used in the same circumstances, and with the same rules that we have already learned.

So the u-state verb is used for making plain statements:

تُذَكَّرُ قِصَّةُ الْمَلِكِ فِي كُتُبِ التَّأْرِيخِ.

“The story of the king is mentioned in the books of history.”

لَا تُرْفَعُ الْأَصْوَاتُ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ.

“Voices are not raised in the library.”

The a-state verb is used for expressing wish or purpose:

يَأْمُلُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ أَنْ يُعْفَرَ لَهُمْ.

“The Muslims hope that they be forgiven.”

(Note that *يُعْفَرُ* has a singular masculine deputy doer because there is no direct doer.)

لَنْ تُسْمَعَ.

“You<sub>2</sub> shall not be heard.”

دُفِعَ الْبَابُ حَتَّى يَفْتَحَ.

“The door was pushed for the result that it open.”

Similarly, the o-state verb is used in the following cases:

- With *لَمْ* “was not”:

لَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي أَنْ أَدْخُلَ.

“It was not permitted for me that I enter.”

- With *لَمْ* “not yet”

لَمْ يُكْتَبْ كِتَابٌ فِي هَذَا الْمَوْضُوعِ.

“A book has not yet been written in this subject.”

- With *لِ* for indirect commands:

لِيُسْمَعَ صَوْتُهُ!

“Let his voice be heard!”

There is no verb of command for unknown-doer verbs. So while indirect commands are typically not used for the addressee participant for known-doer verbs (see section @ref(indirect-commands)), they are the only way to issue commands for the addressee participant in the unknown-doer verb construction:

لِيُنَّصَرُوا!

“Let you<sub>3m</sub> be aided!”

## 21.6. Usage of the unknown-doer verb

There are cases where it is permissible to use of the unknown-doer verb construction, and cases where it is *not* permissible to use of the unknown-doer verb construction. We will explain them below:

### 21.6.1. Permissible use of the unknown-doer verb

There can be a number of reasons why a speaker is forced to, or chooses to, use the unknown-doer verb construction. Among these reasons are:

- a. When the doer is actually unknown to the speaker. This is the classic use-case, as indicated by the name *unknown-doer verb*. (But, as we shall see below, it is not the only use case.) So, if we say:

كُسِرَتِ الزُّجَاجَةُ.

“The glass was broken.”

then, it may be that we don’t know who broke the glass, and that is why we are expressing it in the unknown-doer verb construction.

- b. When the doer is known to the speaker, but he does not wish to make him known to others. So the same sentence above كُسِرَتِ الزُّجَاجَةُ could be used when the speaker knows that it was actually زَيْد “Zayd”, for example, who broke the glass, but the speaker does not wish that others find out that it was Zayd. This itself could be for any reason, for example: the speaker fears Zayd, for fears for Zayd, etc.

- c. When the speaker wishes to draw attention to the act itself rather than the doer of the act. So we might say:

مُنِغْنَا الدُّخُولُ.

“We have been prevented from entering.”

when we wish to focus on the act of our having been prevented, rather than who prevented us.

- d. For stylistic reasons, when it is obvious and known who the doer is. For example:

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

“Man was created of haste [i.e., impatience].” (Qur’ān 21:37. Trans. Saheeh International)

In the above ’āyah it is known and obvious that Allāh created man.

- e. In order to glorify the doer. So we might the unknown-doer verb construction to say:

خُلِقَ الْخِنْزِيرُ.

“The pig was created.”

This could be to distance Allāh from being mentioned next to the name of a particularly dirty animal.

- f. When the doer is not mentioned due to contempt for him. For example:

قُتِلَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عُمَرُ.

“The Commander of the believers, Eumar, was killed.”

In this sentence we chose not to name the killer due to contempt for him.

These reasons are not mutually exclusive, and sometimes the unknown-doer verb construction is used for a combination of them.

### 21.6.2. Impermissible use of the unknown-doer verb

The unknown-doer verb may not be used when the doer is mentioned with the verb. This is different from English which can use the word “by” to indicate the doer in a passive voice construction, as in: “The book was written by Zayd.”. Such a sentence, in Arabic can only be expressed with the known-doer verb construction:

كَتَبَ زَيْدٌ الْكِتَابَ.

*kataba zayduni -lkitāb.*

“Zayd wrote the book.”

It may seem like this rule is broken in sentences like:

قُتِلَ بِالسَّيْفِ.

*qutila bi-ssayf.*

“He was killed by the sword.”

But such is not the case. The known-doer verb construction would be something like:

قَتَلَهُ فُلَانٌ بِالسَّيْفِ.

*qatalahu fulānun bi-ssayf.*

“So-and-so killed him with the sword.”

As you can see, فُلَانٌ “so-and-so” is actually the doer, and السَّيْفُ “the sword” is merely a prepositional phrase indicating the instrument used in the act.

## Chapter 22.

### Additional forms of the verb

#### 22.1. Introduction

So far we have been studying the form 1 verb (فَعَلَ يَفْعُلُ). The form 1 verb is the basic form of the verb. It consists of only the three root letters for the stateless verb.

In this chapter we will learn additional forms of the verb. These forms add extra letters to three root letters. There are about 15 or so additional forms of the verb. But only 10 or so are in common usage.

Learning these additional forms may seem tedious but we advise you to persevere because additional forms of the verb are used very commonly.

The form 1 verb has variability in the middle (ع) letter, which can have either an *a*, *i*, or *u* mark. It also has variability in the pattern its verbal noun of doing. The additional forms have almost no variability of this kind. So, in one sense, the additional forms of the verb are easier than the form 1 verb.

##### 22.1.1. Topics to cover

- usage of the masdar of one form for another form
- افتعل with the meaning of تفاعل and nuances in the meaning
- avoid using [□□] with form 6, unless as masdar. (Actually added it to Usage and Style chapter in appendix but reference it here.)

#### 22.2. The form 2 verb فَعَّلَ يَفْعِّلُ

The form 2 verb doubles the middle ع letter. The vowel mark on the middle letter does not vary. Here are some examples of form 2 verbs:

Root	Verb	Meaning
علم	عَلَّمَ يُعَلِّمُ	to teach
قتل	قَتَّلَ يُقَتِّلُ	to massacre
كبر	كَبَّرَ يُكَبِّرُ	to magnify, say اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

### 22.2.1. Meaning patterns

The form 2 verb can denote a strengthening of the meaning. For example,

- كَسَرَ “to break (هـ s.th.)”; كَسَّرَ “to smash (هـ s.th.)”
- قَتَلَ “to kill (هـ s.o.)”; قَتَّلَ “to massacre (هـ s.o.)”

Often it denotes a causative meaning. For example,

- طَهَّرَ “to be pure”; طَهَّرَ “to purify (هـ، هـ s.o., s.th.)”
- عَلِمَ “to know (هـ s.th.)”; عَلَّمَ “to teach (ب هـ or هـ s.o. s.th.)”

Note that in such cases, if the form 1 verb is intransitive (e.g. طَهَّرَ) then it becomes transitive in form 2 (طَهَّرَ). And if it is transitive in form 1 (e.g. عَلِمَ), then it becomes doubly transitive in form 2 (عَلَّمَ).

### 22.3. The form 3 verb فَاعِلٌ يُفَاعِلُ

The basic meaning pattern for the form 3 verb is to express or emphasize the relation of the action to someone else.

Sometimes, as an extension of the basic meaning, it expresses vying with someone in the action of the verb. For example:

- قَتَلَ “to kill (هـ s.o.)”; قَاتَلَ “to fight (هـ s.o., with s.o., or against s.o.)”, i.e., “to vie with another to kill him”.
- سَبَقَ “to precede (هـ، هـ s.o., s.th.)”; سَابَقَ “to race (هـ s.o.)”, i.e., “to vie with another to precede him”.

## Chapter 23.

### The verbal-nouns of the doer and the doee

FIXME:

- move to later chapter, after استفهام because إعمال اسم الفاعل relies on it.
- add الصفة المشبهة *verb-like descriptive noun* and its عمل
- add difference in إعمال اسم الفاعل when it has ال and when without.
- add نائب الفاعل acting as verb with اسم المفعول

See + Wright vol. ii. p. 65 + , and p. 195. + النحو الوافي vol 3, p. 246 + + Howell vol. 4, p 1606 +

#### 23.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we studied the verbal-noun of doing. In this chapter we shall study two more kinds of verbal-nouns. These are the doer verbal-noun and the doee-verbal noun. These, too, are nouns that can give the meaning of the verb they are derived from. In places, they may even replace the verb, thereby adding some nuances in meaning.

The doer verbal-noun gives the meaning of the doer, that is the person doing the action of the verb. For example, for the verb قَرَأَ يَقْرَأُ قِرَاءَةً “to read”, the doer verbal-noun is قَارِئٌ *qārī* “a reader”.

#### 23.2. Pattern of the doer verbal-noun

We saw in the previous chapter that the pattern for the doing verbal-noun for form 1 verbs was very variable. In contrast, the pattern for the doer verbal-noun for form 1 verbs is fixed. It is always on the pasttern فَاعِلٌ *fācīl*. Also, the doer verbal-noun is modified for gender and number. Its forms its feminine by appending ة thus: فَاعِلَةٌ. It takes sound plurals: the -ūn for the masculine, and the -āt plural for the feminine. In many case, it may also have broken plurals. Here is a table showing these modifications for the u-state. You should be able to extend them for the a-state and i-state.

Number	Masculine	Feminine
singular	فَاعِلٌ <i>fā'ilun</i>	فَاعِلَةٌ <i>fā'ilatun</i>
dual	فَاعِلَانِ <i>fā'ilāni</i>	فَاعِلَتَانِ <i>fā'ilatāni</i>
plural	فَاعِلُونَ <i>fā'ilūna</i>	فَاعِلَاتٌ <i>fā'ilātun</i>

### 23.3. The doer verbal-noun as a noun

Like the doing verbal-noun, the doer verbal noun occupies a place that is between a noun and a verb. The basic, most essential, meaning of the doer verbal noun is that of a noun which denotes the doer of the verb.

So, for example, consider the verb سَأَلَ سَأَلٌ سُؤَالٌ “to question”. Its doer verbal-noun is سَائِلٌ. Since it refers to the doer of this verb, we can translate it as “a questioner<sub>m</sub>”.

By itself, the word سَائِلٌ “a questioner” just denotes a noun. It does not indicate when the doer does the action of the verb: has the questioner already asked the question, is he asking it at present, or will he ask it in the future? So, for example, we can say:

سَيَقْدَمُ سَائِلٌ وَسَيَسْأَلُ سُؤَالًا.  
*sayaqdamu sā'ilun wasayaqdamu su'ālān.*  
 “A questioner<sub>m</sub> will arrive and he will ask a question.”

In the above sentence, the doer verbal-noun is being described as performing the action of the verb in the future.

Here is another example:

سَأَلَتِ الْفَقِيهَةَ سَائِلَةٌ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.  
*sa'alati l-faqiha sā'ilatun ʿan ʿamrin.*  
 “A questioner<sub>f</sub> asked the jurist about a matter.”

In the above sentence, the doer verbal-noun is being described as having performed the action of the verb in the past.

Doer verbal-nouns of form 1 verbs, when used with this nunal meaning, often have broken plurals, in addition to their sound plurals. Generally, either could be used in most cases, but the usage of the broken plurals is preferred.

For example, consider the verb قَتَلَ يَقْتُلُ قَتْلًا “to kill (هـ s.o.)”. Its doer verbal-noun is قَاتِلٌ “a killer<sub>m</sub>”. Its sound plural is قَاتِلُونَ *qātilūna* and its broken plurals are قُتَالٌ *quttāl* and قَتَاةٌ *qatalah*. Any of these could be used but the broken plural is often preferred.

هَرَبَ قَتْلَةٌ إِلَى مَخْبَأِهِمْ.  
*haraba qatalatu -rrajuli ʾilā makhba'ihim.*  
 “The killers of the man fled to their hideout.”



## 23.4. The doer verbal-noun as a verb

We have learned that the essential meaning of the doer verbal-noun is the doer of the action of the verb from which it is derived. In addition to this essential meaning, the doer verbal-noun can also be used in place of the verb from which it is derived. This is only done when the verb to be replaced is the incomplete-action verb. The doer verbal-noun does not replace the completed-action verb. We will now explain this usage.

### 23.4.1. Usage of the doer verbal-noun as a present tense verb

Consider the following sentence:

يَذْهَبُ زَيْدٌ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ.

*yadh-habu zaydun 'ila -lmdrasati.*

“Zayd goes to school.”

The above sentence does not explicitly specify whether Zayd is actually going to school at present, or that he goes to school habitually and not necessarily right now.

If we wish to indicate that Zayd is actually going to school at present we can replace the incomplete-action verb with the indefinite doer verbal-noun. So we get:

زَيْدٌ ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ.

*yadh-habu zaydun 'ila -lmdrasati.*

“Zayd is going to school.”

Note that the same preposition إِلَى *'ilā* “to” is used with the doer verbal-noun as is used with the verb. Also note that this is now a subject-information sentence instead of a verbal sentence. زَيْدٌ *zaydun* “Zayd” is the subject, and ذَاهِبٌ *dāhibun* is part of the information.

This usage of the doer verbal-noun to indicate that the action of the verb is occurring at present is mostly done for what we call *verbs of posture* and *verbs of motion*.

Verbs of posture denote a static position or activity of the doer’s body and include verbs like sitting, standing, lying down, sleeping, etc.

Verbs of motion denote a moving action of the doer’s body and include verbs like going, coming, running, etc.

So, if, for example, we say,

زَيْنَبٌ جَالِسَةٌ عَلَى هَذَا الْكُرْسِيِّ.

*zaynabu jālisatun ʿala hādha -lkursiyyi.*

“Zaynab is sitting on this chair.”

this indicates that Zaynab is sitting on this chair at present. And if we say,

تَجْلِسُ زَيْنَبُ عَلَى هَذَا الْكُرْسِيِّ.

*tajlisu zaynabu ʿala hādha -lkursiyyi.*

“Zaynab sits on this chair.”

this indicates that Zaynab usually sits on this chair.

If this usage of the doer verbal-noun to indicate a present action is mostly only for verbs of posture and motion, how then do we indicate this distinction for other verbs? We have answered this in section [TODO: add section to incomplete-action verb] where we said that in order to give the meaning that the action of the verb is happening right now, a verbal sentence can be converted to a subject-information sentence.

#### 23.4.2. Usage of the doer verbal-noun as a future tense verb

The doer verbal-noun may be used in place of the verb it is derived from to indicate an intent on the part of the doer, or to indicate that the action will occur in the future.

This usage of the doer verbal-noun is not just for verbs of posture and motion like the present tense usage. Rather, it is for all verbs in general.

And since intention is something that is mostly expressed by the speaker for himself, rather than for someone else, we will often find this usage with the subject أَنَا *ʾana* “I”.

##### 23.4.2.1. With an indirect doee

Here is an example of the usage of the doer verbal-noun as a future tense verb with an indirect doee:

أَنَا ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ صَدِيقِي فِي الصَّبَاحِ.

*ʾana dhāhibun ʾilā bayti ṣadiqī fi -ṣṣabāhi.*

“I’m going to go to my friend’s house in the morning.”

In the above sentence it is possible for the phrase فِي الصَّبَاحِ *fi -ṣṣabāhi* “in the morning” to be omitted for the same meaning. In that case, surrounding context could tell us that the person is intending to go in the future, and is not actually in the process of going there at present.

Here is another example (by a female speaker):

عِنْدِي كُرَّةٌ فِي الْبَيْتِ فَأَنَا رَاجِعَةٌ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ وَلَاعِبَةٌ بِهَا.

*ʿindī kuratun fi -lbayti faʾana rājiʿatun ʾilā -lbayti walāʿibatun bihā.*

“I have a ball at home, so I’m going to go home and play with it.”

## 23.4.2.2. Difference with the particles سَـ sa- and سَوْفَ sawfa

We have already learned a method to express a future action using the particles سَـ sa- and سَوْفَ sawfa with the incomplete-action verb. So we could also have said:

سَأَذْهَبُ إِلَى بَيْتِ صَدِيقِي.

*sa'adh-habu 'ilā bayti ṣadiqī.*

"I will to go to my friend's house."

The difference between using the particles سَـ sa- and سَوْفَ sawfa and using the doer verbal-noun is that using the doer verbal-noun signifies more emphasis, or, as a possible consequence of the emphasis, that the action is more imminent. That is:

أَنَا ذَاهِبٌ ...

*'ana dhāhibun ...*

"I will [definitely] go ..."

or

"I'm going to go ..."

سَأَذْهَبُ ...

*sa'adh-habu ...*

"[Soon] I will go ..."

## 23.4.2.3. With a direct doer

If a verb takes a direct doer, and we wish to use the direct doer with the verb's doer verbal-noun when the doer verbal-noun is acting as a verb, then we may deal with it in one of three ways:

1. The direct doer in a-state following the doer verbal-noun

The most basic method of dealing with a direct doer of a doer verbal noun is by placing it in the a-state right after the doer verbal-noun. Here is an example,

قَدْ دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ رَجُلٌ شَرِيرٌ. هُوَ قَاتِلٌ سُكَّانِهَا.

*qad dakhalā l-madīnata rajulun ṣharīrun. hua qātilun sukkānahā.*

"An evil man has entered the city. He is going to kill its residents."

2. The direct doer in i-state annexed to the doer verbal-noun

The combination of the doer verbal-noun and following direct doer in the a-state is often replaced with an annexation of the doer verbal-noun to the i-state direct doer. So, for example, instead of the above example, we can say:

قَدْ دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ رَجُلٌ شَرِيرٌ. هُوَ قَاتِلٌ سُكَّانِهَا.

*qad dakhalā l-madīnata rajulun ṣharīrun. hua qātilu sukkānihā.*

"An evil man has entered the city. He is going to kill its residents."

Note that قَاتِلٌ سُكَّانِهَا *qātilu sukkānihā*. can also support the non-verbal meaning of the doer verbal-noun: “killer of its residents”, i.e., he has already killed its residents in the past. So, when an annexation is used with a doer verbal-noun, we will often need surrounding context to tell us whether the verbal (incomplete-action) meaning is intended, or the noun meaning.

This usage of annexing the doer verbal-noun to the i-state direct doee instead of employing the more basic usage of the doer verbal-noun and a following a-state direct doee is optional, but fairly common. In fact, when the doer-verbal noun is indefinite and nūnated, and the direct doee begins with اَلْ al, then the annexation usage becomes predominant over the basic a-state usage. So we will be more likely to see:

أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ.  
'ana fā'iluhu.

instead of:

أَنَا فَاعِلٌ إِنِّي.  
'ana fā'ilun 'iyyāhu.

for the meaning: “I will do it.” Note again, that the latter sentence could also support the nounal meaning of the doer-verbal noun: “I am its doer”, i.e., “the one who did it.”

Similarly, it will be more common to find:

هُوَ قَاتِلُ النَّاسِ.  
huwa qātilu -nnāsi.

instead of:

هُوَ قَاتِلٌ النَّاسِ.  
huwa qātiluni -nnāsa.

for the meaning: “He is going to kill the people.” Note, once again, that the former sentence also supports the meaning: “He is the people’s killer”, i.e., “the one who killed them”, and that context would be needed to tell us which of the two meanings is intended.

The annexation of a doer verbal-noun to its direct doee in the i-state is not the kind of “proper” annexation that we have learned so far. In fact, it is called an *improper annexation* and we shall study it in more detail in chapter **TODO**, if Allāh wills.

3. Quite similar to what we learned in section @ref(the-direct-doe-in-i-state-preceded-by-the-preposition-%D9%84-li) for doing verbal-nouns, the direct doee can follow the doer verbal-noun in the i-state preceded by the preposition لِ li.

This is often optional, as an alternative to the above two methods. For example,

هُوَ قَاتِلٌ لَهُمْ.  
*huwa qātilun lahum.*  
 “He will kill them.”

Using *li* in this manner is also a technique to move the direct doer before the doer verbal-noun for effect, if desired. For example,

هُوَ لَهُمْ قَاتِلٌ.  
*huwa lahum qātilun.*  
 “He will kill them.”

### 23.4.3. The definite doer verbal-noun as a verb

So far we have seen only an indefinite doer verbal-noun being used with the meaning of an incomplete-action verb. However, the definite doer verbal-noun, too, can give this meaning. The meaning is often in the present tense. Here are some examples:

With an indirect doer:

قَدِمَ زَيْدٌ الدَّاهِبُ إِلَى الْجَامِعَةِ.  
*qadima zayduni -dāhāhibu 'ila -ljāmieati.*  
 “Zayd, the one who goes to the university, has arrived.”

With a direct doer in the a-state:

هَرَبْتُ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ الْأَكِلِ الْإِنْسَانَ.  
*harabtu mina -l'asadi -l'ākilu -l'insāna.*  
 “I fled from the lion, the one that eats man.”

With a direct doer in the i-state preceded by the preposition *li*:

سَيَنْجَحُ الطَّالِبُ الْتَّارِكُ لِلْهُوِ.  
*sayanjahu -ttālibu -ttāriku lillahwi.*  
 “The student, the one who leaves idle amusement, will succeed.”

### 23.4.4. Plurals of the doer verbal-noun when used as a verb

We mentioned in section @ref(the-doe-verbal-noun-as-a-noun) that doer-verbal nouns when used with their nunal meaning often have broken plurals along with their sound plural. We gave the example of the doer verbal-noun قَاتِلٌ *qātil* “a killer<sub>m</sub>,” with the sound plural is قَاتِلُونَ *qātilūna* and the broken plurals قُتِلَ *quttāl* and قَتَلَهُ *qatalah*.

When the doer verbal-noun is used as a verb, only the sound plural is permitted to be used, and the broken plurals, if any are not used. So we can only say:

هُمْ قَاتِلُونَ النَّاسَ.  
*hum qātilūna -nnāsa.*  
 and

هُمْ قَاتِلُوا النَّاسِ.  
*hum qātilu -nnāsi.*

for

“They will kill the people.”

not, for example

× هُمْ قُتِلَ النَّاسِ.

(In the second sentence, the ن of قَاتِلُونَ is omitted because it is an annexe noun).

## 23.5. The doee verbal-noun

The doee verbal-noun for form 1 verbs is on the pattern مَفْعُول *mafe'ul*. It carries the meaning of the person or thing to whom the action of the verb has been done. For example, the doee verbal-noun for the verb قَتَلَ يَقْتُلُ “to kill (o s.o.)” is مَقْتُول *maqtūl* and means “a killed person”.

### 23.5.1. The plural of the doee verbal noun

The doee verbal-noun almost always takes the sound plurals *-ūn* for masculine intelligent beings, and *-āt* otherwise. Therefore the plural of the doee verbal-noun مَقْتُول *maqtūl* “a killed person<sub>m</sub>.” is مَقْتُولُونَ *maqtūlūna* “killed persons<sub>m</sub>.” and the plural of the doee verbal-noun مَقْتُولَةٌ *maqtūlah* “a killed person<sub>f</sub>.” is مَقْتُولَاتٌ *maqtūlāt* “killed persons<sub>f</sub>.”

There are only a few doee verbal-nouns that, as an exception, have broken plurals. The broken plural for these exceptions is than always on the pattern مَفَاعِيلٌ *mafā'īl*<sup>2</sup>. For example, the doee verbal-noun for the verb لَعَنَ يَلْعَنُ لَعْنًا “to curse (o s.o.)” is مَلْعُونٌ *malēun* “accursed” and its plural is مَلَايِينٌ *malā'īn*<sup>2</sup>.

### 23.5.2. Usage of the doee verbal-noun

Much of what has been said regarding the doer verbal-noun applies to the doee verbal-noun as well: The doee verbal-noun may be used with a verbal meaning for the incomplete-action verb only. So if we say:

هُوَ مَقْتُولٌ.  
*huwa maqtūl*

with a verbal meaning, then it means “He will be killed.” And if we say it using its nounal meaning, then it means “He is the person killed.”

Unlike the doer verbal-noun which can take doees, since the doee verbal-noun is itself the doee, there is no question of it taking other doees. So this does simplify matters.

## 23.5.3. The doee verbal-nouns of indirect doee verbs

Consider the verb سَأَلَ يَسْأَلُ سَأْلاً “to question (عن ه s.o. about s.th.)”.

Here it is used in a sentence:

سَأَلَ زَيْدٌ زَيْنَبَ عَنْ حَادِثَةٍ.

*sa'ala zaydun zaynaba ʿan ḥādīthah.*

“Zayd questioned Zaynab about an accident.”

In this sentence, زَيْدٌ *zaydun* “Zayd” is the doer. The corresponding doer verbal-noun that refers to him is سَائِلٌ *sā'il* “a questioner<sub>m</sub>”. Next, زَيْنَبُ *zaynaba* “Zaynab” is the direct doee. The corresponding doee verbal-noun that refers to her is مَسْئُولَةٌ *mas'ūlah* “a questioned person<sub>f</sub>”. But how, now, do we refer to the indirect doee: حَادِثَةٌ *ḥādīthatin* “an accident”? The answer is that the doee verbal-noun referring to this indirect doee is مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهَا *mas'ūl ʿanhā* “a thing<sub>f</sub> questioned about”.

Let's analyze this term مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهَا *mas'ūl ʿanhā* “a thing questioned about” carefully. The first word is مَسْئُولٌ *mas'ūl* which shall always be singular masculine, regardless of the gender and number of the indirect doee. The second word is عَنْهَا *ʿanhā* “about it”. Here عَنْ *ʿan* is the same preposition that has been used with the verb. And هَا *hā* is the pronoun that refers to the indirect doee حَادِثَةٌ *ḥādīthatin* “an accident”. If the number or gender of the indirect doee were to change then this would be reflected in this pronoun.

So, for example, if we say,

نَظَرَ زَيْدٌ إِلَى الرِّجَالِ.

*naḏhara zaydun ʾila -rrijāli.*

“Zayd looked at the men.”

then, the doee verbal-noun that refers to الرِّجَالِ *ʾarrijāli* “the men” is مَنْظُورٌ إِلَيْهِمْ *manḏhūr ʾilayhim* “persons<sub>m</sub> looked at”.

If doee verbal-nouns of indirect does are used in sentences then it is the first word (in this case مَنْظُورٌ *manḏhūrun*) that changes for definiteness and state (but not for gender or number, as already discussed). Here are some examples:

From the verb لَعَبَ يَلْعَبُ لَعِبًا “to play (ه s.th.)”:

هَذِهِ الْكُرَى هِيَ الْمَلْعُوبُ بِهَا.

*hādhi -lkurā hiya -lmaleūbu bihā.*

“These balls are the ones played with.”

From the verb أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ أَمْرًا “to order (ه s.o. ب to do s.th.)”:

فَعَلَ الْغُلَامُ الْمَأْمُورَ بِهِنَّ.

*faʿala -lghulāmu -lma'mūra bihinna.*

“The boy did the [things] ordered to do.”

(Remember that the feminine plural pronouns may be used to refer to plural non-intelligent beings, regardless of their grammatical gender, in order to indicate plurality.)

Having said all this, in practice, you may find that indirect doees are sometimes treated as direct doees when forming their doee verbal-noun. This is especially common when forming plurals for terms that are very common. So instead of referring to “[things] ordered to do” in the above example as *’alma’mūra* أَلْمَأْمُورَ بِهِنَّ *bihinna*, you may find the word *’alma’mūrāti* أَلْمَأْمُورَاتِ used instead.

TODO: The doee verbal noun for indirect doees may have some ambiguity with the doee verbal for direct doees. *مسؤول عنه* can also be “the person who is asked about it” where the pronoun has been substituted for a noun, for example *مسؤول عن الأمر*. In this case it is the word *مسؤول* which will be feminized and pluralized. *المسؤولون عنه* “the persons asked about it.”

For that matter *سائل عنه* is also valid as “the questioner about it”.

## 23.6. Doer and doee verbal-nouns re-used as adjectival-nouns

Doer and doee verbal-nouns are often re-used as adjectival-nouns with meanings that are directly formed from their doer and doee meaning respectively. Here are some examples:

Verb	Doer/doe verbal-noun	Adjectival-noun meaning
تَنَمَّ يَنْعَمُ نَعْمَةً “to be soft”	نَاعِم	“soft”
يَبِسَ يَبْيَسُ يَبْؤَسَةً “to be dried up”	يَابِس	“dried up”
حَضَرَ يَحْضُرُ حُضُورًا “to be present”	حَاضِر	“present (attending)”
جَمَعَ يَجْمَعُ جَمْعًا “to gather (هـ s.th.)”	جَامِع	“comprehensive”
لَمَعَ يَلْمَعُ لَمْعًا وَلَمْعَانًا “to be shiny”	لَامِع	“shiny”
فَتَحَ يَفْتَحُ فَتْحًا “to open (هـ s.th.)”	مَفْتُوح	“open”
شَهَرَ يَشْهَرُ شَهْرًا “to make famous (هـ s.o., s.th.)”	مَشْهُور	“famous”

### 23.6.1. Genderizability of doer and doee verbal-nouns when re-used as adjectival-nouns

When a doer or doee verbal-noun is re-used as an adjectival-noun, then it generally retains its genderizability. For example,

بَابٌ مَفْتُوحٌ  
*bābun maftūḥun*  
 “an open door”



and

نَافِذَةٌ مَّفْتُوحَةٌ  
*nāfiḏhatun maftūḥatun*  
 “an open window”

If, however, the adjectival-noun is only applicable to females, then, only a female adjectival-noun is formed but, peculiarly, without the feminine marker ة. The most common example is from the verb: حَمَلَ يَحْمِلُ حَمْلًا “to carry (هـ s.th.)”. The doer verbal-noun is حَامِل *ḥāmil* “a carrier”. The adjectival-noun formed from the doer verbal-noun is “pregnant”, but because it is only applicable to females, it does not get the feminine marker ة. For example,

الْمَرْأَةُ حَامِلَةٌ.  
*‘almar’atu ḥāmil.*  
 “The woman is pregnant.”

This does not affect the doer verbal-noun when it is not used with this adjectival-noun meaning. For example,

الْمَرْأَةُ حَامِلَةُ الْمَاءِ.  
*‘almar’atu ḥāmilatu -lmā’.*  
 “The woman will carry the water.”  
 or  
 “The woman is the water-carrier.”

### 23.6.2. Corresponding with English adjectives

Sometimes both the doer verbal-noun and the doee verbal-noun are used in Arabic with distinct meanings where we would use the same word in English. For example, the verb عَقَلَ يَعْقِلُ عَقْلًا *‘aqala ya‘qilu ‘aqlan* means “to make sense (هـ of s.th.)”. Its doer verbal-noun عَاقِل *‘āqil* means “one who makes sense (of something)” and may be re-used as an adjectival noun meaning “sensible” when it refers to a person who makes sense of something. For example,

زَيْدٌ غُلَامٌ عَاقِلٌ.  
*zaydun ḡhulāmun ‘āqil.*  
 “Zayd is a sensible boy.”

Its doee verbal-noun مَعْقُول *ma‘qūl* means “something which makes sense” and may be re-used as an adjectival noun meaning “sensible” when it refers to a something which makes sense. For example,

هَذَا مَنَهِجٌ مَعْقُولٌ.  
*hādā manhajun ma‘qūl.*  
 “This is a sensible approach.”

### 23.7. Doer and doee verbal-nouns re-used as common nouns

The doer verbal-noun is often re-used as a common noun with a meaning that is either directly, or indirectly related to the meaning of the verb. For example, the doer verbal-noun of the verb سَأَلَ يَسْأَلُ سُؤَالًا *sa'ala yas'alu su'ālan* is سَائِلٌ “a questioner” with the sound plural سَائِلُونَ *sā'ilūna* and the broken plurals سُؤَالٌ *su'āl* and سَأَلَةٌ *sa'alah*.

The word سَائِلٌ *sā'il* “a questioner” is re-used with the meaning “a beggar”. The association in meaning is that a beggar continually asks people for money.

The re-use of a doer verbal-noun or doee verbal-noun as a common noun does not prevent it from being used with its doer/doee or verbal meaning any more. سَائِلٌ *sā'il* may be used to mean both “a questioner” and “a beggar”, and context will help us determine which of the meanings is intended.

When a doer verbal-noun is re-used as a common noun then only the broken plural, if it exists, may be used. The sound plural is only permitted to be used if no broken plurals exist. Here are some more examples of doer verbal-nouns re-used as common nouns:

Verb	Doer/doee verbal-noun	Plural	Common noun meaning
عَلِمَ يَعْلَمُ عِلْمًا “to know (هـ s.th.)”	عَالِمٌ	عُلَمَاء <sup>2</sup>	“a scholar”
طَلَبَ يَطْلُبُ طَلْبًا “to seek (هـ s.th.)”	طَالِبٌ	طُلَّابٌ، طَلَبَةٌ	“a student”
لَاعَبَ يَلْعَبُ لَعِبًا “to play (هـ s.th.)”	لَاعِبٌ	لَاعِبُونَ	“a player”
جَمَعَ يَجْمَعُ جَمْعًا “to gather (هـ s.th.)”	جَامِعَةٌ	جَامِعَاتٌ	“a university”
جَمَعَ يَجْمَعُ جَمْعًا “to gather (هـ s.th.)”	جَامِعٌ	جَوَامِع <sup>2</sup>	“a mosque (in which the Friday prayers are performed)”
حَدَثَ يَحْدُثُ حَدْوثًا “to happen”	حَادِثَةٌ	حَوَادِث <sup>2</sup>	“an accident”
شَرِبَ يَشْرَبُ شَرْبًا “to drink (هـ s.th.)”	شَارِبٌ	شَوَارِب <sup>2</sup>	“a moustache”
سَخَلَ يَسْخُلُ سَخْلًا “to abrade (هـ s.th.)”	سَاحِلٌ	سَوَاحِل <sup>2</sup>	“a seashore”
صَمِنَ يَصْمِنُ صِمَانًا “to guarantee (هـ s.th.)”	مَضْمُونٌ	مَضَامِين <sup>2</sup>	“a content (of a letter, etc.)”
دَخَلَ يَدْخُلُ دُخُولًا “to enter”	دَاحِلٌ	none	“inside”
خَرَجَ يَخْرُجُ خُرُوجًا “to exit”	خَارِجٌ	none	“outside”

The last two دَاحِلٌ “inside” and خَارِجٌ “outside” are notable. Here, for example, is how they can be used:

غَسَلَ الْكُؤَبَ مِنْ دَاخِلٍ.

*ghāsala -lkūba min dākḥilin.*

“He washed the tumbler from inside.”

### 23.7.1. Genderizability of doer and doee verbal-nouns when re-used as common nouns

When a doer or doee verbal-noun is re-used as a common noun, then it loses its genderizability. For example, if we wish to say “The building is a university.” we will say:

الْبِنَاءُ جَامِعَةٌ.

*‘albinā’u jāmīeah.*

“The building is a university.”

We cannot masculinize جَامِعَةٌ *jāmīeah* “a university” to جَامِع *jāmīe* in order to make it match the gender of بِنَاء *binā’* (masc.) “a building”. Were we to do so, then جَامِع *jāmīe* would get interpreted with either:

1. Its doer verbal-noun meaning “a gatherer”:

“The building is a gatherer.”

which doesn’t make sense as a sentence.

2. Or, with the common noun meaning of جَامِع *jāmīe*, if one happens to exist. There is such a meaning in this case: “a mosque (in which the Friday prayers are performed)”. So then we would get:

الْبِنَاءُ جَامِعٌ.

*‘albinā’u jāmīeun.*

“The building is a mosque (in which the Friday prayers are performed).”

3. Or, with the adjectival noun meaning of جَامِع *jāmīe*, if one happens to exist. There is such a meaning in this case: “comprehensive”. So then we would get:

الْبِنَاءُ جَامِعٌ.

*‘albinā’u jāmīeun.*

“The building is comprehensive.”

None of these give the original meaning we intended: “The building is a university.” So, in summary, once a doer or doee verbal-noun is re-used as a common noun, it loses its genderizability.

Having said this, when a doer verbal-noun is re-used as a common noun that applies to humans, both the masculine and feminine common-noun typically exist together. So for example,

عَالِم *‘ālim* is re-used as the common-noun for “a (male) scholar” with the plural عُلَمَاء *‘ulamā’*.<sup>2</sup> And

عَالِمَةٌ *ʿālimah* is re-used as the common-noun for “a (female) scholar” with the plural عَالِمَات *ʿālimāt*.

In such cases, i.e., when applicable to humans, the dictionary will generally only list, and supply the definition for the masculine common-noun. The reader is expected to know that its feminine exists and how to form it.

There are exceptions, however. The verb جَرَى يَجْرِي جَرًّا *jarā yajrī jaryan* “to run” is formed from the root جري. This is a weak root because of the letter ي in it, and we will study it in more detail later in chapter @ref(roots-with-weak-final-letter). In any case, its feminine doer verbal-noun is جَارِيَةٌ *jāriyah* and is re-used for the common noun meaning “a girl”. The masculine doer verbal noun is not re-used as a common noun for the meaning “a boy”.

Work in progress

## Chapter 24.

### The verb كَانَ

#### 24.1. Introduction

We have learned that a verb must have a doer in the u-state and can have a direct doee in the a-state. In this chapter, we will learn about a new type of verb, whose doer is called its subject, and whose direct doee is called its information.

The principal verb of this type is كَانَ which is used to mean “was”. There are other verbs which behave in a similar manner and they are called the *sisters* of كَانَ.

#### 24.2. كَانَ, its subject, and its information

Consider the sentence:

الرَّجُلُ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
“The man is a teacher.”

This is a subject-information sentence. الرَّجُلُ is the subject in the u-state, and مُعَلِّمٌ is the information, also in the u-state. Arabic does not, in this case, express any word for “is”.

Consider now the following sentence:

كَانَ الرَّجُلُ مُعَلِّمًا.  

direct doee/  
information
doer/  
subject

Now, as you can see, Arabic does express a word for “was”. It is the past verb كَانَ *kāna*. كَانَ is a hollow verb from the root كون. Its resembling verb is يَكُونُ *yakūnu*. The complete table for this verb for all doer pronouns is given below:

Doer pronoun	past verb	resembling verb
he	كَانَ	يَكُونُ
she	كَانَتْ	تَكُونُ

Doer pronoun	past verb	resembling verb
you <sub>1m</sub>	كُنْتَ	تَكُونُ
you <sub>1f</sub>	كُنْتِ	تَكُونِينَ
I	كُنْتُ	أَكُونُ
they <sub>2m</sub>	كَانَا	يَكُونَانِ
they <sub>2f</sub>	كَانَتَا	تَكُونَانِ
you <sub>2</sub>	كُنْتُمَا	تَكُونَانِ
they <sub>3m</sub>	كَانُوا	يَكُونُونَ
they <sub>3f</sub>	كُنَّ	يَكُنَّ
you <sub>3m</sub>	كُنْتُمْ	تَكُونُونَ
you <sub>3f</sub>	كُنْتُنَّ	تَكُنَّ
we	كُنَّا	نَكُونُ

Like, for other verbs, the doer of كَانَ, الرَّجُلُ, is in the u-state, and its direct doer, مُعَلِّمًا, is in the a-state.

However, unlike most other verbs, the doer of كَانَ, الرَّجُلُ, is also called its subject and its direct doer, مُعَلِّمًا, is also called its information.<sup>1</sup>

So a sentence with كَانَ used in this way is a subject-information sentence. If it begins with كَانَ then it is also a verbal sentence at the same time.

This property also applies to the sisters of كَانَ that we will learn later in this chapter. Together, these verbs are also called *deficient* verbs, because, besides their doer/subject, they also need an information to complete the meaning of the sentence. That is, without the information, the sentence is deficient.

“Is” subject-information sentences can be converted to “was” subject-information sentences using the verb كَانَ. Here are some examples:

“is”	“was”
زَيْنَبٌ جَائِعَةٌ. “Zaynab is hungry.”	كَانَتْ زَيْنَبٌ جَائِعَةً. “Zaynab was hungry.”
الْغُلَامُ زَيْدٌ. “The boy is Zayd.”	كَانَ الْغُلَامُ زَيْدًا. “The boy was Zayd.”
النِّسَاءُ فِي بُيُوتِهِنَّ. “The women are in their houses.”	كَانَتِ النِّسَاءُ فِي بُيُوتِهِنَّ. “The women were in their houses.”
هُمْ مَسْرُورُونَ وَفَرِحُونَ. “They <sub>3m</sub> are happy and rejoicing.”	كَانُوا مَسْرُورِينَ وَفَرِحِينَ. “They <sub>3m</sub> were happy and rejoicing.”
أَنَا نَائِمَةٌ. “I am sleeping.”	كُنْتُ نَائِمَةً. “I was sleeping.”

<sup>1</sup>The Baṣran school explained the reason for the خبر of كَانَ being منصوب that it is a مفعول به. The Kūfan school, on the other hand, considered it a حال.

From المقاصد الشافية في شرح الخلاصة الكافية (شرح ألفية ابن مالك) للشاطبي vol. 2, p. 137:

لَمَّا كَانَ وَجْهٌ نَصْبُهُ مُخْتَلَفًا فِيهِ بَيْنَ الْبَصْرِيِّينَ وَالْكُوفِيِّينَ؛ فَذَهَبَ الْبَصْرِيُّونَ إِلَى أَنَّهُ مَنْصُوبٌ خَبَرًا لَهَا، فَالْمَبْتَدَأُ وَالْخَبَرُ مَعَهَا كَالْفَاعِلِ وَالْمَفْعُولِ. وَذَهَبَ الْكُوفِيُّونَ إِلَى أَنَّهُ يَنْصَبُ عَلَى الْحَالِ.

“is”	“was”
“I <sub>if</sub> am sleeping.” أَنْتَ لِي أَخٌ. “You <sub>im</sub> are a brother to me.	“I <sub>if</sub> was sleeping.” كُنْتُ لِي أَخًا. “You <sub>im</sub> were a brother to me.

### 24.2.1. Sequence of كَانَ, its subject, and its information

In sentence word order, the natural sequence is verb, subject, information.

كَانَ زَيْدٌ قَائِمًا.

“Zayd was standing.”

but we may also, for the same meaning, apply the sequence verb, information, subject:

كَانَ قَائِمًا زَيْدٌ.

“Zayd was standing.”

and also the sequence information, verb, subject:

قَائِمًا كَانَ زَيْدٌ.

“Zayd was standing.”

This last order is common in questions and alternative sentence sentences. For example:

أَفَقَائِمًا كَانَ زَيْدٌ.

“Was Zayd standing?”

أَذْعُ زَيْدًا قَائِمًا كَانَ أَوْ جَالِسًا!

“Call Zayd, be he standing or sitting!”

Sometimes, however, this inversion is impossible because of an indistinguishable state of the two nouns.

For example, in order to express “My brother was my companion,” we must say:

كَانَ أَخِي رَفِيقِي.

“My brother was my companion.”

This is because, if we invert it, it would naturally mean:

كَانَ رَفِيقِي أَخِي.

“My companion was my brother.”

The following apparent sequence is also possible:

زَيْدٌ كَانَ قَائِمًا.

“Zayd: he was standing.”

But this is actually a topic-comment sentence. زَيْدٌ is the topic. And the comment is كَانَ قَائِمًا, which is itself a كَانَ subject-information sentence in the sequence

verb, subject, information. The subject is the hidden pronoun “he” and the information is فَايَّمًا.

### 24.2.2. Plurals of non-rational beings with كَانَ

Because كَانَ sentences are subject-information being sentences, many of the rules that we have learned for subject-information sentences also apply to كَانَ sentences. One such rule is that when the subject of a sentence is a plural of non-rational beings, and the information is an adjectival noun, then the feminine singular adjectival noun is often used. (See section @ref(usage-of-plurals-of-non-intelligent-beings).) For example:

كَانَتِ الْبُيُوتُ صَغِيرَةً. (typical)  
“The houses were small.”

Also allowed, but not as common:

كَانَتِ الْبُيُوتُ صَغِيرَاتٍ.  
كَانَتِ الْبُيُوتُ صِغَارًا.

الْتَّيْرَانُ كَانَتْ صَخْمَةً. (typical)  
“The bulls were large.”

Also allowed, but not as common:

الْتَّيْرَانُ كَانَتْ صَخَامًا.  
الْتَّيْرَانُ كُنَّ صَخَمَاتٍ.

### 24.2.3. كَانَ with a separating pronoun

Another rule that applies to subject-information sentences, and that carries over to كَانَ sentences, is that when the subject and information are both definite, then a separating pronoun, which is a detached pronoun that matches the subject, can be inserted between them. For example,

كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ هُمُ الْفَائِزِينَ.  
“The believers were the winners.”

The separating pronoun هُمْ does not, in this case, serve to disambiguate the information الْفَائِزِينَ “the winners”, from being a describer, as it did in sentences without كَانَ (see section @ref(subject-information-sentences-separating-pronoun)). This is because the a-state of الْفَائِزِينَ already tells us that it is the information of كَانَ. If الْفَائِزِينَ were a describer of the u-state subject الْمُؤْمِنُونَ, then it too would be in the u-state, not the a-state. So the separating pronoun serves more, here, to emphasize the subject.

Most of the time, separating pronouns are used in كَانَ sentences when the subject of كَانَ is itself a pronoun. Examples:



وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ

“And it is We who were the inheritors” [al-Qur’ān 28:58, translation by Saheeh International]

كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“You were the Observer over them” [al-Qur’ān 5:117, translation by Saheeh International]

Sometimes a pronoun may appear to be a separating pronoun, but actually is not one. Consider, for example, the following sentence:

كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ.

“The believers were the winners.”

Note that *الْفَائِزُونَ* is in the u-state, so it is not, by itself, the information of *كَانَ*. So this is, in fact, a topic-comment sentence. *الْمُؤْمِنُونَ* is the topic and the subject of *كَانَ*. The information of *كَانَ* is the comment *هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ*, which is itself a subject-information sentence with a u-state subject (*هُمْ*) and a u-state information (*الْفَائِزُونَ*).

#### 24.2.4. Negating *كَانَ*

Like other past verbs, the verb *كَانَ* may be negated by preceding it with the particle *مَا*. For example:

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allāh]. And he was not of the polytheists.” (al-Qur’ān 3:67, translation Saheeh International)

A similar meaning may be obtained with the particle *لَمْ* followed by the o-state resembling verb *يَكُنْ*. This is dealt with in section @ref(lam-yakun) below.

#### 24.2.5. Gender of a pronoun subject of *كَانَ*

Remember from section @ref(gender-of-pronoun-subject) that when the subject of a sentence is a pronoun, then it may optionally either match the gender of the noun it refers to, or the the gender of the predicate. This rules carries over to *كَانَ* subject-information sentences as well. For example:

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى السُّوقِ فِي الصَّبَاحِ. وَكَانَتْ لِي عَادَةً.

“I went to the market in the morning. And it was a habit for me.”

وَرَكِبُوهُمْ فَكَانَتْ هَزِيمَتُهُمْ

“And they bore down upon them and it was their defeat.”

Note, how, in the above examples, *كَانَتْ* has a ت of femininity to match the feminine gender of the information *عَادَة* “habit”, and *هَزِيمَتُهُمْ* “their defeat”.

## 24.2.6. A pronoun as the information of كَانَ

TODO

## 24.3. The resembling verb يَكُونُ

The rules related to كَانَ, its subject, and its information, that we have given above apply also to its resembling verb يَكُونُ.

We will now discuss the usages of the specific states of the resembling verb.

## 24.3.1. The u-state resembling verb يَكُونُ

We have already mentioned that Arabic does not usually express any word for “is”. So when, then, is the u-state resembling verb يَكُونُ used? There are actually a few uses of this verb. We will explain them below:

## 24.3.1.1. يَكُونُ used for habitual “is”

Consider the sentence, “The mother cooks the food.” The verb “cooks” implies that the action is habitually done, not necessarily that it is being done at present. If we wished to say that the action is being done at present, we might instead say, “The mother *is cooking* the food.” English maintains this distinction between the present and the habitual for most verbs. But it does not for the verb “is”. So if we say, “The sky is blue,” then it can mean both (i) that the sky is blue at present, or (ii) that it is habitually blue, not necessarily that it is blue at present.

In Arabic the situation is somewhat different. Arabic does not usually have a distinction between the present and the habitual for most verbs. So تَطْبُخُ الْأُمُّ الطَّعَامَ. may mean both (i) that the mother is cooking the food at present, or (ii) that she habitually does.

But for the verb “is”, Arabic can distinguish between the present and the habitual. So if we say السَّمَاءُ زُرْقَاءُ, then this can, in general, mean both (i) that the sky is blue at present, and (ii) that it is habitually blue. If we wish to emphasize the habitual meaning, we may use the resembling verb يَكُونُ, thus:

تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ زُرْقَاءَ.

“The sky is [habitually] blue.”

While we call this the habitual يَكُونُ, it can include a range of meanings, including continually, recurring, regularly, typically, generally, often, sometimes, can, may, etc. Habitual يَكُونُ is negated using مَا or لَا, just like other u-state resembling verbs.

Here are some examples:

قَالَ وَمَا الْبَيْعُ وَالْمِزْرُ؟ قُلْتُ شَرَابٌ يَكُونُ مِنَ الْعَسَلِ وَالْمِزْرُ يَكُونُ مِنَ الشَّعِيرِ  
 “He said: ‘What is mead and beer?’ I said: ‘A drink [made] from honey, and beer is [made] from barley.’

(Part of ḥadīth 5604 from Sunan al-Nisā’i)

يَكُونُ اللَّحَافُ وِسَادَةً وَلَا تَكُونُ الْوِسَادَةُ لِحَافًا.

“The blanket can be a pillow but the pillow cannot be a blanket.”

مَا يَكُونُ الرَّجُلُ صَدِيقَكَ حَتَّى يَصْدَقَكَ.

“A man is not your friend until he is truthful to you.”

#### 24.3.1.1.1. قَدْ يَكُونُ for “may be”

When the meaning “may be” is desired, the the resembling verb يَكُونُ may be preceded by the particle قَدْ. For example,

قَدْ يَكُونُ الْأَسْتِهْزَاءُ كُفْرًا.

“Mocking may be a disbelief.”

#### 24.3.1.2. يَكُونُ used for future “will be”

Another usage of the resembling verb يَكُونُ is for the future tense to mean “will be”. In this case, it is often preceded by سَوْفَ or سَيُ. سَوْفَ and سَيُ are optional and are commonly dropped, especially when the context indicates the future. Future يَكُونُ is negated by لَا. Here are some examples:

فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا

“For you [disbelievers] have denied, so it [i.e., your denial] is going to be adherent.”

(al-Qur’ān 25:77, translation Saheeh International)

لَا يَكُونُ اللَّعَّانُونَ شُفَعَاءَ وَلَا شُهَدَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“The frequent cursers will be neither intercessors nor witnesses [on] the day of resurrection.”

(Ḥadīth 1553 from Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn, يَوْمَ is in the a-state because it is an adverb of time, see chapter @ref(adverb-of-time).)

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

“It is the Day when people will be like moths, dispersed,”

(al-Qur’ān 101:4, translation Saheeh International)

#### 24.3.2. The a-state resembling verb يَكُونُ

Like a-state resembling verbs in general, يَكُونُ “be” expresses the meaning of purpose, wish, or expectation. It occurs after the particles اِنَّ, اَنْ, لَنْ, لَ, كَيْ, and اِذَنْ. All this is consistent with what we have learned about a-state resembling verbs in chapter @ref(a-state-incomplete-action-verbs). Here are some examples:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ. عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ  
 “The Trustworthy Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down. Upon your heart,  
 [O Muḥammad] - that you may be of the warners -”  
 (al-Qur’ān 26:193–194, translation Saheeh International)

لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ  
 “Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allāh, nor would the angels  
 near [to Him]”  
 (From al-Qur’ān 4:172, translation Saheeh International)

أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ  
 “Then, [O Muḥammad], would you compel the people in order that they become  
 believers?”  
 (al-Qur’ān 10:99, translation Saheeh International)

### 24.3.3. The o-state resembling verb يَكُنْ

The o-state resembling verb يَكُنْ is used consistent with the usage of o-state resembling verbs in general. (See chapter @ref(o-state-resembling-verbs).)

For example:

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
 “And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, en-  
 joining what is right and forbidding what is wrong,<sup>1</sup> and those will be the suc-  
 cessful.”  
 [From al-Qur’ān 3:104, translation by Saheeh International]

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ  
 “The truth is from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters.” [From al-Qur’ān  
 3:60, translation by Saheeh International]

لَمْ يَكُنِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَبَابًا وَلَا فَحَاشًا وَلَا نَعَاتًا  
 “The Prophet (ﷺ) was not one who would abuse (others) or say obscene words,  
 or curse (others)”  
 [From Ḥadīth in al-Bukhārī:6031]

#### 24.3.3.1. Deletion of ن

The ن may (irregularly) be deleted for the o-state resembling verbs that don’t have a و before them. These are:

- يَكُنْ, becomes يَكْ
- تَكُنْ, becomes تَكْ
- نَكُنْ, becomes نَكْ
- أَكُنْ, becomes أَكْ

This may only be done when the word following the verb does not begin with a connecting hamzah ا. Examples:

وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

“and do not be in distress over what they conspire.”

[From al-Qur’ān 16:127, translation by Saheeh International]

وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا

“for I created you before, while you were nothing”

[From al-Qur’ān 19:9, translation by Saheeh International]

But we can’t say:

لَمْ تَكُ الرَّجُلُ. ×

This is because الرَّجُلُ begins with a connecting hamzah ا. So we have to say instead:

لَمْ تَكُنِ الرَّجُلُ.

“You were not the man.”

## 24.4. The verb of command كُنْ

The verb of command كُنْ is used to mean “Be!”. Examples:

قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

We [i.e., Allāh] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

[al-Qur’ān 21:69, translation by Saheeh International]

فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

“and We said to them, ‘Be apes, despised.’

[From al-Qur’ān 2:65, translation by Saheeh International]

The verb of command كُنْ followed by the name of a person in the a-state is used to express one’s guessing that the person whom one sees is the individual named. For example:

كُنْ زَيْدًا.

“I presume that the person approaching is Zayd.”

or

“I guess that you are Zayd.”

## 24.5. The complete كَانَ

The verb of command كَانَ that we have been using so far is called the *deficient* كَانَ. It is called so because its meaning is deficient without its information. For example, in the sentence كَانَ زَيْدٌ قَائِمًا “Zayd was standing,” if we remove the information قَائِمًا then the sentence is not complete for the desired meaning.

There is another type of كَانَ called the *complete* كَانَ. This كَانَ does not need an information to complete its meaning. This كَانَ gives the meaning of “exists”. In English, we usually express this meaning using “there was”. For example,

كَانَ مَلِكٌ.

“There was a king.”

(literally: “A king was.”)

Note that مَلِك “king” is in the u-state as the subject. If it were in the a-state, then it would change the meaning:

كَانَ مَلِكًا.

“He was a king.”

Here are some more examples:

كَانَ تَاجِرٌ وَكَانَ لَهُ بَنُونَ.

“There was a trader, and he had sons.”

Incidentally, as you can see, the past verb of “have”: “has” is expressed using كَانَ:

كَانَ عِنْدِي كِتَابٌ.

“I had a book.”

(literally: “A book was for me.”)

يَكُونُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ دَجَالُونَ كَذَّابُونَ

“There will be in the end of time charlatan liars”

[From Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:7]

إِنَّهَا تَكُونُ الظُّلْمَةُ وَالسَّيْلُ

“[At times there] is darkness and flooding”

[From Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:667]

لَمْ تَكُنْ الْحَرْبُ.

“The war didn’t occur.”

(literally: “The war was not.”)

## 24.6. Time signification of the past verb كَانَ

The general signification of the past verb كَانَ is to indicate a state that existed in the past, and that has possibly ceased. For example:

كَانَ زَيْدٌ قَائِمًا

“Zayd was standing.”

This statement is regarding Zayd’s state in the past and the implication is that he is possibly no longer standing.

This is the most common signification of the past verb كَانَ and the one that we have been using so far. But كَانَ is special in that it admits additional significations:

The second signification of كَانَ is to indicate a state that, at first, had not yet begun, and which then began and remained, possibly up to the present. It has, in this sense, the meaning “became”, “has become”, or “happened”. Examples:

أَبَىٰ وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”

[From al-Qur’ān 2:34, translation by Saheeh International]

اُخْتَرَقَ الْخَشَبُ فَكَانَ تُرَابًا.

“The wood burned and so became dust.”

A third signification of كَانَ is to indicate a state that will be in the future. For example:

وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا

“and [they] fear a Day whose evil will be widespread.”

[From al-Qur’ān 76:7, translation by Saheeh International]

A fourth signification of كَانَ is to indicate a state that always existed and will always exist.<sup>2</sup> For example:

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

“And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful.”

[From al-Qur’ān 33:73, translation by Saheeh International]

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَجِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.”

[From al-Qur’ān 17:32, translation by Saheeh International]

<sup>2</sup>From [3:110] كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا لَمَّا بَدَأْتُمْ وَالْوَاقِعُ لَا يَنْكُرُهُمْ أَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

وظاهر كان هنا أنها الناقصة، وخير أمة هو الخبر. ولا يراد بها هنا الدلالة على مضي الزمان وانقطاع النسبة نحو قولك: كان زيد قائماً، بل المراد دوام النسبة كقوله: {وكان الله غفوراً رحيماً} [الأحزاب: 73] {ولا تقربوا الزنا إنه كان فاحشة وساء سبيلاً} [الإسراء: 32] وكون كان تدل على الدوام ومرادفه لم يزل قولاً مرجوحاً، بل الأصح أنها كسائر الأفعال تدل على الانقطاع، ثم قد تستعمل حيث لا يراد الانقطاع. وقيل: كان هنا بمعنى صار، أي صرتم خير أمة. وقيل: كان هنا تامة، وخير أمة حال. وأبعد من ذهب إلى أنها زائدة، لأن الزائدة لا تكون أول كلام، ولا عمل لها. وقال الزمخشري: كان عبارة عن وجود الشيء في من ماض على سبيل الإبهام، وليس فيه دليل على عدم سابق، ولا على انقطاع طارئ. ومنه قوله تعالى: {وكان الله غفوراً رحيماً}. ومنه قوله: كنتم خير أمة، كأنه قيل: وجدتم خير أمة انتهى كلامه. فقوله: أنها لا تدل على عدم سابق هذا إذا لم تكن بمعنى صار، فإذا كانت بمعنى صار دللت على عدم سابق. فإذا قلت: كان زيد عالماً بمعنى صار، دللت على أنه انتقل من حالة الجهل إلى حالة العلم. وقوله: ولا على انقطاع طارئ قد ذكرنا قبل أن الصحيح أنها كسائر الأفعال يدل لفظ المضي منها على الانقطاع، ثم قد تستعمل حيث لا يكون انقطاع. وفرق بين الدلالة والاستعمال، ألا ترى أنك تقول: هذا اللفظ يدل على العموم؛ ثم تستعمل حيث لا يراد العموم، بل المراد الخصوص. وقوله: كأنه قال وجدتم خير أمة، هذا يعارض أنها مثل قوله: {وكان الله غفوراً رحيماً} لأن تقديره وجدتم خير أمة يدل على أنها تامة، وأن خير أمة حال. وقوله: {وكان الله غفوراً رحيماً} لا شك أنها هنا الناقصة فتعارض.

## 24.7. كَانَ combined with other verbs

The past verb كَانَ and its resembling verb يَكُونُ are combined with other verbs to express complex tenses in the past and the future, respectively. We will explain these combinations below.

### 24.7.1. كَانَ combined with a resembling verb

كَانَ is combined with a following resembling verb to express that the action of the verb was repeatedly or continually occurring in the past. For example:

كَانَ زَيْدٌ يَكْتُبُ.

“Zayd was writing.”

or

“Zayd used to write.”

or

“Zayd would write.”

This sentence can be analyzed grammatically as a topic-comment sentence. The subject of كَانَ is زَيْدٌ and it is the topic of the sentence. The information of كَانَ is itself a sentence يَكْتُبُ “he writes”, and it is the comment of the main sentence.

The order of the subject and the resembling verb can be re-arranged for the same meaning thus:

كَانَ يَكْتُبُ زَيْدٌ.

Now, two grammatical analyses are possible:

1. زَيْدٌ is the doer of يَكْتُبُ, and the subject of كَانَ is a hidden pronoun of the fact.
2. زَيْدٌ is the delayed subject of كَانَ and يَكْتُبُ is the information of كَانَ. The doer of يَكْتُبُ is a hidden pronoun.

Either way, the meaning, as we have mentioned, is the same. Here are some more examples for different types of doers/subjects:

كَانَ يَعْْبُدُ مُشْرِكُو مَكَّةَ الْأَصْنَامَ.

or

كَانَ مُشْرِكُو مَكَّةَ يَعْْبُدُونَ الْأَصْنَامَ.

“The polytheists of Makkah used to worship idols.”

كَانَتْ تُحِبُّ الصَّدَقَةَ.

“She used to love [to practice] charity.”

[From Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:1420]

كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ

“their messengers used to come to them with clear evidences”

[From al-Qur’ān 64:6, translation by Saheeh International]

(Sound plurals, even of rational beings, may be treated as grammatically singular feminine. See section @ref(sound-plurals-sing-fem).)





لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَسْأَلُونَ عَنِ الْإِسْنَادِ

“They would not ask about the chains of narration”

[From Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Introduction]

In terms of the differences between these constructions مَا كَانَ يَفْعَلُ imparts more emphasis in the denial than كَانَ لَا يَفْعَلُ.

There is also difference between the options كَانَ لَا يَفْعَلُ and مَا كَانَ يَفْعَلُ in terms of when one would be used instead of the other.<sup>3</sup> For example, if someone says to you: “I thought I saw you writing yesterday.” To reply in the negative, you would say: مَا كُنْتُ أَكْتُبُ instead of كُنْتُ لَا أَكْتُبُ to mean “I was not writing.”

The construction مَا كَانَ يَفْعَلُ is also used when one wishes to say that one never used to do something due to one’s circumstances And also to mean that one did not know how to do something in the past. For example,

مَا كُنْتُ أَحْفَظُ شِعْرًا.

“I used to not memorize any poetry.”

As for كَانَ لَا يَفْعَلُ, it connotes an intentional or purposeful lack of doing something. Whereas, with مَا كَانَ يَفْعَلُ, the lack of action may be incidental. For example, كَانَ لَا يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ “He used to not read the Qur’ān imparts that the person was intentionally not doing so. Whereas مَا كَانَ يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ does not convey the intentionality of the lack of action. For example, the person may not have been reading the Qur’ān because he did not know how to.

#### 24.7.1.3. The combination of كَانَ with يَكُونُ

Occasionally, كَانَ can be combined with its own resembling verb يَكُونُ This gives the meaning “was being” or “used to be”. يَكُونُ is, in this combination, often optional and may be dropped for no change in meaning. Examples:

كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مَهْنَةٍ أَهْلِيهِ

[From Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:676]

and

كَانَ فِي مَهْنَةٍ أَهْلِيهِ

[From Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:6039]

“He used to keep himself busy serving his family”

قَدْ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي الْأُمَمِ مُحَدَّثُونَ

“There used to be in the nations inspired persons”

[From Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī:2398]

رَجَالٌ كَانُوا يَكُونُونَ مَعَ الْمُلُوكِ

“men that used to be with the kings”

كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي الْبَيْتِ

“He used to be in the house.”

<sup>3</sup>معاني النحو لفاضل صالح السامرائي 31/222

## 24.7.1.4. Possible past occurrence

Sometimes *كَانَ* is used with a resembling verb to express an action that could have occurred in the past, or should have. Examples:

كَانَ يَكُونُ سُوءَ أَدَبٍ.

“It would have been a misbehavior.”

فَقَالَ حُذَيْفَةُ أَنْتَ كُنْتَ تَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ

“Ḥudhayfah said: ‘You might have done that.’”

[From Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:1788]

24.7.1.5. Omission of *كَانَ*

If one or more past verbs precedes the resembling verb or if the context indicates that the action was occurring in the past, then *كَانَ* can be omitted, and the resembling verb is used by itself. For example:

قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَزْوَاجَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ

“Say,” Then why did you kill the prophets of Allāh before”

[From al-Qur’ān 2:91, translation by Saheeh International]

(No *تَقْتُلُونَ* before *تَقْتُلُونَ*.)

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ

“And they followed [instead] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon”

[From al-Qur’ān 2:102, translation by Saheeh International]

(No *تَتْلُوا* before *تَتْلُوا*.)

24.7.1.6. *كَانَ* followed by a doer or doee verbal-noun instead of a resembling verb

Instead of a resembling verb after *كَانَ*, its doer or doee verbal noun may be used instead. And this can give the effect of a state of being rather than an action being done. For example:

كَانَ سَاكِنًا فِي الْمَدِينَةِ.

“He was dwelling in the city.”

كَانَتْ الْعَصِيَّ مَرْكُوزَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ.

“The staffs were sticking in the ground.”

(*كَانَتْ تُرْكُزُ* would imply that they were being stuck.)

When the verbal noun refers to an action taking place in the future, the idea of futurity is transferred to a past time. For example:

أَمْرٌ كَانَ مَفْعُولًا

“a matter which was to be done”

## 24.7.2. كَانَ combined with a past verb

كَانَ is combined with a following past verb to denote an action completed prior to some past (specified or implied) point in time. Example:

مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَّاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ بْنِ اللَّيْثِ.

“al-Rashīd died at Tūs after (literally: and) he had set out for K̤hūrāsān to combat Rāfi‘ ibn al-Layth.”

The particle قَدْ is often used when كَانَ is combined with a past verb. قَدْ may be placed either between كَانَ and the following past verb, or before كَانَ. Examples:

كُنْتُ قَدْ رَبَّيْتُ جَارِيَةً

“I had brought up a girl”

قَدْ كَانَتْ فَرَعَتْ مِنْ عَمَلِهَا.

“She had been done with her work.”

When there are multiple past verbs, and one (or more) of them occurred farther in the past than the others, it is indicated with قَدْ, the others having merely كَانَ. We re-use a previous example here and extend it:

مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَّاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ بْنِ اللَّيْثِ.

وَكَانَ رَافِعٌ هَذَا قَدْ خَرَجَ وَخَلَعَ الطَّاعَةَ وَتَغَلَّبَ عَلَى سَمَرْقَنْدٍ.

“al-Rashīd died at Tūs after he had set out for K̤hūrāsān to combat Rāfi‘ ibn al-Layth. And this Rāfi‘ had already rebelled and cast off his allegiance and taken forcible possession of Samarqand.”

(Note how قَدْ is only used before Rāfi‘’s action of rebelling.)

## 24.7.2.1. Negation

This combination may, again, be negated in multiple ways. Examples:

لَا يَأْتِي ابْنَ آدَمَ النَّذْرُ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَكُنْ قَدْ قَدَّرْتَهُ

“Vowing does not bring to the son of Adam anything I have not already written in his fate,”

[From Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:6609]

وَدِدْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكُنْ خَرَجْتُ الْعَامَ

“I wish I had not come out (for Ḥajj) this year”

[From Sunan Abi Dawūd:1778]

وَمَا كَانَ قَدْ أَتَاهَا بِشَيْءٍ<sup>4</sup>

“And he had not brought her anything”

<sup>4</sup>From إحياء علوم الدين لأبي حامد الغزالي (without إسناده):

24.7.3. *يَكُونُ combined with a past verb*

The resembling verb *يَكُونُ* is combined with a past verb (often with an interposed *قَدْ*) to express that the action is conceived of having been completed in the future. Examples:

يَكُونُ قَدْ وَجِبَ عَلَيْكَ صَدَقَةٌ

“Charity will have been incumbent upon you”

[From *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*:1793]

فَلَنَأْخُذَهُ فَتَكُونُ قَدْ أَخَذْنَا عَوَضًا

“Let us take him for (then) we will have taken a substitute”

24.7.3.1. *a-state يَكُونُ combined with a past verb*

An a-state *يَكُونُ* is combined with a past verb to express being in a state of an action having occurred or that might have occurred. For example:

خَافَ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ خَطَأَ

“He feared that he could have erred.”

وَيَجُوزُ أَنْ يَكُونُوا قَدْ سَبَقُوا

“And that they might have been preceded is possible”

يَشْطَرِطُ فِي النَّائِبِ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ حَجَّ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ

“It is conditional for the deputy that he be in as state of already having performed the Ḥajj for himself.”

24.7.4. *Verb of command كُنْ combined with a resembling verb*

Occasionally, the verb of command *كُنْ* is combined with a resembling verb, thus:

كُنْ أَنْتَ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ

“You be speaking to them!”

---

وَكَانَ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ عَامِلًا لِعَمْرِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ قَالَتْ لَهُ امْرَأَتُهُ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ مِمَّا يَأْتِي بِهِ الْعَمَالُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ قَدْ أَتَاهَا بِشَيْءٍ فَقَالَ كَانَ عِنْدِي صَاعُطٌ قَالَتْ كُنْتَ أَمِينًا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعِنْدَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَبِعْتَ عَمْرَ مَعَكَ صَاعُطًا وَقَامْتَ بِذَلِكَ بَيْنَ نِسَائِهَا وَاسْتَكْتَمْتَ عَمْرَ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَهُ ذَلِكَ دَعَا مُعَاذًا وَقَالَ بَعَثْ مَعَكَ صَاعُطًا قَالَ لَمْ أَجِدْ مَا أَعْتَذِرُ بِهِ إِلَيْهَا إِلَّا ذَلِكَ فَضَحَكَ عَمْرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَأَعْطَاهُ شَيْئًا فَقَالَ أَرْضَاهَا بِهِ

### 24.8. كَانَ with the ل of denial

One special use of كَانَ is what is termed the ل of denial. This is a negative كَانَ (either مَا كَانَ or لَمْ يَكُنْ with the appropriate suffixes or prefixes for the subject) followed by ل and then an a-state resembling verb. This expresses the meaning of:

- i. to deny being the one to do something, or
- ii. to deny going to do something

Here are some examples:

لَمْ تَكُنْ زَيْنَبُ لِتَضْرِبْ وَلَدَهَا  
 “Zaynab was not one to beat her child.”

or

“Zaynab was not going to beat her child.”

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ  
 “But Allāh would not punish them while you, [O Muḥammad], are among them”  
 [From al-Qur’ān 8:33, translation by Saheeh International]

فَقَالَ أَتُخَشِّينَ أَنْ أَقْتُلَهُ مَا كُنْتُ لَأَفْعَلَ ذَلِكَ  
 “He said: Do you fear that I shall kill him ? I am not going to do that.”  
 [From Sunan Abi Dawūd:3112]

قَالَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لَأَفْعَلَ  
 “He said: I was not going to do that.” [From Sunan Ibn Mājah:1503]

### 24.9. كَانَ with the ل of deserving

Closely related, yet distinct from, the use of كَانَ with the ل of denial (above) is the use of كَانَ with a ل that signifies deserving, behooving, appropriateness, or possibility. This is, again, a negative كَانَ followed by the preposition ل and a following i-state noun, and then أَنْ followed by an a-state resembling verb. This signifies that the action of the verb does not behoove, or is not appropriate or desrving or possibly for the person denoted by the noun after ل.<sup>5</sup> For example:

<sup>5</sup>From [3:79] مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ الْبَحْرَ الْمَحِيطَ لِأَبِي حَيَّانِ:

ومعنى { ما كان لبشر أن يؤتيه الله } وما جاء نحوه أنه ينبغي عنه الكون، والمراد نفي الخبر، وذلك على قسمين. أحدهما: أن يكون الانتفاء من حيث العقل، ويعبر عنه بالنفي التام، ومثاله قوله: { ما كان لكم أن تنبتوا شجرها } [النمل: 60] { وما كان لنفس أن تموت إلا بإذن الله } [آل عمران: 145]. والثاني: أن يكون الانتفاء فيه على سبيل الانتفاء، ويعبر عنه بالنفي غير التام، ومثاله قول أبي بكر الصديق، رضي الله عنه: ما كان لابن أبي قحافة أن يتقدم أن يصلي بين يدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. ومدرک القسمين إنما يعرف بسياق الكلام الذي النفي فيه، وهذه الآية من القسم الأول، لأننا نعلم أن الله لا يعطي الكذبة والمدعين النبوة، وفي هذه الآية دلالة على عصمة الأنبياء عليهم السلام.

From التحريم والتوير in the tafsir of the same verse:

فَأَذْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ نَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا  
 “causing to grow thereby gardens of joyful beauty which you could not [other-  
 wise] have grown the trees thereof”

[From al-Qur’ān 27:60, translation by Saheeh International]

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
 “It is not for a human [prophet]<sup>1</sup> that Allāh should give him the Scripture<sup>2</sup> and  
 authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, “Be servants to  
 me rather than Allāh,””

[From al-Qur’ān 3:79, translation by Saheeh International]

قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ مَا كَانَ لِابْنِ أَبِي قُحَافَةَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
 “Abu Bakr said ; it was not befitting for the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) to  
 lead the prayer in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ”(□)

[From Sunan Abi Dawūd:940]

وقوله { ما كان لبشر } نفي لاستحقاق أحد لذلك القول واللام فيه للاستحقاق. وأصل هذا التركيب في الكلام ما كان فلان فاعلاً كذا، فلما أريدت المبالغة في النفي عدل عن نفي الفعل إلى نفي المصدر الدال على الجنس، وجعل نفي الجنس عن الشخص بواسطة نفي الاستحقاق إذ لا طريقة لحمل اسم ذات على اسم ذات إلا بواسطة بعض الحروف، فصار التركيب ما كان له أن يفعل، ويقال أيضاً ليس له أن يفعل، ومثل ذلك في الإثبات كقوله تعالى { إن لك ألا تجوع فيها ولا تعرى } طه 118. فمعنى الآية ليس قول { كونوا عباداً لي } حقاً لبشر أي بشر كان. وهذه اللام هي أصل لام الجحود التي في نحو { وما كان الله ليعذبهم } الأنفال 33، فتراكيب لام الجحود كلها من قبيل قلب مثل هذا التركيب لقصد المبالغة في النفي، بحيث ينفي أن يكون وجود المسند إليه مجعولاً لأجل فعل كذا، أي فهو بريء منه بأصل الخلقة ولذلك سميت جحوداً. والمنفي في ظاهر هذه الآية إتياء الحكم والنبوءة، ولكن قد علم أن مصب النفي هو المعطوف من قوله { ثم يقول للناس كونوا عباداً لي } أي ما كان له أن يقول كونوا عباداً لي إذا أتاه الله الكتاب إلخ.

Work in progress



## Chapter 25.

### إِنَّ and its sisters

#### 25.1. Introduction

In the basic subject-information sentence, both the subject and the information are in the u-state. For example:

الرَّجُلُ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
          {          }  
          subject  
information

“This man is a teacher.”

In the above sentence both the subject الرَّجُلُ “the man”, and the information مُعَلِّمٌ “a teacher” are in the u-state. In this chapter we will study a family of particles, called إِنَّ and its sisters, that modify the subject-information sentence by placing the subject in the a-state instead of the u-state. For example,

إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ مُعَلِّمٌ.  
*’inna -rrajula muεallimun.*

“Indeed the man is a teacher.”

Note how, in the above example, the subject الرَّجُلُ “the man” is now in the a-state. The information مُعَلِّمٌ “a teacher” remains in the u-state.

The particles constituting the family of إِنَّ and its sisters are:

1. إِنَّ *’inna*
2. أَنَّ *’anna*
3. كَأَنَّ *ka’anna*
4. لَكِنَّ *lākinna*
5. لَبَّيْتُ *layta*
6. لَعَلَّ *laεalla*

We shall now study each of these particles.

## 25.2. إِنَّ 'inna

إِنَّ 'inna is used to begin independent sentences. It has an emphatic meaning, as if the speaker is asserting the information about the subject. It is often translated into English as “indeed” or “verily”, but it is also often left untranslated.

إِنَّ 'inna is only used to begin subject-information sentences. Verbal sentences cannot be introduced by إِنَّ 'inna directly. (Later, in section @ref(damiir-al-shan), we shall see how to overcome this restriction.). For example,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ.

'inna -ddīna einda -llāhi -l'islāmu.

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allāh is Islām.” (Qur’ān 3:19, trans. Saheeh International)

إِنَّ 'inna may be preceded by other particles like وَ “and”, فَ “so”, and ثُمَّ “then”. For example,

“أَطْلُبُ الْعِلْمَ النَّافِعَ. فَإِنَّ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمِ النَّافِعِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ. وَإِنَّ تَرْكَهُ غَفْلَةٌ.”  
“Seek the useful knowledge. For indeed the seeking of the useful knowledge is a good deed. And indeed leaving it is a negligence.”

The subject of إِنَّ 'inna may be a noun phrase, in which case, any describers or replacements of the subject are also in the a-state. Examples:

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ الرِّجَالَ الْكَرَامَ أَصْدِقَائِي.

“Indeed these noble men are my friends.”

إِنَّ 'inna may have multiple subjects, each in the a-state, separated by وَ. Example,

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ يَعْبُدُونَ اللَّهَ.

“Indeed the Muslim men and Muslim women worship Allāh.”

If the information of the first subject has been mentioned before the second subject, then the second subject may optionally be in the a-state or the u-state. For example:

إِنَّ زَيْدًا جَالِسٌ وَعَمْرٌ.

or

إِنَّ زَيْدًا جَالِسٌ وَعَمْرُو.

“Indeed Zayd is sitting and ʿAmr [as well].”

إِنَّ هَذَا الْكِتَابَ لِي وَذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَكَ.

or

إِنَّ هَذَا الْكِتَابَ لِي وَذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَكَ.

“Indeed this book is for me and that book is for you.”

إِنَّ 'inna may be used to begin sentences with an indefinite subject. For example,

إِنَّ مَلِكًا مِنَ الْهِنْدِ كَتَبَ إِلَى أَحَدِ وَزَرَائِهِ.

“Indeed a king from India wrote to one of his ministers.”

Note that in all the above examples that إِنَّ 'inna is only used to begin subject-information sentences. Verbal sentences cannot be introduced by إِنَّ 'inna directly. (Later, in section @ref(damiir-al-shan), we shall see how to overcome this restriction.). By default, the subject of إِنَّ 'inna must directly follow it with no intervening words or particles. The only exception is when the information consists of a prepositional or adverbial phrase, it is then allowed to precede the subject. The subject, in any case, shall be in the a-state. For example,

إِنَّ فِي الْبَيْتِ رَجُلًا.

“Indeed, in the house, is a man.”

إِنَّ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ كَنْزًا ثَمِينًا.

“Indeed, under the tree, is a precious treasure.”

This reverse order is permitted even when the subject is definite. For example,

إِنَّ مَعَكَ صَاحِبَكَ.

“Indeed, with you, is *your companion*.”

This puts the logical accent on the subject صَاحِبَكَ “your companion”. If the subject is placed first then this puts the logical accent on the information:

إِنَّ صَاحِبَكَ مَعَكَ.

“Indeed your companion is *with you*.”

If the subject contains a pronoun that refers to a noun in the information then the information must precede the subject. For example,

إِنَّ فِي الْمَصْنَعِ عُمَّالَهُ.

“Indeed, in the factory, are its workers.”

إِنَّ أَمَامَ الدَّارِ حَارِسَهَا.

“Indeed, in front of the door, is its guard.”

### 25.2.1. Pronoun subjects

The subject of إِنَّ may be a pronoun instead of a noun. For this the attached pronouns are used. For example,

لَا تَقْطَعْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةَ فَإِنَّهَا ظَلِيلَةٌ.

“Don’t cut that tree, for it is shady.”

إِنِّكُمَا صَدِيقَايَ.

“You<sub>2</sub> are my friends.”

The speaker pronouns, both singular and plural, may optionally keep or drop their ن. So for the singular speaker pronoun both إِنِّنِي 'innanī and إِنِّي 'innī may be used. And for the plural speaker pronoun both إِنِّنَّا 'innanā and إِنَّا 'innā may be used. Examples:

إِنِّي مُسْلِمٌ.

or

إِنِّي مُسْلِمٌ.

“Indeed I am a Muslim.”

إِنَّا كَاتِبُو هَذَا الْكِتَابِ.

or

إِنَّا كَاتِبُو هَذَا الْكِتَابِ.

“Indeed we are the writers of this book.”

TODO: Multiple pronoun subjects: ... إِنَّ وَ إِيَّاكَ

إِنَّ with the speaker pronouns are often used with doer verbal nouns to signify that the speaker intends to to the action of the verb. For example,

إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ.

“I’m going to the mosque.”

We also mentioned this point in section @ref(doer-verbal-noun-for-intended-future-action).

### 25.2.2. إِنَّ with a strengthening ل

The strengthening particle ل adds extra emphasis and may optionally be used between the subject of إِنَّ and its information. If the subject occurs first (as is the default) then ل is connected to and placed directly before the information. For example:

إِنَّ زَيْدًا لَقَائِمٌ.

“Indeed Zayd is definitely standing.”

If the information precedes the subject, then ل is connected to and placed directly before the subject. For example:

إِنَّ فِي الْبَيْتِ لَرَجُلًا.

“Indeed, in the house, is definitely a man.”

The strengthening particle ل is only used with إِنَّ and not for any of its other sisters (لَعَلَّ, لَيْتَ, لَكِنَّ, كَأَنَّ, and إِنَّ).

### 25.2.3. Commonality of rules for إِنَّ and its sisters

Unless otherwise noted, the rules we have presented above for إِنَّ, for example, the subject being in the a-state, the order of the subject and the predicate, the use of attached pronouns for the subject, etc., apply also to its other sisters.

The strengthening particle ل, as mentioned above, is only used with إِنَّ and not for any of its other sisters.

## 25.3. اَنَّ 'anna

The particle اَنَّ 'anna can be translated as “that”. It is similar to اِنَّ in that it asserts the information about the subject. But اَنَّ is different from اِنَّ in that اِنَّ, its subject, and its information together constitute a complete sentence. Whereas the اَنَّ clause (اَنَّ, its subject, and its information together) does not constitute a complete sentence. For example, consider the expression:

زَيْدٌ صَادِقٌ.  
“Zayd is truthful.”

This is a complete sentence. But if we add اَنَّ “that” to its beginning, it no longer remains a complete sentence:

اَنَّ زَيْدًا صَادِقٌ  
“that Zayd is truthful”

We need to additional words, external to the اَنَّ clause to complete the sentence. We will see examples of this below.

## 25.3.1. The اَنَّ clause in place of the direct doer

أَعْلَمُ اَنَّ زَيْدًا صَادِقٌ.  
direct doer

“I know that Zayd is truthful.”

Note how, in the example above the اَنَّ clause (اَنَّ زَيْدًا صَادِقٌ) has occupied the place of the direct doer of the verb أَعْلَمُ.

In a similar manner, اَنَّ clauses can be placed where one would expect other noun positions, such as: a subject, an information, a doer, and more. Here are some examples:

## 25.3.2. The اَنَّ clause in place of the doer

Example:

بَلَغَنِي اَنَّكَ مَرِيضٌ.  
doer

“That you are sick has reached me.” (“It has reached me that you are sick.”)

25.3.3. The **إِنَّ** clause in place of the subject

Example (with information before subject in sentence word order):

مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ أَنَّهُ كَرِيمٌ.  
subject

“From his characteristics is that he is noble.”

25.3.4. The **إِنَّ** clause in place of the information

Example:

أَلْحَقَّ أَنَّهُ ذَهَبَ.  
information

“The truth is that he went.”

25.3.5. **كَانَ** with **أَنَّ**

As you know, **كَانَ**'s doer is also its subject, and its doer is also its information. The **أَنَّ** clause can occur in either the subject or the information of **كَانَ**. For example, the **أَنَّ** clause as the information:

كَانَ الْأَمْرُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ وَاجِبَهُ.  
information

“The matter was that he didn't do his obligation.”

Now, the **أَنَّ** clause as the subject:

كَانَ الْأَمْرُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ وَاجِبَهُ.  
subject

“That he didn't do his obligation was the matter.”

Note that in the latter case, the information precedes the subject.

## 25.3.6. The اَنَّ clause in place of an i-state noun

The اَنَّ clause can occur in place of an i-state base noun in an annexation. Example:

كَثُرَ قَاطِعُو الطَّرِيقِ لِدَرَجَةِ اَنَّ السَّفَرَ خَطِرٌ.  
base noun

“The highway robbers (literally: the cutters of the way) have increased to the degree that the journey is dangerous.”

The اَنَّ clause can occur in place of an i-state noun directly following a preposition. Example:

عَجِبْتُ مِنْ اَنَّ زَيْدًا نَائِمٌ.  
i-state after preposition

“I wondered at that Zayd is asleep.”

## 25.3.6.1. Optionally deleting the preposition directly before an اَنَّ clause

If an اَنَّ clause directly follows a preposition, it is permissible to optionally delete the preposition as long as the meaning remains clear. So the previous example can be expressed without the preposition مِنْ with the same meaning:

عَجِبْتُ اَنَّ زَيْدًا نَائِمٌ.  
“I wondered at that Zayd is asleep.”

## 25.3.6.2. لِأَنَّ “because”

The combination of the preposition لِ “for” and اَنَّ is used to mean “because”. For example,

أَكَلْتُ الطَّعَامَ لِأَنِّي كُنْتُ جَائِعًا.  
“I ate the food because I was hungry.”

## 25.3.7. Equivalence of the اَنَّ clause with a verbal noun of doing

As a matter of grammatical theory, the اَنَّ clause, i.e. (اَنَّ itself, its subject, and its information) is considered equivalent to a verbal noun of doing (typically in an annexation, and possibly with a doer as well). It is this equivalence that allows it to take the place of a doer, direct doer, and the other categories we have given above. For instance, consider the example:

عَجِبْتُ مِنْ اَنَّ زَيْدًا ذَهَبَ.

“I wondered at that Zayd went.”

Here, the clause ذَهَبَ زَيْدًا اِنَّ is equivalent to the verbal noun phrase ذَهَابَ زَيْدٍ “Zayd’s going”. So the grammatically equivalent sentence with this verbal noun phrase is:

عَجِبْتُ مِنْ ذَهَابِ زَيْدٍ.

“I wondered at Zayd’s going.”

Similarly, in the example,

مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ اَنَّهُ كَرِيمٌ.

“From his characteristics is that he is generous.”

the clause اَنَّهُ كَرِيمٌ is equivalent to the verbal noun phrase كَرَامَتِهِ “his generosity”. So the grammatically equivalent sentence with this verbal noun phrase is:

كَرَامَتِهِ مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ.

“His generosity is from his characteristics.”

This grammatical equivalence is more a matter of theory than of practical usefulness to us. And you have seen this grammatical equivalence before with اِنَّ and a-state incomplete action verbs in chapter @ref(a-state-incomplete-action-verbs-verbal-noun).

#### 25.4. كَأَنَّ ka’anna

كَأَنَّ ka’anna may be translated as “[It is] as if”. It is actually simply the preposition كَ “like” attached to اَنَّ. But it is treated separately because, unlike اَنَّ, كَأَنَّ ka’anna, its subject, and its information constitute a complete sentence. For example,

كَأَنَّ الْأُمَّ مَدْرَسَةٌ.

“[It is] as if the mother is a school.”

TODO: add more info

#### 25.5. لَكِنَّ lākinna

TODO

#### 25.6. لَيْتَ layta

TODO



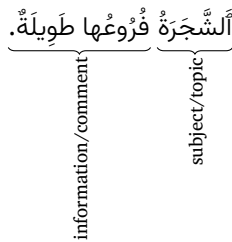
## 25.7. لَعَلَّ laʿalla

TODO

## 25.8. Topic-comment sentences and the pronoun of the fact

## 25.8.1. Topic-comment sentences

There is a sub-type of subject-information sentence called a topic-comment sentence. Here is an example:



“The tree: its branches are long.”

In these kinds of sentences, the subject introduces a topic, and the information is itself a sentence which comments on the topic/subject. We have, in fact, already seen sentences like this in section @ref(past-verbs-order-of-words), when we take a verbal sentence and convert it to a subject-information sentence. This is the example we discussed there:

الرَّجُلُ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا.

“The man: he wrote a book.”

## 25.8.1.1. The linker pronoun

A topic-comment sentence typically requires a pronoun in the comment that links back to the comment. In the example الشَّجَرَةُ فُرُوعُهَا طَوِيلَةٌ, the attached pronoun هَا “it” in فُرُوعُهَا “its tree” is the linker pronoun that links back to the topic الشَّجَرَةُ “the tree”.

Similarly, in the example الرَّجُلُ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا, the linker pronoun is the invisible doer pronoun “he” of the verb كَتَبَ “he wrote” that links back to the topic الرَّجُلُ “the man”.

## 25.8.1.2. Topic-comment sentences with إِنَّ and its sisters

إِنَّ and its sisters are very often used in topic-comment sentences. (With إِنَّ it is, as usual, an incomplete sentence.) Here are some examples:

إِنَّ زَيْدًا لَهُ أَخٌ وَأُخْتُ.

“Indeed Zayd: he has a brother and sister.”

إِنَّمَا نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ حُصُولُهُ بِتَطَلُّبٍ جُهْدًا.

“Know that knowledge: its obtaining requires effort.”

## 25.8.1.3. Topic-comment sentences with a pronoun topic

The topic, in a topic-comment sentence, is frequently a pronoun. For example,

أَنَا أَسْمِي زَيْدٌ.

“I: my name is Zayd.”

أَكَلْتُ الطَّعَامَ لَكِنَّكَ لَمْ تَأْكُلْ.

“I ate the food but you: you didn’t eat.”

## 25.8.2. The pronoun of the fact

Mostly, pronouns are used in place of nouns when it is already known to whom the noun refers to. So if you say:

أَنَا أَسْمِي زَيْدٌ.

“I: my name is Zayd.”

the pronoun أَنَا “I” refers to the speaker, who is known.

There is a special pronoun, called the *pronoun of the fact* that begins topic-comment sentences. This pronoun does not refer to any previously known entity, but rather refers to the comment that follows it. It is sometimes translated as “the fact is” but is often left untranslated. Here is an example:

هُوَ {الْبَرْدُ شَدِيدٌ}.

information/comment
pronoun of the fact

“The fact is: the cold is intense.”

This pronoun is usually the singular masculine pronoun (as above) but it is also sometimes the singular feminine pronoun هِيَ. It is typically used with statements of import, to which the speaker wishes to draw attention. The comment does not contain a linker pronoun because the whole comment refers back to the topic. The pronoun of the fact is frequently used with إِنَّ and its sisters. Here are some examples:

إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ.

“Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed.”

(Qur’ān 23:117, trans. Saheeh International)

Sometimes, one can choose between using the pronoun of the fact and a pronoun matching the participant resulting in different emphasis. For example,

إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَاعِلُونَ

“Indeed, the fact is: they are the doers.”

إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَاعِلُونَ

“Indeed, *they* are the doers.”

## 25.9. The lightened versions إِنَّ, اِنَّ, and لَنْ

The particles إِنَّ, اِنَّ, and لَنْ, because of the doubled ن are considered *heavy*. There exist *lightened* versions of these particles that are: اِنَّ, اِنَّ, and لَنْ. These lightened versions have similar meanings to their heavy counterparts but they have somewhat different rules. We will discuss them below. In terms of their usage اِنَّ and اِنَّ are not very commonly used except in the Qur’ān, poetry, and other rhetorical texts. اِنَّ and لَنْ are relatively more common.

### 25.9.1. The lightened اِنَّ

The lightened اِنَّ can be used in either of the following ways:

- i. With the same rules as the heavy اِنَّ. The subject is put in the a-state and the use of the strengthening ى is optional. For example,

اِنَّ زَيْدًا مُّسْلِمٌ.

or

اِنَّ زَيْدًا لِّمُسْلِمٍ.

“Indeed Zayd is a Muslim.”

However, this method is not as common as the second way (below):

- ii. The subject is not put in the a-state but is rather in the u-state. However, the strengthening ى (see section @ref(inna-strengthening-la) above), that was optional with the heavy اِنَّ, is now mandatory with the lightened اِنَّ. For example,

إِنَّ زَيْدَ لَمُسْلِمٍ.  
 “Indeed Zayd is a Muslim.”

Another notable difference between the lightened **إِنَّ** and the heavy **إِنَّ** is that the heavy **إِنَّ** is only used to introduce subject-information sentences. The lightened **إِنَّ**, however, can be used to introduce verbal sentences, but only those that begin with the verbs: **كَانَ** and its sisters, **كَادَ** and its sisters, and **ظَنَّ** and its sisters. For example,

قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَ وَإِنْ كَانَ الْكِتَابُ لَجَيِّدًا.  
 “I read the book and indeed the book was good.”

### 25.9.2. The lightened **أَنَّ**

As we know, the heavy **أَنَّ** is an emphatic particle and is frequently used with the pronoun of the fact, thus:

أَعْلَمُ أَنَّهَ الْبَرْدُ شَدِيدٌ.  
 “I know that the fact is: the cold is intense.”

When we wish not to use much emphasis, we may replace the heavy **أَنَّ** along with its following pronoun of the fact (**أَنَّهَا/أَنَّهُ**) with a lightened **أَنَّ**, thus:

أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْبَرْدَ شَدِيدٌ.  
 “I know that the cold is intense.”

Note that the lightened **أَنَّ** replaces **أَنَّهُ**, which is the combination of heavy **أَنَّ** and the pronoun of the fact **هُ**. So the pronoun of the fact (**هُ**) does not appear with the lightened **أَنَّ**.

In the above example, the lightened **أَنَّ** introduces a comment which is a subject-predicate sentence. But the more common use of the lightened **أَنَّ** is to introduce comments that are verbal sentences.

When the comment of the lightened **أَنَّ** is a verbal sentence, then it is preferred to separate the verb from **أَنَّ** with one of the following:

#### 1. **قَدْ**. Example:

أَظُنُّ أَنَّ قَدْ عَرَبَتِ الشَّمْسُ.  
 “I think that the sun has set.”

#### 2. **سَوْفَ** or **سَ**. Example:

أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ سَيَذْهَبُ.  
 “I know that he will go.”

## 3. A negative particle like لَا, لَنْ, or لَمْ.

أَعْلَمُ أَنْ لَا يَذْهَبُ.

“I know that he does/will not go.”

Note that, in writing, we have not combined the lightened اَنَّ and لَا to form اَلَّا, as is done for the a-state-verbal اَنَّ (for example: اَلَّا يَذْهَبُ “that he not go”) in chapter @ref(chapter-a-state-incomplete-action-verbs). This distinction in spelling is not obligatory, but some authorities recommend it. In any case, they are both pronounced the same: *ʿallā*.

More examples:

أَعْلَمُ أَنْ لَنْ يَذْهَبُ.

“I know that he shall not go.”

أَعْلَمُ أَنْ لَمْ يَذْهَبُ.

“I know that he did not go.”

Note that the لَنْ and لَمْ, even when after the lightened اَنَّ, change the state of the following incomplete-action verb to the a-state and o-state respectively.

## 4. The conditional particle لَوْ. We will study conditional sentences in chapter @ref(conditional-sentences). TODO: add example.

Rigid verbs like لَيْسَ and verbs expressing supplications are exempted from needing to be separated from the lightened اَنَّ. Example:

ظَنَنْتُ أَنْ لَيْسَ الْبُرْدُ شَدِيدًا.

“I thought that the cold is not intense.”

## 25.9.2.1. Distinguishing between the lightened اَنَّ and the a-state-verbal اَنَّ

Although they are similar in meaning, care must be taken to distinguish between this lightened اَنَّ and the a-state-verbal اَنَّ (that we learned in chapter @ref(chapter-a-state-incomplete-action-verbs)). The a-state-verbal اَنَّ puts the following incomplete action verb in the a-state. Whereas the incomplete action verb directly after the lightened اَنَّ remains in the u-state. The following guidelines can help to distinguish between these two اَنَّs:

- If the verb before اَنَّ signifies certainty then only اَنَّ and its lightened version اَنَّ is used. For example,

أَعْلَمُ أَنْ قَدْ ذَهَبَ وَأَنْ سَيَرْجِعُ.

“I know that he has gone and that he will return.”

- If the verb before اِنَّ signifies wanting, hoping, or expecting, then the اِنَّ puts the following verb in the a-state. For example,

اَطْمَعُ اَلَّا يَذْهَبَ.

“I hope that he not go.”

Note that the verb يَذْهَبُ is in the a-state.

- If the verb before اِنَّ reflects a view of something going to occur, and signifies neither certainty nor expectation, but rather doubt or neutrality, then either of the اِنَّs may be used, depending on the intended meaning. Such verbs include ظَنَّ يَظُنُّ “to think” and حَسِبَ يَحْسِبُ “to deem”. For example,

a-state-verbal اِنَّ:

ظَنَنْتُ اَنْ يَرْجِعَ.

“I thought that he should return.”

lightened اِنَّ:

ظَنَنْتُ اَنْ يَرْجِعَ.

“I thought that he will return.”

- If the verb before اِنَّ does not reflect a view of something going to occur then the اِنَّ is typically the a-state-verbal اِنَّ. For example,

سَرَّيْنِي اَنْ تَنْجَحَ

“That you succeed [will have] gladdened me.”

Remember from chapter @ref(chapter-a-state-incomplete-action-verbs), that the a-state-verbal اِنَّ can occur with completed-action verbs as well. Example:

سَرَّيْنِي اَنْ نَجَحْتَ

“That you have succeeded [has] gladdened me.”

### 25.9.3. The lightened كَأَنَّ

The lightened كَأَنَّ is similar to the lightened اِنَّ in that it introduces a topic-comment sentence and the topic is usually a deleted pronoun of the fact. For example,

كَأَنَّ الْبَرْدَ ذَهَبَ.

“[It is] as if the cold has gone.”

Also similar to the lightened اِنَّ, the lightened كَأَنَّ may introduce a verbal sentence but it must be separated from كَأَنَّ by either فَدَ or لَمْ. For example,

ذَهَبَ كَأَنَّ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ.

“He went as if he did not hear.”

## 25.9.4. The lightened لَنَكُنْ

The lightened لَنَكُنْ has the same meaning as the heavy لَنَكُنْ but it has no grammatical effect on the word or sentence after it. It may introduce either subject-information or verbal sentences. For example,

نَجَحَ زَيْدٌ لَنَكُنْ صَدِيقُهُ لَمْ يَنْجَحْ.

“Zayd succeeded but his friend did not succeed.”

Work in progress

Work in progress



## Chapter 26.

### The connected nouns

#### 26.1. Introduction

Consider the sentence:

رَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ.  
“I saw the man.”

If the listener (or reader) can identify the individual referred to by the noun “the man” (maybe from a pre-existing mutual understanding with the speaker), then there is no problem with this sentence. But often, further clarification is needed for the listener to correctly identify the individual to whom the speaker is referring. This further clarification can be provided in a number of ways.

One way is to use an adjectival noun to describe the noun. For example:

رَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ الطَّوِيلَ.  
“I saw the *tall* man.”

Another way is to use a pointing noun, thus:

رَأَيْتُ ذَٰلِكَ الرَّجُلَ.  
“I saw *that* man.”

But sometimes, a whole sentence is needed to provide the needed identification. In this case, Arabic uses what is called a *connected noun* and a *connecting sentence*. This example should help you understand what we mean:

رَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ الَّذِي لَقِيتُهُ بِالْأَمْسِ.  
connecting sentence      connected noun

“I saw the [specific] man whom I met yesterday.”

In the above sentence, the connected noun is الَّذِي *‘alladhī*. It is applied to singular masculine nouns, like الرَّجُلَ. By itself it may be translated as “the one<sub>1m</sub> that/which/who/whom”. It is called a connected noun because it is directly followed by, i.e. *connected* to, a connecting sentence. The connecting sentence

contains necessary information for the listener to correctly identify the individual that the connected noun refers to. The connecting sentence in the above example is the sentence لَقَيْتُهُ بِالْأَمْسِ "I met him yesterday."

Note by the way, that we did not translate the pronoun "him" in our original translation (above). This is because it would sound unnatural in English to say: "I saw the [specific] man (whom) I met *him* yesterday." But this pronoun is an essential part of the Arabic connecting sentence and is called the *refer-back pronoun*. We will deal with it in section @ref(refer-back-pronoun) later in this chapter.

There are two types of connected nouns:

1. The specific connected nouns
2. The general connected nouns

We will study both these types separately within this chapter.

## 26.2. The specific connected nouns

The specific connected nouns have a significance which is restricted to a specific individual or category of individuals, and its connecting sentence should contain sufficient information to identify that specific individual.

The specific connected nouns is a group of nouns where each noun is applied to a gender and number of individuals. They are:

Connected noun	Description
الَّذِي 'alladhī	Singular masculine. For both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. Rigid. Only one ل in its spelling.
الَّتِي 'allatī	Singular feminine. For both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. Also used for plural non-intelligent beings of both genders. Rigid. Only one ل in its spelling.
الَّذَانِ 'alladhānī	Dual masculine. For both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. Flexible: اِلَّذَيْنِ 'alladhaynī in the a- and i-states. Two ل's in its spelling.
الَّتَانِ 'allatānī	Dual feminine. For both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. Flexible: اِلَّتَيْنِ 'allataynī in the a- and i-states. Two ل's in its spelling.
الَّذِينَ 'alladhīna	Plural masculine. For both intelligent beings. Rigid. Only one ل in its spelling.
الَّلَاتِي 'allātī	For plural feminine intelligent beings. Also used for non-intelligent beings of both genders but اِلَّتِي is more common there. Rigid. Two ل's in its spelling. Has the following variants: اِلَّلَاتِ 'allātī, اِلَّلَائِي 'allā'ī, اِلَّلَوَاتِي 'allawātī

## 26.2.1. Grammatical position of the specific connected noun

Consider again the same example:

رَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ الَّذِي لَقِيتُهُ بِالْأَمْسِ.  
 “I saw the [specific] man whom I met yesterday.”

In this example, the connected noun الَّذِي *‘alladhī* is a describer (in the a-state) to the described noun الرَّجُلَ. Because الَّذِي is a rigid noun, it will appear the same in all states without any change to its ending.

As a describer, the connected noun may also come as the last in a series of describers, and can also be combined with a pointing noun. For example:

رَأَيْتُ ذَٰلِكَ الرَّجُلَ الطَّوِيلَ الَّذِي لَقِيتُهُ بِالْأَمْسِ.  
 “I saw that [specific] tall man whom I met yesterday.”

But connected nouns need not only occur as describers. They may occur in various grammatical positions. Here are some examples:

As a subject:

<sup>1</sup> وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ  
 “And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allāh - give them tidings of a painful punishment.”

As an information:

<sup>2</sup> خَيْرُ أَوْلِيَاءِكُمْ الَّذِينَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَكُمْ  
 “The best of your rulers are the ones whom you love and who love you”

<sup>3</sup> هُنَّ اللَّوَاتِي عَلَى الْمَنْبَرِ  
 “They are the ones which (are) on the pulpit.”

As a doer:

قَدْ بَلَغَنَا الَّذِي قُلْتُمُوهُ.  
 “The [specific] one (thing) that you said has reached us.”

As a doee:

<sup>4</sup> رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ أَضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ  
 “Our Lord, show us those who misled us of the jinn and men”

Following a preposition:

<sup>5</sup> أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ  
 “Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township”

As a base noun in an annexation:

<sup>1</sup> التوبة:34

<sup>2</sup> مسلم:1855

<sup>3</sup> الدارمي:36

<sup>4</sup> فصلت:29

<sup>5</sup> البقرة:259

6 قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا

“Certainly has Allāh heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [O Muḥammad]”

### 26.3. The refer-back pronoun

The connecting sentence is directly follows the connected noun. As we mentioned in the introduction, the connecting sentence provides clarifying information for the listener (or reader) to identify the individual referred to by the connected noun.

In the connecting sentence is a pronoun that refers back to the connected noun. This pronoun is called the *refer-back pronoun*. and it is an essential (though not always apparent) part of the connecting sentence.

Let us identify some of the refer-back pronouns in the examples we have given.

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْبِرُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِصَّةَ

“And those who hoard gold and silver”

refer-back pronoun: the plural masculine doer pronoun **و** in يَكْبِرُونَ

خَيْرُ أَيْمَتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ

“The best of your rulers are the ones whom you love and who love you”

refer-back pronoun: the plural masculine doer attached pronoun **هُمْ** in تُحِبُّونَهُمْ

قَدْ بَلَغَنَا الَّذِي قُلْتُمُوهُ.

“The [specific] one (thing) that you said has reached us.”

refer-back pronoun: the singular masculine doer attached pronoun **هُ** in قُلْتُمُوهُ

رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ أَضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ

“Our Lord, show us those who misled us of the jinn and men”

refer-back pronoun: the dual masculine doer pronoun **ا** in أَضَلَّانَا

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ

“Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township”

refer-back pronoun: the implied singular masculine doer pronoun “he” in مَرَّ

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا

“Certainly has Allāh heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [O Muḥammad]”

refer-back pronoun: the implied singular feminine doer pronoun “she” in تُجَادِلُكَ

<sup>6</sup>المجادلة:1

## 26.3.1. Matching the refer-back pronoun with the connected noun

The refer-back pronoun matches the specific connected noun in gender and number. And the refer-back pronoun is generally an absent-person pronoun (هُ، هَا، هُوَ، etc.). In the example وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ “And those who hoard gold and silver,” the refer-back pronoun is the plural masculine absent-person doer pronoun “they” in يَكْتِزُونَ “they hoard”. And it matches the plural masculine connected noun الَّذِينَ.

However, there is an exception to the refer-back pronoun being an absent-person pronoun. And that is when the connected noun refers to the speaker or the addressed person, like أَنَا الَّذِي or أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ, etc. In these cases, the refer-back pronoun may optionally:

- i. either be an absent-person pronoun to match the connected noun (as usual),
- ii. or match the pronoun for the speaker or addressed person (as the case may be)

The latter is generally more common but both options are permissible. For example:

أَنَا الَّذِي حَضَرْتُ.

refer-back pronoun: the singular masculine doer pronoun for the speaker تِ حَضَرْتُ

or

أَنَا الَّذِي حَضَرَ.

refer-back pronoun: the implied singular masculine doer pronoun for the absent person “he” in حَضَرَ

“I am the one (who) was present.”

Here are some examples from Classical Arabic:

7 أَنَا الَّذِي سَمَّيْنِي أُمِّي حَيْدَرَهُ

“I am the one whom my mother named Ḥaydarah”

(The refer-back pronoun is the speaker person’s doer pronoun in سَمَّيْنِي, which is an abbreviation of سَمَّيْنِي “she named me”).

8 فَقَالَ مُوسَى يَا آدَمُ أَنْتَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ اللَّهُ بِيَدِهِ

“Mūsā said: O Ādam, you are the one whom Allāh created with His Hand”

(The refer-back pronoun is the addressed person’s doer pronoun in خَلَقَكَ كَ.)

There is one circumstance where matching the refer-back pronoun to the (absent person) connected-noun is mandated. And that is when the connected noun is the called-out person using the particle أَيُّهَا or أَيُّهَا. For example,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“O you who have believed”

<sup>7</sup>Wright vol. ii, §175, p. 324B

<sup>8</sup>الترمذي:2134

not

× يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

Similarly,

9 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ

“O you upon whom the message has been sent down”

## 26.4. The general connected nouns مَنْ and مَا

The general connected nouns are unrestricted in significance, and may be applied to any individual who fits the criteria given in the connecting sentence. The most commonly general connected nouns are:

- مَنْ *man*. Typically used for intelligent beings and translated as “who”.
- مَا *mā*. Typically used for non-intelligent beings and translated as “what”.
- أَيُّ *ʾayy*. Used for both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. Translated as “which”, “whichever” or “any”.

There are also a couple of rarely or dialectally used general connected nouns that we will not cover. These are ذُو *dihū*, and دَا *dihā*.

In this section we will deal with مَنْ and مَا. We will deal with أَيُّ separately in section (give ref) later in this chapter.

Unlike the specific connected nouns (الَّذِي, etc.), the general connected nouns do not vary for number and gender.

For example:

أَحِبُّ مَنْ يَعْدِلُ

“I love [him] who is just.”

أَحِبُّ مَنْ يَعْدِلُونَ

“I love [them] who are just.”

أُصْنَعْ مَا بَدَا لَكَ.

“Do what seems (good) to you.”

مَرَرْتُ بِمَا يُعْجِبُكَ.

“I passed by what will please you.”

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<sup>9</sup> الحجر:6

## 26.4.1. مَنْ and مَا after prepositions

When مَنْ and مَا are directly preceded by the prepositions عَنْ and مِنْ, these prepositions lose their ن and are joined to the following noun with the noun's م doubled. For example: عَنْ مِمَّنْ *mimman*, مَا مِمَّمَا *mimmā*, عَنْ عَمَّنْ *eamman*, عَمَّا *eammā*.

The preposition فِي is also often (though not always) optionally attached to these connected nouns, thus: فِي مِمَّنْ *fīman*, فِي مِمَّمَا *fīmā*.

The remaining prepositions follow the normal rules: عَلَى مِمَّا, etc. But we will see, if Allāh wills, in chapter @ref(questions), that مَا and مَنْ are also used as question nouns, in which case the rules of joining prepositions to them will differ.

## 26.4.2. The refer-back pronoun for the general connected nouns

The general connected nouns مَنْ and مَا are themselves singular masculine in number and gender. However, they can be used to signify persons or things of any number and gender.

Their refer-back pronouns can then, optionally:

- i. Either match the gender and number of the persons or things meant by the connected noun. For example:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ <sup>10</sup>

“And among them are those who listen to you”

قَدْ خَابَتْ مَنْ فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمْ وَخَسِرَتْ <sup>11</sup>

“She has thwarted herself, whoever did that from them<sub>3f</sub>, and lost.”

Note also how, in this example how, in addition to the feminine refer-back doer pronouns in فَعَلْتَ and خَسِرَتْ, the feminine gender of the person signified by مَنْ has also caused the ث of femininity to be added to the verb خَابَ (of which مَنْ is the doer noun).

جَمَعْتُ مِنَ الْوَرَقِ مَا سَقَطَ. “I gathered what fell from the leaves.”

صَلِّ مِنَ الرُّكْعَاتِ مَا يَتَيَسَّرُ.

or

صَلِّ مِنَ الرُّكْعَاتِ مَا تَتَيَسَّرُ.

“Pray from the units (of prayer) what is easy.”

- ii. Or be singular masculine to match the connected noun itself. This is generally more common for مَا. For example:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ <sup>12</sup>

“And of them are those who believe in it, and of them are those who do not believe in it.”

<sup>10</sup> 42:يونس

<sup>11</sup> 3318:الترمذي

<sup>12</sup> 40:يونس

جَمَعْتُ مِنَ الْوَرَقِ مَا سَقَطَ. “I gathered what fell from the leaves.”

صَلِّ مِنَ الرُّكْعَاتِ مَا يَتَيَسَّرُ.  
“Pray from the units (of prayer) what is easy.”

لَمْ أَجِدْ مَا أَعْتَذِرُ بِهِ  
“I did not find what I (could) make an excuse for with”.

Both options can be utilized together as well. For example:

<sup>13</sup> بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ  
“Yes, [on the contrary], whoever submits his face [i.e., self] in Islām to Allāh while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

<sup>14</sup> فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هَذَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ  
“whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

#### 26.4.3. Applicability of مَا and مَنْ to intelligent and non-intelligent beings

As we mentioned earlier, مَنْ is typically used to refer to intelligent beings. And مَا is typically used to refer to non-intelligent beings. However, there are some circumstances in which these roles can differ.

مَنْ may be used for non-intelligent beings when a non-intelligent being is compared with an intelligent being. For example,

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ

<sup>15</sup>

“Allāh has created every [living] creature from water. And of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four.”

مَنْ may also be used for non-intelligent beings when attributes usually applicable to intelligent beings are applied to a non-intelligent being. For example:

<sup>16</sup> أَسْرَبَ الْقَطَا، هَلْ مَن يُعِيرُ جَنَاحَهُ \* لَعَلِّي إِلَى مَن قَدْ هَوَيْتُ أَطِيرُ

O flock of birds, is there who will lend his wing that perhaps I may fly to whom I love

جَنَاحَ: “lend”, يُعِيرُ: “is there?”, هَلْ: “flock”, سَرَبَ: “O”, أَطِيرُ: “I fly”, هَوَيْتُ: “I love”, لَعَلِّي: “Perhaps I”,

<sup>13</sup>البقرة:112

<sup>14</sup>البقرة:38

<sup>15</sup>النور:45

<sup>16</sup>Wright vol. ii, §170 rem. c, p. 314D



مَنْ may also be used for non-intelligent beings when there is a mixed group including both intelligent and non-intelligent beings, and the intelligent beings are given preference. For example:

<sup>17</sup> وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ  
“And to Allāh prostrates whoever is within the heavens and the earth”

Similarly, مَا may, in some circumstances, be used for intelligent beings. This may be when there is a mixed group including both intelligent and non-intelligent beings, and the non-intelligent beings are given preference because of their larger number. For example:

<sup>18</sup> يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ  
“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allāh”

مَا may also be used for intelligent beings when the person being referred to is vague to the speaker. For example:

<sup>19</sup> رَبِّ اِنِّیْ نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِيْ مُحَرَّرًا  
“My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service]”

مَا may also be used for intelligent beings when the characteristics of an intelligent being are highlighted when referring to them. For example:

<sup>20</sup> فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ  
“then marry those that please you of [other] women”

#### 26.4.4. Grammatical position of the general connected nouns

The general connected noun may occur in various grammatical positions. Here are some examples:

As a subject:

<sup>21</sup> مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ  
“Whatever you have will end”

As an information:

<sup>22</sup> مَا لَكَ مَا قَدَّمْتَ، وَمَالٌ وَّارِثَكَ مَا أَخَّرْتَ  
“Your wealth is what you have sent forward, and the wealth of your inheritors is what you have left behind.”

As a doer:

<sup>17</sup> الرعد:15

<sup>18</sup> الجمعة:1

<sup>19</sup> آل عمران:35

<sup>20</sup> النساء:4

<sup>21</sup> النحل:96

<sup>22</sup> الأدب المفرد:153

23 فَعَلَهُ مَنْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِنِّي

“it was done by one who was better than I”

As a doer:

24 اَعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ

“Do whatever you will”

Following a preposition:

25 وَأَعْنِينِي بِفَضْلِكَ عَمَّنْ سِوَاكَ

“and make me independent from (all) who are besides You”

As a base noun in an annexation:

26 فَذَلِكَ مَثَلُ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي

“So that is the similitude of the one who obeyed me”

27 مَا تَرَى رَأْيِي مَا نَرَى.

“You do not think what we think.”

(literally: “You do not opine the opinion of what we opine.”)

28 أَمْرَ مَا تَحْذَرُ

“the matter of which you are wary”

Unlike the specific connected nouns (الَّذِي, etc), the general connected nouns do not occur as describers. So while we can say:

مَرَرْتُ بِالرَّجُلِ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ إِلَيَّ.

“I passed by the man who was good to me.”

we cannot say:

× مَرَرْتُ بِالرَّجُلِ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيَّ.

We will have to say instead:

مَرَرْتُ بِمَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيَّ.

The general connected noun can, however, occur as a replacement. For example,

29 والمسلمون من تبع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كثير

“And the Muslims, who follow the Messenger of Allāh, are many”

<sup>23</sup> البخاري:668

<sup>24</sup> فصول:40

<sup>25</sup> الترمذي:3563

<sup>26</sup> مسلم:2283

<sup>27</sup> Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>28</sup> Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>29</sup> Fischer §421.2. Originally, from السيرة النبوية لابن هشام.

## 26.4.5. Use with the preposition مِنْ

The preposition مِنْ is frequently used with the general connected nouns to restrict the applicability of the connected noun to a group or type. This مِنْ may come either before the connected noun, or after its connecting sentence. For example:

<sup>30</sup> فَأَعْطَانِي مَا كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ خُبْزٍ.

“Then he gave me what he had of bread.”

<sup>31</sup> مَنْ دَخَلَ الشَّامَ مِنَ الْعَرَبِ

“Those Arabs who entered Syria”

(literally: “Who entered Syria from the Arabs”)

<sup>32</sup> فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

“then marry those that please you of [other] women”

<sup>33</sup> اللَّهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا يَحُولُ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيكَ

O Allāh, apportion for us, from the fear of You, (that) what shall come between us and disobedience of You

(The connected noun مَا is the direct doer of the verb of command اقْسِمْ.)

## 26.4.6. Use with a repeated word to express vagueness or uncertainty

The general connected nouns مَنْ and مَا are used with a word that is repeated to express a vague or uncertain quantity or quality. For example:

<sup>34</sup> هُمْ مَا هُمْ

“They are what they are.”

<sup>35</sup> نَزَلَ مَنْ نَزَلَ مِنْهُمْ

“Some of them came down.”

(literally: Came down who came down from them.)

<sup>36</sup> جَمَعْتُ مَا جَمَعْتُ

“I gathered what I gathered.”

<sup>30</sup>Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>31</sup>Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>32</sup>النساء:3

<sup>33</sup>الترمذي:3502

<sup>34</sup>Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>35</sup>Fischer §425, p. 218

<sup>36</sup>Fischer §425, p. 218

## 26.5. Deleting the refer-back pronoun

The refer-back pronoun may be deleted (and its meaning is then implicit) if some conditions are satisfied. Some conditions are specific to the state of the refer-back pronoun. These are:

- (a) When the refer-back pronoun is the subject of a subject-information sentence, then it may be deleted, and its meaning will be implied. When deleting the refer-back pronoun in this case, it is preferred that the connecting sentence not be too short.

For example:

انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ <sup>37</sup>  
 “Look at who is lower than you.”  
 (instead of انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ.)

وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ <sup>38</sup>  
 “To Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth.”  
 (instead of مَنْ هُوَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ)

مَا أَنَا بِالَّذِي قَائِلٌ لَكَ شَيْئًا <sup>39</sup>  
 I am not the one who says anything to you.  
 (instead of مَا أَنَا بِالَّذِي هُوَ قَائِلٌ لَكَ شَيْئًا)

If the connecting sentence is very short, the deleting the refer-back pronoun subject is permissible, though rare. For example:

لَا يَنْطِقُ بِمَا سَفَهُ <sup>40</sup>  
 “He does not speak what is foolish.”  
 (instead of بِمَا هُوَ سَفَهُ)

- (b) When the refer-back pronoun is an attached pronoun for the direct doer it is permissible to delete it. For example:

هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ <sup>41</sup>  
 “This is what you hoarded for yourselves”  
 (instead of مَا كُنْتُمْ لَكُمْ)

- (c) When the refer-back pronoun is in the i-state, it is permissible to delete it:

- (i) When the refer-back pronoun is the base noun in an annexation whose annex noun is a verbal noun of the doer or the doee implying a present or future meaning. For example:

<sup>37</sup>مسلم:2963c. See also مسلم:2963a and ابن ماجه:4142 for variants with the refer-back pronoun.

<sup>38</sup>الأنبياء:21

<sup>39</sup>Wright vol. ii, §175, p. 322D

<sup>40</sup>Wright vol. ii, §175, p. 322D

<sup>41</sup>التوبة:35

فَأَقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ <sup>42</sup>

“So decree whatever you are to decree.”

(instead of فَأَقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضِيهِ)

- (ii) When the refer-back pronoun is attached to a preposition or adverb, and the same preposition or adverb has already been used (with the same meaning) with the connecting noun or its described noun. The preposition/adverb is deleted along with its attached pronoun. For example:

أَنَا عِنْدَ مَنْ أَنْتَ. <sup>43</sup>

“I am at his [house] at whose you (are).”

(instead of مَنْ أَنْتَ عِنْدَهُ)

مَرَزْتُ بِالَّذِي مَرَّ سُلَيْمَانُ. <sup>44</sup>

“I passed by the (same) one that Sulaymān did.”

(instead of مَرَزْتُ بِالَّذِي مَرَّ بِهِ سُلَيْمَانُ)

In addition to the above conditions that are specific to the state of the refer-back pronoun, a further, general, condition should be satisfied, which is: that the omission of the refer-back pronoun be obvious to the listener, and the listener can re-construct the original meaning by restoring the refer-back pronoun to get the intended meaning.

If the refer-back pronoun is deleted, and the remaining connecting sentence (with the refer-back pronoun deleted) is valid as a connecting sentence on its own right, then it will give a different meaning (even if slightly) from the original. And the listener will not know that the refer-back pronoun has been deleted. In this case, it is not permitted to delete the refer-back pronoun. Here is an example that should explain what we mean:

Consider the sentence:

جاء الذي كَلَّمْتُهُ في داره. <sup>45</sup>

“The one whom I spoke to (him) in his house, came.

The connecting sentence is جاء الذي كَلَّمْتُهُ في داره. “I spoke to him in his house.” and the refer-back pronoun is the a-state direct doee pronoun هـ “him”. If we delete this pronoun, the sentence becomes

جاء الذي كَلَّمْتُ في داره.

“The one who I spoke in his house, came.

Now the meaning of the sentence is markedly different. The connecting sentence جاء الذي كَلَّمْتُ في داره is valid on its own right but it gives a different meaning from the original. It does not specify that I spoke to *him* in his house, just that I spoke in his house, possibly to others. Because the omission of the refer-back pronoun

<sup>42</sup> طه:72

<sup>43</sup>Wright vol. ii, §175, p. 323C

<sup>44</sup>Wright vol. ii, §175, p. 323D

<sup>45</sup>modified from the example شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك in جاء الذي ضربته في داره

is not obvious, the sentence now does not signify the original intent. And so deleting the refer-back pronoun in this case is not permitted.

## 26.6. The general connected noun أَيَّ

أَيَّ *ayy* “which/whichever” is a general connected noun similar to مَا “what” and مَنْ “who”. But it differs from مَا and مَنْ in a few aspects:

Firstly, أَيَّ is (generally) fully flexible. So it will display its state as a vowel mark on its final letter. Whereas مَا and مَنْ, as we know, are rigid.

Secondly, أَيَّ can be, and, in fact, properly is, the annex noun in an annexation. Whereas مَا and مَنْ cannot be annex nouns. For example,

يُحِبُّنِي أَيُّ التَّلَامِذَةِ يَجْتَهِدُ.

“Whichever of the students strives, pleases me.”

(أَيُّ is in the u-state)

فَأُوْ إِلَى أَبْهَمَ يَحْمِيكَ.

“So take shelter with whichever of them protects you.”

(أَيُّ is in the i-state)

Also, أَيَّ is used indiscriminately for both intelligent and non-intelligent beings. For example,

أَحْمِلْ أَيُّ الْحَقِيْبَتَيْنِ هِيَ الْأَثْقَلُ

“I shall carry whichever of the two bags is the heavier.”

(أَيُّ is in the a-state)

Note how, in the above examples, the final vowel mark on أَيَّ varies, depending on its state due to its being a flexible noun.

أَيَّ, like مَا and مَنْ, is itself a singular masculine noun. And, like مَا and مَنْ, أَيَّ can be used, unchanged, for both genders. The previous example used أَيَّ with حَقِيْبَةٌ which is a feminine noun. But a feminine version أَيَّة does exist and can be used with feminine base nouns. It is, however, only commonly used if its base noun is a feminine pronoun. For example,

صَادِقِي أَيَّتَهُنَّ تَنْصَحُكَ.

“Befriend whichever of them<sub>3,f</sub> is sincere to you<sub>1,f</sub>.”

### 26.6.1. The connected noun أَيَّ without a base noun

أَيَّ can sometimes occur without a base noun. Technically, it will then be indefinite, and thus nūnated. However, it will carry the meaning of an implied annexation. For example,

"I will fight whichever [of them, the enemies, etc.] resists me."

Consistent with what we have already learned for the other connected nouns, the refer-back pronoun may be deleted in connected sentences for the connected noun نَسِيءٌ.

"I will reward whichever of them is truthful."

(instead of أَأَيُّهُمْ هُوَ صَادِقٌ)

As mentioned, اِيَّ is generally fully flexible. However, there is one circumstance in which it may optionally be a rigid noun with the final vowel mark ِ thus: اِيَّا. This is when both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- i. اَيْ is an annex noun.
- ii. The refer-back pronoun to اَيْ is the subject of the connecting sentence and it is deleted.

"I will reward whichever of them is truthful."

“I will reward whichever of them is truthful.”

46 أَجْزَىٰ أَيُّهَا صَادِقٌ.

<sup>46</sup>The examples generally quoted by the grammarians are (1) the verse of poetry ... إِذَا مَا لَقِيتَ بَنِي مَالِكٍ ... and (2) the āyah ثُمَّ لَنَنْزَعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شَئْعَةٍ أَهْلَهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيًّا [69:مريم]

## 26.7. Separating the connecting sentence from the connected noun

Generally, the connecting sentence directly follows the connected noun, as in all the examples we have given so far. However, the connecting sentence may be separated from the connected noun by one of the following:

- i. An oath. For example:

جَاءَ الَّذِي وَاللَّهِ قَهَرَ الْأَعْدَاءَ.

“The one who - by Allāh - overpowered the enemies has come.”

- ii. A sentence calling out to someone. For example,

أَنْتَ الَّذِي يَا زَيْدُ فَتَحْتَ الْبَابَ.

“You are the one - O Zayd - who opened the door.”

- iii. A parenthetical clause, which is a sentence within the main sentence that adds information to it, but which can be deleted without affecting the completeness of the main sentence. For example:

قَدِمَ الَّذِي أَطَالَ اللَّهُ عُمُرَهُ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيَّ.

“The one who - may Allah lengthen his age - was good to me has arrived.”

قَدِمَ الَّذِي وَهُوَ مُبْتَسِمٌ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيَّ.

“The one who - and he is smiling - was good to me has arrived.”

## 26.8. Deleting the connected noun and/or the connecting sentence

TODO. See □□□□□ □□□□□□

## 26.9. Sentences without connected nouns

There are some sentences where we might expect a connected noun but which are always, or often (as the case may be), expressed in Arabic without a connected noun. These sentences are of different types:

### 26.9.1. Sentences with indefinite nouns needing a qualifying sentence

When an indefinite noun needs a qualifying sentence, it is natural in English to insert “that”, “which”, “who”, etc. between the noun and the following sentence. For example, “I passed by a man *who* was sleeping.”



In Arabic, however, we will not use any connected noun in such sentences. This is because the connected nouns are considered definite nouns. And therefore they may not be a describer to an indefinite noun. So while we can say:

مَرَرْتُ بِالرَّجُلِ الَّذِي يَنَامُ.  
“I passed by the man who is sleeping.”

we cannot say

× مَرَرْتُ بِرَجُلٍ الَّذِي يَنَامُ.

Instead, we put the qualifying sentence directly after the indefinite noun. The qualifying sentence will then not be a connecting sentence, but will itself be the describer to the described noun:

مَرَرْتُ بِرَجُلٍ يَنَامُ.  
“I passed by a man (who) is sleeping.”

Here is another example:

جَلَسْتُ فِي مَجْلِسٍ قَدْ رُسِّ بِمَاءِ الْوَرْدِ.  
“I sat in a sitting (that) had been sprinkled with rose-water.”

A connected noun can, however, follow an indefinite noun, if we intend to start a separate sentence with it, or if it is a *replacement* (see chapter @ref(the-replacement)). For example.

وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا الَّذِي وَعَدْتُهُ<sup>47</sup>  
“Resurrect him to a praiseworthy station, the one that you promised him”

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ  
الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ<sup>48</sup>  
“Woe to every scorner and mocker  
Who collects wealth and [continuously] counts it.”

### 26.9.2. Sentences containing a noun with generic definiteness

Sometimes the definite article *al-* does not determine a particular individual, but makes a noun definite only in a generic way. In this case a qualifying sentence may directly follow it without any intermediate connected noun used as a describer. Because there is no connected noun, the qualifying sentence is, again, not analyzed as a connecting sentence. For example:

كَمَثَلِ الْجِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَصْفَارًا<sup>49</sup>  
“like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]”  
(Note how the translator has translated *الْجِمَارِ* as “a donkey” because in English an indefinite noun is often used to indicate a generic type.)

<sup>47</sup> البخاري:614

<sup>48</sup> الهمزة:1-2

<sup>49</sup> الجمعة:5, cited in Wright vol. ii, §172, p. 318C

50 أَنْتَ الْوَزِيرُ لَا يُعَصَّبِي

“You are the (sort of) vizier (who) is not disobeyed.”

51 هُمْ الْفَوَارِسُ يَحْمُونَ النِّسَاءَ.

“They are the (kind of) horsemen (who) protect the women.”

### 26.9.3. Sentences with prepositional or adverbial phrases

If a sentence has a definite noun which is to be qualified by a prepositional or adverbial phrase, then in many cases, that phrase may directly follow the definite noun without any intermediate connected noun used as a describer. But using a connected noun is also permissible if one wishes to emphasize that the specificity of the noun. When there is no connected noun, the prepositional or adverbial phrase is not analyzed as a connecting sentence, but is considered attached to an implied verb that has the idea of “being”, like “is”, “are”, etc. When there is a connected noun, then it is analyzed as a connecting sentence, as usual. For example:

سِرْتُ فِي الْحَدِيقَةِ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ.

“I walked in the garden next to the mosque.”

or

سِرْتُ فِي الْحَدِيقَةِ الَّتِي عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ.

or

سِرْتُ فِي الْحَدِيقَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ.

“I walked in the [specific] garden that [is] next to the mosque.”

<sup>50</sup>Fischer §428.1, p. 219

<sup>51</sup>Fischer §428.1, p. 219

## Chapter 27.

### The question nouns مَا, مَنْ, and أَيَّ

#### 27.1. Introduction

In chapter (connected nouns) we studied the use of مَا “what”, مَنْ “who”, and أَيَّ “which” as the general connected nouns. In this chapter, we will study the use of these same nouns as *question nouns*.

There are other question nouns besides the ones above, like كَيْفَ “how”, أَيْنَ “where”, مَتَى “when”. There are also question words which are particles, not nouns, like أ and هَلْ. We will study all these elsewhere, if Allāh wishes.

#### 27.2. مَا and مَنْ

##### 27.2.1. The question nouns at the beginning of the question sentence

All question words typically occur in the beginning of the question sentence. (Particles like وَ, فَ, etc. are allowed to precede them.) For example,

<sup>1</sup> مَنْ أَنْتَ؟

“Who are you?”

<sup>2</sup> وَمَا تِلْكَ يَمِينِكَ؟

“What is that in your right hand?”

In both the above examples, the question nouns مَا and مَنْ are in the u-state as the topic of their respective question sentences.

When the question is asking about the direct doer of a verb, then too is the question noun placed in the beginning of the sentence. For example,

<sup>3</sup> مَا تَقُولُ؟

“What do you say?”

<sup>4</sup> مَنْ قَتَلْتَ؟

“Whom did you kill?”

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<sup>1</sup>Wright vol. ii, §170, p. 311D

<sup>2</sup>طه:17

<sup>3</sup>Wright vol. ii, §170, p. 312A

<sup>4</sup>Wright vol. ii, §170, p. 311D

<sup>5</sup> مَا فَرَضَ رَبُّكَ عَلَيَّ أُمَّتِكَ؟

“What has your Lord enjoined upon your Ummah?”

In the above three examples, the question nouns مَا and مَنْ are analyzed as the a-state direct doer of the verb following it.

The question nouns are exempted from being placed in the beginning of the question noun when they are in the i-state: either following a preposition, or as the base noun in an annexation. For example,

<sup>6</sup> لِمَنْ هَذَا الْقَصْرِ؟

“Whose is this palace?”

<sup>7</sup> بِنْتُ مَنْ أَنْتَ؟

“Whose daughter are you?”

When the question noun مَا *mā* is in the i-state it is typically shortened to مَ *ma*.

Example:

<sup>8</sup> بِمَ يَرْجِعُ؟

“With what does he return?”

This shortened مَ is also usually joined to the preposition before it, even for prepositions constituting more than one letter (which don't typically join to the word directly following it). So we get:

- بِمَا for بِمَا
- لِمَا for لِمَا
- فِي مَا for فِيهِ
- إِلَى مَا for إِلَى
- عَلَى مَا for عَلَى
- حَتَّى مَا for حَتَّى
- (مِنْ مَا) for مِنْ
- (عَنْ مَا) for عَنْ

When pausing on this shortened مَ, a ʾ is appended to it to preserve the sound of the a-mark. For example:

لِمَ؟

*limah?*

“For what?”

The shortened مَ is also used when it is the base noun in an annexation. However, in this case it won't be joined to the previous word. For example:

<sup>9</sup> مِثْلُ مَ أَنْتَ؟

“What are you like?”

<sup>5</sup>مسلم:162a

<sup>6</sup>الترمذي:3688

<sup>7</sup>Wright vol. ii, §170, p. 311D

<sup>8</sup>سنن ابن ماجه:4108

<sup>9</sup>Wright vol. i, §351, p. 275A

As an alternative to placing the question noun مَا or مَنْ after the preposition or annex noun, the question noun may be placed in the beginning of the sentence and it is referred back to by a pronoun. For example,

<sup>10</sup> قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things"

The question nouns مَا and مَنْ are themselves masculine singular nouns. But they can be used to ask about nouns of any gender or number. For example,

<sup>11</sup> مَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ؟  
"What is that in your right hand?"

مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ الرِّجَالُ؟  
"Who are these men?"

When asking the identity of the doer of a verb, then the verb is usually construed with a masculine singular doer to match the question noun. For example:

مَنْ جَاءَ؟  
"Who has come?"

<sup>12</sup> مَا يُبْكِيكَ؟  
"What makes you cry?"

Occasionally, the feminine verb may be used if asking about a feminine doer. For example:

<sup>13</sup> مَنْ كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ؟  
"Who was your mother?"

If the question is regarding a specific number and gender, then we are more likely to insert the corresponding specific connected noun (الَّذِي, etc.) between the question noun مَنْ and the verb. For example:

<sup>14</sup> مِنَ اللَّتَّانِ تَظَاهَرَتَا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِهِ  
"Who are the ones<sub>2f</sub>, from his wives, who aided one another against the Prophet ?

Note that now the dual feminine doer pronoun إِي in تَظَاهَرَتَا is the refer-back pronoun that refers back to the connected noun اللَّتَّانِ.

<sup>10</sup> 88:المؤمنون

<sup>11</sup> 17:طه

<sup>12</sup> 3894:الترمذي

<sup>13</sup> Wright vol. ii, §170, p. 313C. Also for تفسير البحر المحيط لأبي حيان [النساء:176] and «فإن كانتا اثنتين» [النساء:176] لم تكن فتنتهم» [الأنعام:23]

<sup>14</sup> 4913:صحيح البخاري

## 27.2.2. An indefinite noun after مَا and مَنْ

The question nouns مَا and مَنْ cannot occur as annex nouns. Nor can either of them be a replacee. So any indefinite noun after them must necessarily be the comment of the question sentence. For example, مَنْ فَارِسٌ?<sup>15</sup> can only mean, “Who is a horseman?” not “Who horseman?” or “Which horseman?”

## 27.2.3. مَنْ دَا and مَا دَا

To lend more force to the question or to make it more lively, دَا may be appended to the question nouns مَا and مَنْ. For example,

مَا دَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ<sup>16</sup>

“What did your lord say?”

With مَنْ دَا the specific connected noun الَّذِي is often appended as well. For example:

مَنْ دَا الَّذِي قَالَ هَذَا<sup>17</sup>

“Who is the one that said this?”

Note that دَا is also a variant pointing noun meaning “this” or “that”. In which case, it can be the comment of the question sentence by itself. For example:

فَدَقَقْتُ الْبَابَ، فَقَالَ: مَنْ دَا؟ فَقُلْتُ: أَنَا، قَالَ: أَنَا، كَأَنَّهُ كَرِهَهُ.<sup>18</sup>

“So I knocked at the door. He said, ‘Who is that?’ I said, ‘I.’ He said ‘I? I?’ as if he disliked it.”

## 27.2.4. Why

Arabic has no distinct question word for “why”. Instead, the question noun مَا is used with a preposition, typically لَ to give the meaning “For what?”. For example,

لِمَ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ<sup>19</sup>

“Why did he do that?”

لِمَاذَا وَلَّيْتَ بَعْدَ مَجِيئِكَ إِلَى هَهُنَا؟<sup>20</sup>

“Why did you turn back after your coming here?”

Sometimes, other prepositions like عَلَى and بِ may be used. But this is dependent on the verb in the sentence. For example,

عَلَامَ يَقْتُلُ أَحَدَكُمْ أَخَاهُ<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Wright, vol. ii, §170, p. 312C

<sup>16</sup>صحيح البخاري:4800

<sup>17</sup>سنن ابن ماجه:3802

<sup>18</sup>الأدب المفرد:1086

<sup>19</sup>صحيح مسلم:705b

<sup>20</sup>Wright, vol. ii, §170, p. 312B

<sup>21</sup>مشكاة المصابيح:4562

“Why does one of you kill his brother?”

i.e. “on what [basis]”

بِمَ يَأْخُذُ أَحَدُكُمْ مَالَ أَخِيهِ؟<sup>22</sup>

“Why should any of you take his brother’s property?”

i.e. “by what [justification]”

And often times, the meaning “why” is conveyed using مَا when a suitable verb exists. For example:

مَا تُبْكِيكَ؟<sup>23</sup>

“What makes you cry?”

i.e. “Why are you crying?”

### 27.2.5. Applicability of مَا and مَنْ to intelligent and non-intelligent beings

In (give ref) we discussed how, sometimes, the connected noun مَا may be used for intelligent beings and مَنْ for non-intelligent beings. Those same guidelines apply for مَا and مَنْ when they are question nouns. For example, when inquiring about the nature or qualities of a person مَا may be used. Examples:

فَقُلْتُ لَهُ مَا أَنْتَ قَالَ أَنَا نَبِيٌّ. فَقُلْتُ وَمَا نَبِيٌّ قَالَ أَرْسَلَنِي اللَّهُ<sup>24</sup>

“I said, ‘Who are you?’ He said, ‘I am a prophet.’ So I said, ‘And who is a prophet?’ He said ‘Allāh has sent me.’”

### 27.2.6. Differentiating question words from their other functions

Many of the question words (أَيُّ، مَنْ، مَا، كَيْفَ, etc.) also have other functions. For example, in chapter @ref(the-connected-nouns) we learned that مَنْ، مَا، and أَيُّ are also connected nouns. Many of the question nouns can also be used as *conditional nouns* that we will study in chapter @ref(...), if Allāh wills.

In this section, we will discuss briefly how to determine when words like مَنْ، مَا، كَيْفَ, etc. are question words, and when they could have one of their other functions.

The basic principle regarding a question sentence is that it is to be treated as one unit. A word from within a question sentence is not, individually, affected by anything outside the question. Let’s try to understand this using an example.

Consider the following sentence:

أُسْأَلُ أَيُّهُمْ قَامَ

’is’al ’ayyuhum qām

“Ask: ‘Which of them stood?’”

<sup>22</sup> مشكاة المصابيح:2840

<sup>23</sup> الترمذي:3894

<sup>24</sup> مسلم:832

The speaker is commanding the addressed person to ask a group of people the question: “Which of them stood”.

The question sentence is اُسْأَلْ أَيُّهُمْ قَامَ ‘*ayyuhum qām* “Which of them stood”. This entire sentence is considered the direct doer of the verb of command اُسْأَلْ “ask!”. The question noun أَيُّ ‘*ayyu* is in the u-state because it is the subject of the question sentence. It does not become أَيَّ ‘*ayya* in the a-state because it is not, by itself, the direct doer of اُسْأَلْ. Rather, as we have just stated, the entire question sentence is the direct doer. But because the direct doer is a sentence, and not an individual word, it does not indicate its state using, for example, an a-mark َ.

Now, let’s modify the example. Consider now this sentence:

اُسْأَلْ أَيُّهُمْ قَامَ  
'is'al 'ayyahum qām

Ask the one of them who stood!

Now, the noun أَيُّ is in the a-state because it (individually) is the direct doer of the verb of command اُسْأَلْ. The speaker is now commanding the addressed person to ask (something) of only the person who stood, out of a group of people. The rest of the people are not to be asked. Because the noun أَيُّ is individually affected by the preceding verb اُسْأَلْ it is now not a question noun, and must be one of the other functions that the word أَيُّ can have. As a matter of fact, it is here a connected noun, and the sentence following it: قَامَ “he stood” is its connector.

The other noteworthy point regarding questions (besides their being considered one unit) is that they may only be preceded either by a verb of knowledge, (like عَلِمَ, ذَرَى, etc.) or by an expression indicating that the question is being quoted. We have already seen an example of the question being quoted in the example:

اُسْأَلْ أَيُّهُمْ قَامَ  
“Ask: ‘Which of them stood?’”

An example of a question being preceded by a verb of knowledge is:

مَا عَلِمْتُ أَذْهَبَ أَمْ مَكَثَ  
I don’t know whether he went or stayed.

Here the question sentence is: أَذْهَبَ أَمْ مَكَثَ “Did he go or did he stay?”

By the way, a question sentence may be part of a bigger question as well. For example:

أَتَذَرِي أَيُّهُمْ فِي الْبَارِ؟  
'atadri 'ayyuhum fi -ddār

Do you know: which of them is in the house?

Note now the subtle difference in meaning if we change the state of أَيُّ in the above example from the u-state to the a-state:



أَتَذَرِي أَتِيَهُمْ فِي الدَّارِ؟  
 'atadri 'ayyahum fi -ddār

Do you know the one of them who is in the house?

When أَتِيَّ was in the u-state it was a question noun. And the speaker was asking the addressed person if he could figure out who, from among the group of people, was in the house.

When أَتِي is in the a-state it is now a connected noun. The connector's link-back pronoun is omitted (as is permissible in this case, see section @ref(...)). With the link-back pronoun restored, the sentence is أَتَذَرِي أَتِيَهُمْ هُوَ فِي الدَّارِ؟ And the speaker is asking the addressed person if he is familiar with the person who is in the house. Now he is not asking the addressed person to identify him, but rather if knows him as a person.

This difference is apparent with أَتِي because it is a flexible noun whose state is indicated by the vowel mark at its end. The same occurs in the other question nouns that are also connected nouns: مَا, and مَنْ but it won't often be as apparent because they are rigid nouns.

As a final note, sometimes, one of the words like أَ, مَنْ, مَا, كَيْفَ, etc. may be preceded by parts of a sentence that are neither quoting, nor a verb of knowledge. Here we can be sure that the word is not a question word and must be one of its other functions. However, it still may not be easy to figure out what that other function is. Nevertheless, the meaning of the sentence can still usually be gleaned. For example:

فَلْتَدْخُلْ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ شَاءَتْ

“then let her enter from whichever of the doors of paradise she wishes.” [^question-vs-other-functions]

Work in progress

## Chapter 28.

### Yes/no questions

For تقديم الخبر with حرف الاستفهام, see دلائل الإعجاز للجرجاني. Also referred to in [ ] topic: تقديم المستفهم عنه. Also add, if the comment is simply a noun: أمسافر أنت.

Work in progress

Work in progress

## Appendix A.

### Rules for writing hamzah

#### A.1. Seats of hamzah

Hamzah is written in four different ways:

1. Seated on an alif: أ or إ
2. Seated on an wāw: وُ
3. Seated on an yā': يَ
4. Unseated: ء

Here are some of notes about writing hamzah in the above four methods:

- When unseated hamzah comes between two letters that are joined, then it is written above the line that joins them, for example: خَطِيئَةٌ *khaṭi'ah*. In this word, the yā' يَ joins to the tā' *marbūṭah* ة.

As a special case, when unseated hamza comes between joined lām and alif (لا), then it is positioned between them thus: لاَ. (In most cases, this is replaced with لَ as we will explain in the next point below.) And this is different from hamzah on the alif following the lām: لَأ.

- When unseated hamzah is followed by an alif: اء, the combination of hamzah and alif is usually written as آ as a convention. Examples: آمَنَ *'āmana*, ظَمَّانَ *ḍham'ān*, شَنَّانَ *shana'ān*. However, when the alif is a suffix or part of a suffix, or the hamzah is doubled, or there is an alif before the hamzah then we will write اء, not آ. Examples: شَيَّانَ *shay'āni*, سَأَلَ *sa'al*, قِرَاءَاتٍ *qirā'āt*.
- When hamzah is seated on alif, if it has an *i*-mark, it is written below the alif: اِ. Otherwise, it is written above the alif: اَ, اُ, اِ.
- When hamzah is seated on yā' يَ the dots of the yā' are no longer written. Here's how it will appear in different positions:

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
ء	ئ	أ	أ

Note that hamzah is seated on yā' in the middle position أ is different from unseated hamzah between two joining letters ئ.

So how do we know when to write hamzah unseated and when seated? And how do we choose between its three different seats? There are a set of rules that we need to follow in order to correctly write hamzah.

## A.2. Rules for determining the seat of hamzah

### A.2.1. Without prefixes and suffixes

We will first learn how to determine the seat of hamzah for a word without any prefix or suffix.

Hamzah can occur in three positions in a word:

1. At the beginning of the word
2. In the middle of the word
3. At the end of the word

We will treat each of these positions below.

#### A.2.1.1. At the beginning of the word

When hamzah occurs in the beginning of a word, then:

- a. If the hamzah carries a long-ā vowel, it is written unseated followed by an alif and written as آ, for example آمَنَ āmana.
- b. If the hamzah carries any other vowel, it is written seated on an alif, and is marked with the appropriated vowel mark, for example أَسْلَمَ āslama, أُرِيدُ urīdu, إِسْلَامَ islām, إِيْمَانٍ īmān, أُؤْخَذُ ūkhidha.

#### A.2.1.2. In the middle of the word

Arabic has three short vowels, three long vowels, two semi-vowels, and a zero-vowel indicated by a o-mark ْ. Each of these has an order of precedence and a hamzah seat, that we have shown in the table below:

Precedence	Vowel	Seated hamzah
1.	<i>ī/ay</i>	ء
2.	<i>i</i>	ئ
3.	<i>ū/aw</i>	ء
4.	<i>u</i>	ؤ
5.	<i>ā</i>	ء
6.	<i>a</i>	أ
7.	◌ْ	ء

**Main rule:** Disregard any doubling mark ◌ْ. Consider the vowel on the consonant before the hamzah and the vowel on the hamzah itself. Determine which of the two vowels wins by being higher in precedence in the above table. The winning vowel's seat will be the seat of the hamzah.

**Exception:** If the vowel *ā* wins, but it is written not as an alif but as a ح, then the hamzah will be seated on an alif.

Examples:

Word	Vowel before hamzah	Vowel on hamzah	Winning vowel	Seated hamzah
هَيْئَة <i>hay'ah</i>	<i>ay</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay</i>	ء
خَطِيئَة <i>khaṭi'ah</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ī</i>	ء
اِسْتِيَّاس <i>'isti'ās</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ī</i>	ء (Exception: اء is not written as آ when the preceding vowel is <i>ī</i> .)
تَوَّءَم <i>taw'am</i>	<i>aw</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>aw</i>	ء
سَوَّءَہ <i>saw'ah</i>	<i>aw</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>aw</i>	ء
مَوَّئِل <i>maw'il</i>	<i>aw</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	ئ
سَائِل <i>sā'il</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	ئ
تَسَاوُل <i>tasā'ul</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	ؤ
تَسَاوَل <i>tasā'ala</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	ء
قِرَاءَات <i>qirā'āt</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>ā</i>	ء
نَوَّان <i>nū'ānun</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>ū</i>	ء
مَسْئُول <i>mas'ūl</i>	◌ْ	<i>ū</i>	<i>ū</i>	ء
تَرْئِيس <i>tar'īs</i>	◌ْ	<i>ī</i>	<i>ī</i>	ء
مِرْءَاة <i>mir'āh</i>	◌ْ	<i>ā</i>	<i>ā</i>	ء
ظَمَّان <i>ḡham'an</i>	◌ْ	<i>ā</i>	<i>ā</i>	ء

Word	Vowel before hamzah	Vowel on hamzah	Winning vowel	Seated hamzah
مَسْأَلَةٌ <i>mas'alah</i>	◌ْ	a	a	أ
الْمَرْأَةُ <i>almar'ah</i>	◌ْ	a	a	أ
أَسْئَلَةٌ <i>'as'ilah</i>	◌ْ	i	i	ئ
أَفْتَدَاهُ <i>'afidah</i>	◌ْ	i	i	ئ
بَيْسٌ <i>bi'sa</i>	i	◌ْ	i	ئ
سُؤْلٌ <i>su'l</i>	u	◌ْ	u	ؤ
كَأْسٌ <i>ka's</i>	a	◌ْ	a	أ
سُئِلَ <i>su'ila</i>	u	i	i	ئ
يَبِيسُ <i>ya'isa</i>	a	i	i	ئ
مُطْمَئِنَّ <i>mutma'inn</i>	a	i	i	ئ
سُؤَالٌ <i>su'āl</i>	u	ā	u	ؤ
رَءِيسٌ <i>ra'īs</i>	a	ī	ī	ء
رُءُوسٌ <i>ru'ūs</i>	u	ū	ū	ء
شُؤْنٌ <i>shu'ūn</i>	u	ū	ū	ء
رَءُوفٌ <i>ra'ūf</i>	a	ū	ū	ء
لُؤْيٍ <i>lu'ayy</i>	u	a	u	ؤ
شَنَاانٌ <i>shana'ān</i>	a	ā	ā	ء
سَأَلَ <i>sa'ala</i>	ā	a	a	أ
رَأْسٌ <i>ra'asa</i>	a	a	a	أ
سَيِّئَةٌ <i>sayyi'ah</i>	i	a	i	ئ
يُرَأْسُ <i>yura'isu</i>	a	i	i	ئ
رَأْسٌ <i>ru'isa</i>	u	i	i	ئ
تَفَرُّؤُلٌ <i>tafa'ul</i>	a	u	u	ؤ
سَأَلَ <i>sa'āl</i>	a	ā	ā	ء
لَأَلٌ <i>la'āl</i>	a	ā	ā	ء
رَأَى <i>ra'ā</i>	a	ā	ā	أ (using exception)



## A.2.1.3. At the end of the word

When hamzah occurs at the end of a word, disregard the vowel on hamzah itself, and consider only the vowel on preceding consonant. Plug it into the precedence table as above to determine the seat of hamzah.

Word	Vowel on conso- nant before hamzah	Seated hamzah
دَعَا <i>dueā'u</i>	<i>ā</i>	ء
سُوء <i>sū'u</i>	<i>ū</i>	ء
جِيءَ <i>jī'a</i>	<i>ī</i>	ء
دَاوَا <i>daw'a</i>	<i>aw</i>	ء
شَايَا <i>shay'a</i>	<i>ay</i>	ء
بَطَأَ <i>buṭ'u</i>	◌ْ	ء
عَبَأَ <i>eib'u</i>	◌ْ	ء
شَاطَأَ <i>shaṭ'u</i>	◌ْ	ء
يُهَدَّى <i>yuhaddi'u</i>	<i>i</i>	ئ
مُتَّكِيٌ <i>muttaki'a</i>	<i>i</i>	ئ
سَيَّى <i>sayyi'u</i>	<i>i</i>	ئ
بَطَأَ <i>baṭ'u'a</i>	<i>u</i>	و
يَهْدَأَ <i>yahda'u</i>	<i>a</i>	أ
مُبْتَدَأٌ <i>mubtada'i</i>	<i>a</i>	إ

The exception to this rule is when the previous letter is a doubled wāw with an *u*-mark. In this case the hamzah will again be unseated. Example *تَبَوَّءُ* *tabawwu'u*.

Note also that *مُبْتَدَأٌ* *mubtada'i* can be written with the hamzah below the alif because of the *i*-mark on the hamzah. But it is also common to write it as *مُبْتَدَأٌ* *mubtada'*, especially when the hamzah is unvoiced.

A.2.2. With prefixes and suffixes

A.2.2.1. Prefixes

If hamzah is in the beginning of a word, adding a prefix to the word will not alter the writing of the hamzah. Hamzah will continue to be seated on an alif. Here are some examples of words with beginning hamzahs and prefixes.

Word without prefix	Prefix	Word with prefix
أُسْتَاذٌ	ل	لأُسْتَاذٍ
آخِرَةٌ	الْ	الْآخِرَةُ

A.2.2.2. Suffixes

If hamzah is at the end of a word, adding a suffix to the word can, in general, alter the writing of the hamzah. Hamzah is now, generally, treated as if it is in the middle of the word, and the rules for hamzah in the middle of a word apply. Examples:

Word	Vowel on consonant before hamzah	Shortened vowel on hamzah	Winning vowel	Seated hamzah
بَرِيْثُونُ <i>barī'ūna</i>	ī	ū	ī	ء
بَرِيْثَانِ <i>barī'āni</i>	ī	ā	ī	ء
بَرِيْثِيْنَ <i>barī'īna</i>	ī	ī	ī	ء
بَرِيْثِيْنِ <i>barī'ayni</i>	ī	ay	ī/ay	ء
سَيِّئَاتِ <i>sī'at</i>	ī	a	ī	ء
شَيِّئُهُ <i>shay'uhu</i>	ay	u	ay	ء
شَيِّئِهِ <i>shay'ahu</i>	ay	a	ay	ء
شَيِّئِهِ <i>shay'ihī</i>	ay	i	ay	ء
شَيِّئَانِ <i>shay'āni</i>	ay	ā	ay	ء
شَيِّئِيْنَ <i>shay'ayni</i>	ay	ay	ay	ء
مَجِيْئُهُ <i>majī'uhu</i>	ī	u	ī	ء
مَجِيْئِهِ <i>majī'ahu</i>	ī	a	ī	ء

Word	Vowel on con- sonant before hamzah	Shortened vowel on hamzah	Winning vowel	Seated hamzah
مَجِيئِهِ maji'ihī	ī	i	ī	ء
سُوئِهِ sū'ihī	ū	i	i	ئ
دَاوئِهِ daw'ihī	aw	i	i	ئ
يَسُوئُونا yasū'ūna	ū	ū	ū	ء
سُوئُهُ sū'uhu	ū	u	ū	ء
سُوئَاهُ sū'ahu	ū	a	ū	ء
سُوئَانِ sū'āni	ū	ā	ū	ء
دَاوَاهُ daw'ahu	aw	a	aw	ء
دَاوَانِ daw'āni	aw	ā	aw	ء
مُرْجَاتِ murja'āt	a	ā	ā	ء
خَاطِئِينَ khāṭi'īn	i	ī	ī	ء
خَاسِئِينَ khāsi'īn	i	ī	ī	ء
مُتَّكِيْنَا muttaki'īna	i	ī	ī	ء
مُتَّكِيْنَا muttaki'ūna	i	ū	i	ئ
يُبَرِّئُونَا yubarrī'ūna	i	ū	i	ئ
يُبَارِّئُونَا yubarra'ūna	a	ū	ū	ء
أَقْرَأُوا iqra'ū	a	ū	ū	ء
سَيِّئَاتِ sayyi'āt	i	ā	i	ئ
فِتَاتِ fi'āt	i	ā	i	ئ
فِتُونِ fi'ūn	i	ū	i	ئ
مِئَاتِ mi'āt	i	ā	i	ئ
مِئُونِ mi'ūn	i	ū	i	ئ
يُطْفِئُوا yutfi'ū	i	ū	i	ئ
مُسْتَهْزِئُونِ mustahzi'ūn	i	ū	i	ئ
مُنْشِئُونِ munshi'ūn	i	ū	i	ئ
يُضَاهِئُونَا yuḍāhi'ūna	i	ū	i	ئ

مُرْجُونَ *murji'un*      i      ū      i      ع

---

There are some exceptions:

- If the letter before the hamzah has a o-mark and is not wāw or yā', then the hamzah will be written unseated. Examples:

- جُرْءَانِ *juz'āni*
- عِبْءَانِ *ib'āni*
- عِبْءَيْنِ *ib'ayni*
- بَطْءُهُ *buṭ'ahu*
- بَطْءُهُ *buṭ'uhu*
- بَطْءِهِ *buṭ'ihī*

(ان, ه, and هِ are suffixes.) Note that the combination لء is not written as ل when the alif is part of the suffix.

### A.2.3. Nūnation on final hamzah

Nūnation on final hamzah does not affect the writing of the hamzah except in the case of a nūnated *a*-mark َ. When writing a nūnated *a*-mark َ on a hamzah at the end of a word:

1. If there is an alif before a unseated hamzah ا, then we don't add a silent alif when writing the nūnated *a*-mark َ. For example دَاء becomes دَاءٌ *dā'an*, not دَاءِ.
2. Otherwise, we add the silent alif after the hamzah so that the hamzah is now in the middle of the word with a suffix alif after it. We now pretend that the hamzah has an *a*-mark and that the alif after it is a long-ā vowel. Then we go through the rules for writing hamzah in the middle of a word (given above) to determine how hamzah will be written. We then write the nūnated *a*-mark َ on the hamzah. Examples:

- مَبْتَدَأُ becomes مَبْتَدِئًا, مَبْتَدِئًا, مَبْتَدِئًا
- مَلْجَأُ becomes مَلْجِئًا, مَلْجِئًا, مَلْجِئًا
- جُزْءُ becomes جُزْئًا, جُزْئًا, جُزْئًا

- شَيءٌ becomes شَيْءٌ شَيْئًا, شَيْءٌ شَيْءٌ
- سَيٌّ becomes سَيِّئًا, سَيِّئًا, سَيِّئًا

#### A.2.4. Variants

There are some historical and regional variants to the above rules. The main one is when the letter before hamzah has a o-mark, the hamzah is generally written unseated. So with this variant, we write:

- مَسْأَلَةٌ instead of مَسْأَلَةٌ

However, this rule appears to be not consistently followed. For example, *nash'ah* is generally always written نَشَاءٌ never نَشْءٌ.

Another variant is that when word final hamzah has an *i*-mark and is followed by a suffix starting with *ū*, then the hamzah is written unseated instead of as ء. Examples:

- مُتَّكِنُونَ *muttaki'ūn* instead of مُتَّكِنُونُ
- يُطْفِئُونَ *yutfi'ū* instead of يُطْفِئُونُ
- مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ *mustahzi'ūn* instead of مُسْتَهْزِئُونُ
- مُنْشِئُونَ *munshi'ūn* instead of مُنْشِئُونُ
- يَضَاهِئُونَ *yudāhi'ūna* instead of يَضَاهِئُونُ
- مُرْجُونَ *murji'ūn* instead of مُرْجُونُ
- مُرْجُونَ *murji'ūn* instead of مُرْجُونُ
- رَأِيسٌ *ra'is* instead of رَأِيسٌ

Excepted from this variant are deficient words like:

- فِتْنُونَ *fi'ūn*
- مِئُونَ *mi'ūn*

Another, more modern, variant is to modify the precedence rule of vowels. According to this modern variant, the vowel before hamzah is compared with the *shortened* vowel on the hamzah. This can result in some changes in the hamzah seat. For example:

- مَسْئُولٌ *mas'ul* instead of مَسْئُولٌ
- رُؤُوسٌ *ru'ūs* instead of رُؤُوسٌ

- أَقْرَأُوا *iqra'ū* instead of أَقْرَأُوا

Excepted from this variant is the combination *a'ā* which will continue to be written as عَا or آَا. For example: مُرْجَات, شَنَان.

### A.3. Why so complicated?

Hamzah was originally not pronounced everywhere in some Classical Arabic dialects. For speakers of these dialects, when hamzah would occur in the middle of a word, they would replace it with an *a*, *u*, or *i* vowel. So they would adjust their pronunciation as follows:

Pronunciation with hamzah	Pronunciation without hamzah
هَيَّة <i>hay'ah</i>	هَيَّة <i>hayyah</i>
خَطِيَّة <i>khaṭi'ah</i>	خَطِيَّة <i>khaṭiyyah</i>
تَوَّام <i>taw'am</i>	تَوَّام <i>tawwam</i>
تَسَاوُل <i>tasā'ul</i>	تَسَاوُل <i>tasāwul</i>
بَيْس <i>bi'sa</i>	بَيْس <i>bisa</i>
سُوْل <i>su'l</i>	سُوْل <i>sul</i>
كَاس <i>ka's</i>	كَاس <i>kās</i>

When the Classical Standard Arabic variety emerged, then, for reasons that are beyond the scope of this text, the pronunciation *with* hamzah and the consonantal spelling *without* hamzah became standardized. So ء is now added as a pronunciation mark on top of the various *seats* that would instead have been dialectally pronounced without hamzah.

### A.4. Typographical limitations

Unfortunately, most digital fonts do not currently allow for correctly typing an unseated hamzah between two joined letters (عَا), as in خَطِيَّة *khaṭi'ah*. In most fonts, the hamzah character (Unicode u + 0621) will break the joining between the two letters surrounding it, and the output will be rendered incorrectly: عَا *khaṭi'ah*.

Two typefaces which allow for the correct typesetting are

- Amiri from Alif Type ([amirifont.org](http://amirifont.org))
- Naskh™ from DecoType ([decotype.com](http://decotype.com))

We have used the Amiri font for typesetting this appendix chapter.

For most other fonts, an unseated hamzah between two joined letters would have to be approximated in one of two ways:

1. Hamzah superscript on a taṭwīl character: ء. Example: حَظِيَّة. The Unicode input sequence is:

u + 0640 ARABIC TATWEEL

u + 0654 ARABIC HAMZA ABOVE

This is a more accurate approximation, but some fonts may not position the hamzah correctly on the taṭwīl, or position vowel marks on the superscript hamzah correctly.

2. Hamzah seated on yā': ئ. Example: حَظِيَّة. This is a reprehensible, yet more prevalent, and better supported, approximation.

Beware, though, that neither of these approximations would allow for the correct rendering of a complex (but thankfully rare) word like لآلِ laʾāl “pearl seller”, where the hamzah is not allowed to disturb the lām-alif ligature لا.

Work in progress



## Appendix B.

### Usage and style

#### B.1. “There is a ...” sentences.

In English the plain existence of an indefinite subject is expressed using the word “there”. For example:

- i. “There is a gloom in the house”
- ii. “There is a type of anger which is liked and [there is] a type of anger which is disliked.
- iii. “There are reasons.”
- iv. “There is a god.”
- v. “Is there food?”
- vi. “Yes, there is food”

The word “there” in these examples does not indicate a specific place. Rather it signifies the existence of the subject of the sentence. This use of “there” is called the *existential* “there”.

Expressing such sentences in Arabic can sometimes be tricky. There is a modern tendency to use the ḍharf makan هُنَاكَ and the majhūl verb يُوجَدُ. So one might find:

- i. هُنَاكَ حَزَنٌ فِي الْبَيْتِ. or  
يُوجَدُ حَزَنٌ فِي الْبَيْتِ.
- ii. هُنَاكَ غَضَبٌ يَسْتَحِبُّ وَهُنَاكَ غَضَبٌ يَكْرَهُ. or  
يُوجَدُ غَضَبٌ يَسْتَحِبُّ وَيُوجَدُ غَضَبٌ يَكْرَهُ.
- iii. هُنَاكَ أَسْبَابٌ. or  
تُوجَدُ أَسْبَابٌ.
- iv. هُنَاكَ إِلَهٌ. or  
يُوجَدُ إِلَهٌ.
- v. هَلْ هُنَاكَ طَعَامٌ؟ or  
هَلْ يُوجَدُ طَعَامٌ؟
- vi. نَعَمْ هُنَاكَ طَعَامٌ. or  
نَعَمْ يُوجَدُ طَعَامٌ.

Sometimes in place of هُنَاكَ, its synonym, تَمَّةٌ is used. These usages of هُنَاكَ, تَمَّةٌ, and يُوجَدُ are foreign to Arabic and should generally be avoided.

In Classical Arabic, expressing such sentences falls under the category of sentences with indefinite subjects. We have discussed this topic in chapter @ref(chap-indef-subjects).

There are various strategies for expressing such sentences:

If, for example, there is a *jārr wa-majrūr*, or other *shibh jumlah* then it can readily be used as a *khabar* that precedes the *mubtada'*. For example:

فِي الْبَيْتِ حَزَنٌ.

"In the house is gloom."

Sometimes, a *jārr wa-majrūr*, or other *shibh jumlah* is not original, but can readily be manufactured. For example, in the sentence, "There are reasons." the reasons must be for something, and that something can be used as a *khabar*:

لِلْوَضْعِ أَسْبَابٌ.

"For the situation, are reasons."

Similarly, an introductory sentence or *shibh jumlah* can be manufactured to pave the way for the main sentence. For example:

الْغَضَبُ غَضَبَانِ: غَضَبٌ مُسْتَحَبٌّ وَغَضَبٌ مَكْرُوهٌ.

"Anger is (actually) two angers: an anger that is liked, and an anger that is disliked."

مَنْ الْغَضَبِ مَا يُسْتَحَبُّ وَمَا يُكْرَهُ.

"From anger is that which is liked, that which is disliked."

Sometimes it hard to come up with any of the above solutions, as in the sentence: "There is a god." Such sentences, if they are able to be converted to an interjection, may be expressed with the subject itself as a one word sentence:

إِلَهٌ!

"[There is] a god!"

This solution should only be considered if the sentence makes sense as an interjection, and can not be used as a blanket solution. For example, in the exchange:

"Is there food?"

"Yes, there is food."

One way to express this in Arabic is:

هَلْ مِنْ طَعَامٍ؟

نَعَمْ، عِنْدَنَا طَعَامٌ.

English also uses the word "there" with this existential meaning for sentences like:

i. "There was a king."

ii. "There is no hope."

These sentences can be expressed in Arabic without indefinite subjects. For example:

## i. كَانَ مَلِكٌ.

This uses the *self-sufficient* كَانَ. (See section @ref(self-sufficient-kaana).)

## ii. لَا أَمَلَ.

This uses the *nāfiyah lil-jins* لَا. (See section @ref(la-nafiyah-lil-jins).)

## B.1.1. Legitimate use of هُنَاكَ and يُوجَدُ

If, of course, a place is intended by “there” then there is no problem using هُنَاكَ or its synonyms. For example:

أَنْتُمْ زَيْدٌ؟

“Is Zayd there?”

Similarly, يُوجَدُ may be used with no problem if the meaning “is (to be) found” is intended. For example:

مَنْ قَتَلَ مَعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنْ رِيحَهَا تَوْجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا

## B.1.2. Technical and scientific use of يُوجَدُ

Our above directive to avoid the use of يُوجَدُ to mean “there is” holds for normal sentences. Sometimes, however, a more technical meaning of “exists” is intended, especially in the language of science. In this case, يُوجَدُ and its ism mafe'ul موجود may be used when needing to discuss the existence of something in a scientific text. But such usage should be restricted to its domain, and should not, ideally, spill over to normal sentences, where a simple “there is” is intended.

While this concession can be granted to يُوجَدُ, we find no such justifying circumstance for using هُنَاكَ existentially.

## B.2. Pronoun of separation after question nouns

In later writing we find the following forms:

مَنْ هِيَ زَيْنَبُ؟

Who is Zaynab?

مَا هُوَ الْإِسْلَامُ؟

What is Islām?

لِمَاذَا هُوَ حَزِينٌ؟

Why is he sad?

The insertion of the pronoun of separation (هُوَ, هِيَ, etc.) after question nouns is best avoided. So it is better to say:

مَنْ زَيْنَب؟

Who is Zaynab?

مَا الْإِسْلَامُ؟

What is Islām?

As for “why” sentences, Arabic has a native expression using مَا لَ followed by a noun or pronoun in the i-state and then an adjective in the a-state. For example:

مَا لَهُ حَزِينًا؟

Why is he sad?

Another option, that is sometimes possible, is to convert the “why” question into a “what” question, thus:

مَا أَخَذَنَّهُ

Why is he sad? (literally: What has made him sad?)

### B.3. “What happened to ...”

When asking the question, “What happened to a person/thing?” the verbs فَعَلَ and صَنَعَ are used and the person or thing asked about is made the doer. For example:

يَا أَبَا عَمِيرٍ مَا فَعَلَ النَّعْصِرُ

What happened to al-nughayr  
bukhari:6129

ما فعل أصحابك

What happened to your companions?  
riyadussalihin:30

مَا فَعَلَتِ الرِّيطَةُ

What happened to the thin cloak?  
ibnmajah:3603

فَيَسْأَلُونَهُ مَاذَا فَعَلَ فُلَانٌ مَاذَا فَعَلَ فُلَانٌ

So they ask him: What happened to so-and-so? What happened to so-and-so?  
nasai:1833

### B.4. about

The word “about” is often indiscriminately translated as عَنْ. عَنْ is to be used, but only in specific circumstances. For example, with the verb سَأَلَ.

سَأَلَهُ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

He asked him about a matter.

We have also found عَنْ in the narration:

مَا هَذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُونَ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ  
abudawud:4621

Usually, though, the preposition فِي should be used instead. For example:

### B.5. "What about ..."

Avoid عَنْ مَادًا when asking "What about someone/something?"

Instead use مَا بَالٍ.

For example:

حَتَّى إِذَا فَرَغَ مَشَيْتُ، فَقُلْتُ مَا بَالُ الْعَظَمِ وَالرَّوْنَةِ  
bukhari:3860

إِذَا تَوَاجَهَ الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَكِلَاهُمَا مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ . قِيلَ فَهَذَا الْقَاتِلُ، فَمَا بَالُ الْمُقْتُولِ  
bukhari:7083

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الشَّيْءُ الَّذِي لَا يَجِلُّ مِنْهُ قَالَ الْمَاءُ وَالْمِلْحُ وَالنَّارُ . قَالَتْ  
قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا الْمَاءُ قَدْ عَرَفْنَاهُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمِلْحِ وَالنَّارِ  
ibnmajah:2474

When the question "What about ...?" is asked as a follow-up to a previous statement then the asked about person/thing can be asked by itself in a single word. For example:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ نَهَى أَنْ يَشْرَبَ الرَّجُلُ قَائِمًا . فَتَادَهُ فَقُلْنَا فَلَاكُلُ فَقَالَ ذَاكَ  
"what about eating?" muslim:2024b

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِلْمُتَلَاعِنَيْنِ " جَسَابُكُمَا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَحَدُكُمَا كَاذِبٌ لَا سَبِيلَ لَكَ  
عَلَيْهَا " . قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا لِي  
"What about my wealth?" abudawud:2257

Work in progress