

# Learn Standard Arabic

A self-instruction textbook with grammar, vocabulary, and  
exercises

Author Names

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# Preface

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The primary texts of Islām (the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth) are in Arabic. So too is much of its scholarly literature. However, there is a multitude of 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.

This book is a teaching grammar and not a reference grammar. So, in the initial chapters, topics are presented sequentially at only a basic level, without treating them exhaustively, before moving on to the next topic. Furthermore, since this is a beginner's textbook, only the more common usages are explained.

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 from proceeding further. (Learning a language can be hard enough without getting the feeling that your grammar book is accusing you of something!) 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 in the appendix 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 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.

#### THE AUTHORS

<https://github.com/adamiturabi/arabic-tutorial-book>

# 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 Qurʾān 1400 years ago to the Prophet Muḥammad, may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him. The language of the Qurʾān 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. The 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 spoken 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 original Arabic language of the time of the revelation.

In the process of preserving Arabic, a literary form that was considered more prestigious, emerged from among the various dialects of Arabic. This literary form is called Classical Arabic. Classical Arabic came to be used as the language of 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 and at this point it is referred to as Standard Arabic. A few words were also borrowed from foreign languages as needed by the different scientific disciplines. These additions were, by and large, deliberate, done by scholars who were experts in their field and also well versed in Classical Arabic, and validated by subsequent generations of scholarly discourse. Besides these needed additions, the grammar and base 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 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. However, it must be said that these additions have often been done by translators rather than scholars in the field, and have sometimes lacked the deliberation seen in the additions to pre-modern Standard Arabic. 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.

## 1.2 Scope of this book

In this book, we will study Standard Arabic. We will focus on the pre-modern language. 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.

## 1.3 How to study from this book

We will start with the Arabic script and present in each chapter a new concept of Arabic grammar, together with examples. We will also give vocabulary for you to memorize and have chapter exercises. Unfortunately, some of the sentences we present, both as examples and as chapter exercises, because of their construction and subject matter, may seem of dubious usefulness to a learner wanting to learn practical usage. We ask that you overlook this and bear with us as we try to reinforce grammatical concepts. In answering the exercises, we strongly recommend that you memorize the vocabulary in full and write down the answers on paper with a pen.

We strongly recommend that you **not**:

- answer the exercises verbally without writing them down,
- look up the answers before attempting to write the answer yourself,
- look up words in the vocabulary list without memorizing them,
- proceed to the next chapter before memorizing the vocabulary and going through the exercises.

Be aware 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.

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 alarm. It may also prove beneficial to re-do the exercises of that chapter when this occurs.

Work in progress. Not ready for study.

# 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>ʿalif</i>	A vowel like in English “man”. But after these letters (ح, 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>	طاء <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.

No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
4	ث	<i>th</i>	ثَاء <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>	جِيم <i>jīm</i>	Equivalent to English “j” in “just”.
6	ح	<i>h</i>	حَاء <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>	خَاء <i>khāʾ</i>	Similar to “ch” in Scottish “loch”. Try saying “kh” but with a scraping sound.
8	د	<i>d</i>	دَال <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.
9	ذ	<i>z</i>	ذَال <i>zāl</i>	Place your tongue as in ت 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>sīm</i>	Equivalent to English “s” in “see”.
13	ش	<i>sh</i>	شِين <i>shīm</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>ẓ</i>	ظَاء <i>ẓāʾ</i>	An emphatic ذ that will be described later.



No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
18	ع	<i>e</i>	عَيْن <i>ʿayn</i>	A sound similar to strangulation or gagging. Try to sound “a” from the bottom of the throat.
19	غ	<i>gh</i>	غَيْن <i>ghayn</i>	Somewhat like a “gh” sound but much softer. Try pronouncing ح 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>	وَإِو <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 ا *ʾalif* is only a vowel. The consonant corresponding to ا *ʾalif* is ʿ *hamzah*. Although ʿ *hamzah* ought to be considered a letter in its own right, it was historically only pronounced and not written. So it is written as a pronunciation mark and is traditionally not considered part of the 28-letter alphabet.

No.	Arabic letter	Transcription	Name	Description
–	ء	ʾ	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 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 Qurʾān teacher. Online videos may also help in practicing the sounds.

#### 2.1.1.1 ص *ṣād*, ط *ṭāʾ*, and ظ *ẓāʾ*

The letters س *sīn*, ت *tāʾ*, and ذ *zāl* 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 *ṭāʾ*, and ظ *ẓāʾ* respectively.

#### 2.1.1.2 ض *dād*

ض *dād* is thought to be unique to Arabic. There are two ways to pronounce it. The first is similar to an emphatic د. The second is almost similar to ط. 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, and ز.

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 (ا، د، ذ، ر، ز، و) 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: ـب

To get the middle form, we take the end form ـب 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: ـبـ

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

Beginning form: بـ

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 ي، ه، ك، غ، ع 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	ـبـ	بـ

No.	Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
3	ت	ت	ت	ت
4	ث	ث	ث	ث
5	ج	ج	ج	ج
6	ح	ح	ح	ح
7	خ	خ	خ	خ
8	د	د	none	none
9	ذ	ذ	none	none
10	ر	ر	none	none
11	ز	ز	none	none
12	س	س	س	س
13	ش	ش	ش	ش
14	ص	ص	ص	ص
15	ض	ض	ض	ض
16	ط	ط	ط	ط
17	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
18	ع	ع	ع	ع
19	غ	غ	غ	غ
20	ف	ف	ف	ف
21	ق	ق	ق	ق
22	ك	ك	ك	ك
23	ل	ل	ل	ل
24	م	م	م	م
25	ن	ن	ن	ن
26	ه	ه	ه	ه
27	و	و	none	none
28	ي	ي	ي	ي

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 م. The next two letters are converted to their middle forms ع, ش. And the last letter ر is converted to its end form ر. 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

Disjoint	Joined (simplified)	Joined (traditional)
ا-ل-م-ا-س	الماس	الماس
ل-م-ح-ة	لمحة	لمحة
ب-ح-ر	بحر	بحر
س-ح-ر	سحر	سحر
ف-ي	في	في

### 2.2.3 Looped $tā^o$

Looped  $tā^o$  ة is a special letter which is merged from two letters of the alphabet. It is a  $tā^o$  ت but it is written as a ه  $hā^o$  with two dots above it. Looped  $tā^o$  ة is pronounced exactly as a ت  $tā^o$ , except when it is at the end of a sentence in which case it is pronounced as a ه  $hā^o$  as we'll explain later, if Allāh wills. Looped  $tā^o$  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

ت is called “open  $tā^o$ ” when needed, to differentiate it from looped  $tā^o$  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 و ئ. When written over ي, the ي will not have any dots, thus: ئ, ئ, ئ. It may also be written under an *alif* thus: إ. Examples: أفعال, سؤالك, فئة, إن.
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: عاء, 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, شيئاً, 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 A. 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 A 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	ـب	ـبـ	بـ
ت	ـت	ـتـ	تـ
ث	ـث	ـثـ	ثـ
ن	ـن	ـنـ	نـ
ي	ـي	ـيـ	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
- ط and ظ
- 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	Beginnning
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 *ʿalif* ا and *lām* ل could also be confused for each other. Their forms are shown here again for easy comparison:

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginnning
ا	اـ	none	none
ل	لـ	لـ	لـ

### 2.2.6 Joining *lām* and *ʿalif*

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

ا+ل → لا

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

لا

Examples:

- ألا
- الإيمان
- الصلاة



## 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 *qutla*

### 2.3.2 Long Vowels

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

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

Examples of words with long and short vowels:

- هَارُونَ *hārūnu*
- كَذَا *kazā*
- سَرَادِيبَ *sarādība*

#### 2.3.2.1 *ā* vowel written with a small *ʾalif*

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

- هَذَا *hāzā*
- ذَلِكْ *zālika*

### 2.3.2.2 $\bar{a}$ vowel written with a $yā'$

In some other words, the  $\bar{a}$  vowel is written with a  $yā'$  instead of an  $ʿalif$  l. When this happens, we will write the  $yā'$  without its dots and write a dagger  $ʿalif$  ٰ above it, like this ٰ. Here are some examples:

- عَلٰى *ʿalā*
- رَمٰى *ramā*

### 2.3.3 Zero-vowel written with a $\emptyset$ -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  $\emptyset$ -mark on it ْ. This mark can generally only occur if there is a short vowel before the letter. Examples:

- كَمْ *kam*
- مُنْذُ *munzu*
- 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  $\emptyset$ -mark on it and a  $\bar{a}$  vowel before it. Example لَوْ *law*.
2. *ay* like in English “bait”. This is written with a  $yā'$  with a  $\emptyset$ -mark on it and a  $\bar{a}$  vowel before it. Example كَيْ *kay*. Examples with short semi-vowels:

- وَيَحْكْ *wayḥaka*
- غَيْرُهُ *ghayruhu*
- قَوْلُهُ *qawlulu*

It also has two long semi-vowels:

1.  $\bar{a}w$  like in English “cow”. This is written with a *wāw* with a  $\emptyset$ -mark on it and a  $\bar{a}$  vowel before it. Example وَلَوْ *wāw*.
2.  $\bar{a}y$  like in English “bye”. This is written with a  $yā'$  with a  $\emptyset$ -mark on it and a  $\bar{a}$  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  $\emptyset$ -mark, and the second letter has a vowel. For example, in the word قَتَّلَ *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: قَتَّلَ *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 قَتَلَ *qatala*. Examples with doubled letters:

- كَبَّرَ *kabbara*
- حَدَّهْ *ḥadduhu*
- فَعَّالَ *faʿʿāla*
- سَكَّنَ *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.)
- سَفَّوْذُ *saffūdu*
- ضَالَّيْنَ *dālīna*
- مُزَّمِّلُ *muzzammilu*

### 2.3.6 *n*-marks

Arabic also has three distinctive pronunciation marks, collectively called *n*-marks.

1. *an*-mark ْ
2. *in*-mark ِ
3. *un*-mark ُ

These *n*-marks may only occur on a letter at the end of a word. They are pronounced as a short vowel (*a*, *i*, or *u*) followed by an *n*. For example, سَالِمٌ *sālimun*, سَالِمِ *sālimin*.

As a spelling rule, if a word ends with an *an* mark, we will generally add a silent *ʿalif* after it, for example سَالِمِ becomes سَالِمًا *sāliman*. This is done for all words except:

1. If the word ends with a looped *tāʾ* ّ. In this case we don’t add the

silent *ʿalif*. For example, غَاضِبَةٌ becomes غَاضِبَةٌ *ghāḍibatān*, not غَاضِبَةٌ or غَاضِبَةٌ.

2. If the word ends with a *ā* vowel, whether written with an *ʿalif* ا or as a *yāʾ* with dagger *ʿalif* ي. In this case, the *an* mark is put on the letter before the *ʿalif* ا or *yāʾ* ي and the final vowel letter becomes silent and is not pronounced. For example, مُصْطَفَى becomes مُصْطَفَى *muṣṭafān*, عَصَا becomes عَصَا *eaṣān*.
3. If the word ends with a *hamzah*. In this case, we might or might not write a silent *ʿalif*, depending on the following rules:
  - a. If there is an *ʿalif* before an unseated *hamzah* ء, then we don't add a silent *ʿalif*. For example ءِذَا becomes ءِذَا *dāʿān*, not ءِذَا.
  - b. Otherwise, we add a silent *ʿalif* after the *hamzah*. However, this may affect the writing of the *hamzah*, for example مُبْتَدَأ becomes مُبْتَدَأ *mubtadaʿān*. This is discussed further in Appendix A.

Here are some examples of words with *n*-marks:

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

## 2.4 Connecting *hamzah*

Some words in arabic begin with a *ʾ*-mark. When this occurs a connecting *hamzah* ا (written as a tiny ص on an *ʿalif*) 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*:

اِفْتَحِ الْبَابَ  
*ʿiftaḥi -lbāba*

أَنْظُرُ  
ʿunzur

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  
zaydunī -lkarīmu

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  
ʾakhaza minna -lkitāba

ذُو الْقَرْنَيْنِ  
zu -lqarnaynī

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  $\emptyset$ -mark when vocalizing the sentence. If the final letter is a looped  $tā^{\text{ʿ}}$   $\delta$  then it is pronounced as a  $\delta$   $hā^{\text{ʿ}}$  with a  $\emptyset$ -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

عُقْبَةُ  
ʿuqbah

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 looped *tāʾ* <sup>ٲ</sup> *ٲ*, in which case it is then pronounced as a *hāʾ* with a *∅*-mark *∅*. Here are examples of words with *an* marks pronounced as if they were at the end of a sentence.

مَفْعُولًا  
mafeūlā

سَاجِدًا  
sājidā

مَرْفُوعَةً  
marfūeah

Note that the above exception is only for looped *tāʾ*<sup>ٲ</sup>. 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 *ʾalif* is written after the *hamzah*. Examples:

- مُبْتَدَأًا is pronounced *mubtadaʾā*
- دُعَاءٌ is pronounced *dueāʾā*

Similarly, if the word has a final *yāʾ*<sup>ٲ</sup> 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:

*zāhaba ʾila -lbayti*

but should be pronounced as

*zāhaba ʾila -lbayt*

## 2.6 Qurʾānic script

In printed volumes of the Qurʾān, the spelling words is a little different from non-Qurʾānic 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 Qurʾān.

Standard Arabic	Qurʾānic Arabic
الصَّلَاةُ	الصَّلَوَةُ
السَّمَاوَاتِ	السَّمَوَاتِ
يَا أَبْنَ أُمَّ	يَبْنَؤُمَّ





# Chapter 3

## Nouns

### 3.1 Introduction

Here are some examples of common nouns in Arabic:

Arabic word	Transcription	Definition
رَجُل	<i>rajul</i>	man
كِتَاب	<i>kitāb</i>	book
بَيْت	<i>bayt</i>	house
شَجَرَة	<i>shajarah</i>	tree
صَبْر	<i>ṣabr</i>	patience
طَعَام	<i>ṭaʿām</i>	food
ابْن	<i>ʾibn</i>	son

Note that the final letter in each word, above, does not have a vowel mark. This is because, for now, we are discussing each noun in isolation.

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

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

## 3.2 Definiteness

### 3.2.1 Indefinite nouns

In English, nouns that start with the word “a” are called indefinite nouns. For example: “a book”. The word “a” is called the *indefinite article*.

There are three options to express the indefinite “a book” in Arabic:

- كِتَابٌ *kitābun*
- كِتَابًا *kitāban*
- كِتَابٍ *kitābin*

In order to make a noun indefinite in Arabic, i.e., to say “a book”, we need put an *n*-mark to the final letter of the word. There are three *n*-marks: the *un*-mark ُ, the *an*-mark ًا, and the *in*-mark ٍ. Putting any of these on the final letter of word gives it the meaning “a book”.

### 3.2.2 Definite nouns

In English, nouns that start with “the” are called definite nouns. For example: “the book”.

There are three options to express the definite “the book” in Arabic:

- الْكِتَابُ *alkitābu*
- الْكِتَابَا *alkitāba*
- الْكِتَابِي *alkitābi*

In order to make a noun definite in Arabic, i.e., to say “the book”, we take away the *n*-mark from the final letter of the indefinite noun, but leave the short vowel marks ُ, ًا, and ٍ. Also, we add ال *al* “the” to the beginning of the word. The prefix ال *al* is called the *definite article*. It begins with a connecting *hamzah* so 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 ا a-mark.

### 3.2.3 Discussing indefinite and definite nouns in isolation

In Arabic, nouns can only be either definite or indefinite. For example, in an Arabic sentence, you have to say either “a book” or “the book”. You can’t say “book” without “a” or “the”. We will discuss this in more detail in section 3.5 below.

So, for convenience, when talking about the indefinite noun in isolation, and not in a sentence, we will often write it without the final *n*-mark thus: كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book”. And it will be understood, that when in a sentence, the noun shall have a final *n*-mark.

Similarly, for convenience, when discussing the definite noun in isolation, and not in a sentence, we may write it without the final short vowel thus: اَلْكِتَاب *alkitāb* “the book”. And it will be understood, that when in a sentence, the noun shall have a final short vowel mark.

### 3.2.4 Sun letters and moon letters

The noun “man” in Arabic is رَجُل *rajul*. To make this noun definite, we add اَل *al* to the beginning of the word. But instead of becoming اَلرَّجُل *alrajul* the word becomes اَلرَّجُل *arrajul*. The ل in اَل becomes silent and the ر gets doubled. This happens because the first letter ر in the word رَجُل *rajul* is from a group of letters called “sun letters”. For all nouns beginning with sun letters, when اَل *al* is put in the beginning, the ل in اَل 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 اَل does not become silent and the moon letter does not become doubled. For example, ك is a moon letter and we have already seen that كِتَاب *kitāb* “book” becomes اَلْكِتَاب *alkitāb* “the book”.

The sun letters are ت د ذ ر ز س ش 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 اَلشَّمْس *ashshams* which begins with ش which causes the ل in اَل to be silent. “The moon” is اَلْقَمَر *alqamar* which begins with ق which does not cause the ل in اَل 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
رَجُل <i>rajul</i> “man”	اَلرَّجُل <i>arrajul</i> “the man”
تَاجِر <i>tājir</i> “trader”	اَلتَّاجِر <i>attājir</i> “the trader”

Noun	Definite noun
لُعْبَةٌ <i>luebah</i> “toy”	اللُعْبَةُ <i>alluebah</i> “the toy”

### 3.2.5 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  $\emptyset$ -mark ْ. Instead it shall have an *i*-mark ِ. Example:

الْأَبْنِ  
*ʿali-bn*  
 “the son”

## 3.3 State

Nouns in Arabic can be in one of three *states*. You may think of the grammatical states of nouns like the physical states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas. The same water can be in a solid ice state, or a liquid water state, or a gaseous water vapour state. Similarly, the same noun, in Arabic, may be in one of the three grammatical states:

1. u-state: demarked by a *u*-mark ُ or a *un*-mark ُو at the end of the word.
2. a-state: demarked by a *a*-mark َ or a *an*-mark ِ at the end of the word.
3. i-state: demarked by a *i*-mark ِ or a *in*-mark ٍ at the end of the word.

Here are the words “a book” and “the book” in their three states:

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

The choice of which state a noun is in depends on its function in a sentence. For example, if the noun is a subject of a sentence, it will usually be in

the u-state. And if it is used adverbially, it will often be in the a-state. And if it occurs after a preposition, it will be in the i-state. We will learn more about putting nouns in their different states throughout this book. Generally speaking, the u-state is the normal state. And there needs to be a reason to take the noun out of the u-state and into one of the other states.

### 3.4 Flexibility of nouns

Most nouns behave as described above: their endings change with their state. These nouns are called *flexible* nouns. In later chapters, we will learn about some nouns whose endings only partially change, or don't change at all, with their state. They will be called *semi-flexible* nouns and *rigid* nouns respectively.

### 3.5 Usage of definite and indefinite nouns

Consider the noun “time”. In English we can make this noun definite using the definite article “the”, for example, “The time to act is now.” When translating this sentence to Arabic, we will correspondingly use the definite noun: **الْوَقْتُ** *alwaqt* “the time”.

In English, we can make “time” indefinite using indefinite articles like “a” or “some”. For example, “There is a time for work and a time for play.” and “We have some time before we need to leave.” When translating these sentences to Arabic we will correspondingly use the indefinite noun in both these sentences: **وَقْتُ** *waqt* “a time”.

Consider now a third scenario: in English we can also use the word “time” with a general meaning without a definite or indefinite article. For example, “Time is money.” However, in Arabic, a noun must be either definite or indefinite. So we must choose between **الْوَقْتُ** *alwaqt* “the time” and **وَقْتُ** *waqt* “a time”. In Arabic, **وَقْتُ** *waqt*, being indefinite, can only mean “a time” or “some time”. So **الْوَقْتُ** *alwaqt* is then used when we wish to say “time” with a general meaning. This means that, in Arabic the definite noun is used in two ways:

- i. When the definite meaning is desired. For example, “We met at the time we had agreed upon.” (Use **الْوَقْتُ** *alwaqt* “the time”.)
- ii. When a general meaning is desired. For example, “There is nothing more valuable than time.” (Again, use **الْوَقْتُ** *alwaqt* “the time”.)

Conversely, the indefinite nouns is used only when an indefinite meaning is desired. For example, “We agreed to meet at a certain time.” (Use وَقْتُ *waqt* “a time”.)

In a similar manner, the nouns “home” or “school” are often used in English without either “the” or “a”. For example, “He goes to school.” and “She went home.”. In these cases, we will use the definite article اَلْ in Arabic. So we will say اَلْبَيْتُ *albayt* “the home” for English “home” and اَلْمَدْرَسَةُ *almdrasah* “the school” for English “school”.

But there is an additional complication: note that English often does not use an indefinite article, even when an indefinite meaning is intended. For example, “We don’t need to leave right now; we have time.” meaning “we have [some] time.” Because of the indefinite meaning intended we will use وَقْتُ *waqt* “a time” here.

This English usage of an indefinite meaning without an indefinite article is especially true with plurals. For example, “There are books in the bag.” Here the intended meaning is “There are [some] books in the bag.” Consequently, in Arabic, we will use the indefinite noun here: كُتُبٌ *kutub* “[some] books” not اَلْكُتُبُ *alkutub* “the books”.

However, there are times when English uses a plural without a definite or indefinite article, and a general meaning is intended. For example, “Books contain knowledge.” In this case, in Arabic we will use the definite noun اَلْكُتُبُ *alkutub* “the books”.

This topic may be a little difficult to comprehend right now because we have not yet learned how to form sentences. Later, you may refer back to this section as needed.

### 3.6 Grammatical gender

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

With respect to the grammatical gender of these nouns, there are three grammatical genders in English:

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. As for nouns that designate inanimate objects and animals, these, too, are assigned either a masculine or a feminine gender. For example, كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book” in Arabic is masculine. And شَجَرَة *shajarah* “tree” in Arabic is feminine. We shall discuss this in more detail below.

### 3.6.1 Nouns that designate animate beings.

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

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

We will discuss each of these categories below.

#### 3.6.1.1 Related 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:

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
ابْن <i>ibn</i>	masc.	a son
ابْنَة <i>ibnah</i>	fem.	a daughter
طِفْل <i>tifl</i>	masc.	a child
طِفْلَة <i>tiflah</i>	fem.	a (female) child
إِنْسَان <i>insān</i>	masc.	a human being

Arabic word	Gender	Definition
إِنْسَانَةٌ <i>ʿinsānah</i>	fem.	a (female) human being
حُرٌّ <i>ḥurr</i>	masc.	a free man
حُرَّةٌ <i>ḥurrah</i>	fem.	a free woman
كَلْبٌ <i>kalb</i>	masc.	a (male) dog
كَلْبَةٌ <i>kalbah</i>	fem.	a (female) dog
هِرٌّ <i>hirr</i>	masc.	a (male) cat
هِرَّةٌ <i>hirrah</i>	fem.	a (female) cat
—	—	—
مُعَلِّمٌ <i>muʿallim</i>	masc.	a (male) teacher
مُعَلِّمَةٌ <i>muʿallimah</i>	fem.	a (female) teacher
طَالِبٌ <i>tālib</i>	masc.	a (male) student
طَالِبَةٌ <i>tālibah</i>	fem.	a (female) student
صَاحِبٌ <i>ṣāhib</i>	masc.	a (male) companion
صَاحِبَةٌ <i>ṣāhibah</i>	fem.	a (female) companion
صَدِيقٌ <i>ṣadiq</i>	masc.	a (male) friend
صَدِيقَةٌ <i>ṣadiqah</i>	fem.	a (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 looped  $tā^o$  ʾ at the end. For example, طِفْلٌ *tifl* (masc.) is a child, and its feminine is طِفْلَةٌ *tiflah* (fem.).

As a matter of fact, the looped  $tā^o$  ʾ is called a feminine marker for singular nouns. There are a couple of other feminine markers besides looped  $tā^o$  ʾ but they are not as common and we will learn them later, if Allāh wills.

Note that the vowel-mark before the looped  $tā^o$  ʾ is always an *a*-mark.

Note that we have divided the table above into two groups. The first group contains nouns that refer to entities, without an primary adjectival or verbal quality in the meaning, for example “human” “cat”, etc. The second group contains nouns that have an adjectival or verbal quality. For example, “a teacher” is someone who teaches. “A friend” is someone who is friendly. And so on.

This grouping will become important when, if Allāh wills, you study morphology, and the classification of nouns into primitive and derived nouns. But we can give a short preview here: Basically, for the second group (the one that has adjectival or verbal meanings), the formation of the feminine



noun by adding a feminine marker (like *ة*) to the masculine noun is normal and expected. Whereas, for the first group (the one that refers to entities without a verbal or adjectival meaning), the fact that the feminine and masculine nouns are similar and differ only by the feminine marker *ة* is something that, although fairly common, is more of a coincidence.

Another noteworthy point is that, for the first group, for many such nouns, 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 particularly important to what is being said. And كَلْبَة *kalbah* (fem.) “a female dog” is typically only used when the gender of the animal is relevant to the sentence. 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 *tifl* (masc.) is commonly used to say “a child”, regardless of whether the child is a boy or a girl. But طِفْلَة *tiflah* is fairly common too 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, 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”.

There aren’t very many of such nouns. And we have covered a few of the common ones above. A good dictionary will also provide guidance in this regard.

As for the second group of words (the one that has adjectival or verbal meanings), they are typically only ever used for their respective gender. So, for example, مُعَلِّم *mueallim* (masc.) is only used for “a (male) teacher”. And مُعَلِّمَة *mueallimah* (fem.) is only used for “a (female) teacher”.

### 3.6.1.2 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 <sup>ʾ</sup> ab	masc.	a father
أُمُّ <sup>u</sup> umm	fem.	a mother
غُلَامٌ <sup>gh</sup> ulām	masc.	a boy
جَارِيَةٌ <sup>jā</sup> riyah	fem.	a girl
عَبْدٌ <sup>e</sup> abd	masc.	a male slave
أَمَةٌ <sup>a</sup> amah	fem.	a female slave
أَسَدٌ <sup>ʾ</sup> asad	masc.	a lion
لَبْوَةٌ <sup>lab</sup> wah	fem.	a lioness
ثَوْرٌ <sup>th</sup> awr	masc.	a bull
بَقَرَةٌ <sup>ba</sup> qarah	fem.	a cow

Even in these nouns you can see that the feminine noun usually ends with a looped *tāʾ ʾ* feminine marker. There are only a few commonly used feminine nouns that don't end with a feminine marker like looped *tāʾ ʾ*. أُمُّ <sup>u</sup>ummun “a mother” is one of these exceptions.

### 3.6.1.3 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 <sup>sh</sup> akhṣ	masc.	a person
نَفْسٌ <sup>na</sup> fs	fem.	a self
عَدُوٌّ <sup>e</sup> aduww	masc.	an enemy
حَيَوَانٌ <sup>hay</sup> awān	masc.	an animal
طَائِرٌ <sup>tāʾ</sup> ir	masc.	a bird
قِرْدٌ <sup>qir</sup> d	masc.	a monkey
حَمَامَةٌ <sup>hamā</sup> mat	fem.	a dove
نَمْلَةٌ <sup>nam</sup> lah	fem.	an ant

So for example قِرْدٌ <sup>qir</sup>dun “a monkey” is grammatically masculine but it will be used for both a male and a female monkey. Similarly, شَخْصٌ <sup>sh</sup>akhṣ is a masculine noun meaning “a person”. While remaining grammatically masculine, it can be used to refer to persons of male or female persons.

Note also that *نَفْس* *nafsun* “a self” is a feminine noun but it does not end in a looped *tāʾ* ة. It is one of the small number of feminine nouns that don’t have a female marker, like *أُمُّ* *ummun* (fem.) “a mother”. Notably, *نَفْس* *nafs* is treated as feminine when it refers to the soul of a person. However, in constructions like “yourself”, “himself”, etc. it will conform to the gender of the person it is referring to. We shall see this in later chapters, if Allāh wills.

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

In these nouns as well, we note that feminine nouns usually end with the feminine marker looped *tāʾ* ة. But here too, we find another exception: *شَمْس* *shamsun* “a 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
رَهِيْنَةٌ <i>rahīnah</i>	fem.	a pledge
عَضْوٌ <i>ʿuḍw</i>	masc.	a member

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

Similarly, عَضْوٌ *ʿuḍw* is a masculine noun meaning “a 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 3.6.1.3, such nouns retain their grammatical gender when used for either male or female persons.

### 3.7 Nouns with mismatched gender

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

- اُمٌّ *umm* (fem.) “a mother”
- نَفْسٌ *nafs* (fem.) “a self”
- شَمْسٌ *shams* (fem.) “a 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.) “a hand” (sometimes “an arm”)
- عَيْنٌ *ʿayn* (fem.) “an eye”
- أُذُنٌ *ʾuẓun* (fem.) “an ear”
- قَدَمٌ *qadam* (fem.) “a foot”
- رِجْلٌ *rijl* (fem.) “a leg” (sometimes “a foot”)
- إِبْهَامٌ *ibhām* (fem.) “a thumb”
- إِصْبَعٌ *isbaʿ* (fem.) “a finger, a toe”

- سِنَّ *sinn* (fem.) “a tooth”
- رُكْبَةٌ *rukbah* (fem.) “a knee”

For other body parts, the gender conforms to whether it has a feminine marker or not. Examples:

- رَأْسٌ *raʿs* (masc.) “a head”
- أَنْفٌ *ʿanf* (masc.) “a nose”
- بَطْنٌ *batn* (masc.) “a belly”
- لِحْيَةٌ *liḥyah* (fem.) “a beard”

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

- مَنْخَرٌ *mankhar* (masc.) “a nostril”
- مِرْفَقٌ *mirfaq* (masc.) “an elbow”

There are other such exceptions as well.

Conversely, nouns that end with a feminine marker like *ة*, yet are masculine are very rare. The most common of them are:

- خَلِيفَةٌ *khalīfah* (masc.) “a caliph”
- عَلَّامَةٌ *ʿallamah* (masc.) “a great scholar”
- دَاعِيَةٌ *dāʿiyah* (masc.) “a great preacher”

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

- سُوقٌ *sūq* (masc. or fem.) “a market”
- طَرِيقٌ *ṭariq* (masc. or fem.) “a path”

A good dictionary should mention the gender of all these exceptional words.



## 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 two horizontal curly braces underneath. 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 **الْبَيْتُ** *albināʾ* (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 an *un*-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. **الْبَيْتُ** *albināʾu* (masc.) “the building” (u-state)
- ii. **بَيْتٌ** *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:

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

*albaytu bināʾ.*

“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, not 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 2.5.

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: الْبَيْتُ *ʿalbaytu* (masc.) “the house” (u-state)
- ii. The information: بِنَاءٌ *bināʿun* (masc.) “a building” (u-state)

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

الْبَيْتُ بِنَاءٌ.

*ʿalbaytu bināʿ.*

“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: الْبِنَاءُ *ʿalbināʿu* (masc.) “the building” (u-state)
- ii. The information: مَدْرَسَةٌ *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:

الْبِنَاءُ مَدْرَسَةٌ.

*ʿalbināʿu madrasah.*

“The building is a school.”

We can also reverse this sentence:

الْمَدْرَسَةُ بِنَاءٌ.

*ʿalmadrasatu bināʿ.*

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

Obviously, <sup>مُعَلِّمَةٌ</sup> *muʿallimah* would apply here so we put it in the u-state: <sup>مُعَلِّمَةٌ</sup> *muʿallimatun* (u-state).

Now we can assemble the sentence:

<sup>اَلْأُمُّ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.</sup>  
<sup>ʾalʾummu muʿallimah.</sup>  
 “The mother is a teacher<sub>f</sub>.”

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

<sup>اَلْمُعَلِّمَةُ اُمٌّ.</sup>  
<sup>ʾalmuʿallimatu ʾumm.</sup>  
 “The teacher<sub>f</sub> is a mother.”

Here is another example:

<sup>اَلرَّجُلُ اَبٌ.</sup>  
<sup>ʾarrujulu ʾab.</sup>  
 “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.

<sup>اَلْأُمُّ شَخْصٌ.</sup>  
<sup>ʾalʾummu shakhṣ.</sup>  
 “The mother is a person.”

<sup>اَلشَّخْصُ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.</sup>  
<sup>ʾashshakhṣu muʿallimah.</sup>  
 “The person is a (female) teacher.”

الْمُعَلِّمَةُ شَخْصٌ.

<sup>2</sup>*almuʿallimatu shakhṣ.*

“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** *shakhṣ* “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.

<sup>2</sup>*alḥayawānu hirr.*

“The animal is a (male) cat.”

and

الْحَيَوَانُ هِرَّةٌ.

<sup>2</sup>*alḥayawānu 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 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 are 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 participant who is speaking 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 participant he is speaking to 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 this participant in English, he uses the pronouns “he”, “him”, “she”, “her”, “it”, “they”, and “them”.

We will now learn the pronouns for these participants in Arabic. We will start with the 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.  
*ʾarraǧulu mueallim.*  
“The man is a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

هُوَ مُعَلِّمٌ.

*huwa muʿallim.*

“He is a (male) teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

- اَلْجَارِيَةُ طَالِبَةٌ.

*ʿal-jāriyatu ṭalibah.*

“The girl is a student<sub>f</sub>.”

- هِيَ طَالِبَةٌ.

*hiya ṭalibah.*

“She is a student<sub>f</sub>.”

- اَلْبَيْتُ بِنَاءٌ.

*ʿal-baytu bināʾ.*

“The house is a building.”

هُوَ بِنَاءٌ.

*huwa bināʾ.*

“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.

- اَلْبِنَاءُ مَدْرَسَةٌ.

*ʿal-bināʾu 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 اَلْبِنَاءُ *ʿal-bināʾ* (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* *madrasatun* “a school” is feminine.

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

الْجَارِيَةُ إِنْسَانٌ.  
*al-jāriyatu insān.*  
 “The girl is a human.”

هِيَ إِنْسَانٌ.  
*hiya insān.*  
 “She is a human.”

Here, if we replace the noun *الْجَارِيَةُ* *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 muallim.*  
 “You<sub>m</sub> are a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”
- أَنْتِ مُعَلِّمَةٌ.  
*anti muallimah.*  
 “You<sub>f</sub> are a teacher<sub>f</sub>.”

- أَنَا مُعَلِّمٌ.  
ʾana muʿallim.  
“I am a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”
- أَنَا مُعَلِّمَةٌ.  
ʾana 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 الّ al “the”).

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

#### 4.4.5 Rigidity of pronouns

Remember in section 3.4, 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 -lmuʿallim.  
“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.  
*ʿarraǧulu 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.  
*ʿalbaytu -lbināʾu.*  
 “The house is the building.”

الْحَيَوَانُ هِيَ الْهَرَّةُ.  
*ʿalhayawānu hiya -lhirratu.*  
 “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 وَ wa- “and”, فَ fa- “so”/“and then”, and أَوْ ʾaw “or”

### 4.7.1 وَ wa- “and”

Arabic uses the particle وَ 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”

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

الْبِنَاءُ مَسْجِدٌ وَمَدْرَسَةٌ.  
ʾalbināʾu 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 وَ and commas are not typically used.

الْبِنَاءُ مَسْجِدٌ وَمَدْرَسَةٌ وَمَكْتَبَةٌ.  
ʾalbināʾu baytun wamadrasatun wamaktabah  
“The building is a mosque, a school, and a library.”

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

وَالرَّجُلُ إِنْسَانٌ وَالْكَلْبُ حَيَوَانٌ  
warrujulu ʾinṣānun 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 وَ 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.

*ʿalbināʿu 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 ʿinṣānun wa-lkalbu ḥayawānun*

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

# 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”:

في بَيْت  
*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 *in*-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 الَّ al or ended with an *n*-mark. And they don't have states (u-state, a-state, and 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
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 الَّ *al*, the preposition is generally joined to the *alif* in the الَّ *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 *li* in *لِ* gets an *i*-mark ِ instead of its usual *l*-mark ُ. We described this in section 3.2.5. Example:

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

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

لِلرَّجُلِ  
*li-rrajuli*  
 “for the man”

لِلْجَارِيَةِ  
*li-ljāriyati*  
 “for the girl”

لِلابْنِ  
*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:

أَلِلْعَبَةِ  
*ʿalluebatu*  
 “the toy”

becomes

لِلْعَبَةِ  
*li-lluebati*  
 “for the toy”

not

× لِلْعَبَةِ

This is also true for the phrase:

لِلَّهِ

*lillāhi*

“for Allāh”

which is formed from *لِ* + *اللَّهِ*

- 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* *يَ* instead of an *alif*. (We have already learned that some words are written this way in section 2.3.2.2.)
- 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*

*fi -lbayti*

“in the house”

*إِلَى ابْنِ*

*ʿila -bnin*

“to a son”

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

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

*عَنِ الرَّجُلِ*

*ʿani -rrajuli*

“from the man”

*عَنِ ابْنِ*

*ʿani -bnin*

“from the son”

- The ending of the preposition *مِنْ* *min* gets an *a*-mark if followed

by the *ألّ* *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”

مِنَ 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>einda</i>	at
لَدَى	<i>lada</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  
*maea -lghulāmi*  
“with the boy”

عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ  
*einda -lbayti*  
“at the house”

لَدَى الْبَابِ  
*lāda -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 4.4. 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”	هُوَ - <i>hu</i> “him”
Fem. absentee	هِيَ <i>hiya</i> “her”	هِيَ - <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 *ma'ahu* “with him”
  - عَنْهَا *eanhā* “from her”
2. The *ā* ending of prepositions become *āy* when attaching an attached pronoun. Examples:
- إِلَيْهَا *ilayhā* “to her”
  - عَلَيْكَ *elayka* “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 *ilayhi* “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. *yī* -*ī*
  - ii. *yī* -*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 لِي *liya* “for me”
- بِي *bī* and بِي *biya* “with/by me”
- مَعِي *ma'ī* and مَعِي *ma'iya* “together with me”
- عِنْدِي *indī* and عِنْدِي *indiya* “at me”

Between these two, variants, *yī* -*ī* 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 *yī* -*ī* for the speaker attached pronoun is not used. Instead, only the variant *yī* -*ya* may be used with such words.

Prepositions that fall under this category are *fī* *fī*, *alā* *alā*, *ilā* *ilā*, and *ladā* *ladā*. Furthermore, the *ā* ending in these will become *āy* instead when attaching the pronoun.

In addition, the pronoun *yī* -*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 + يَ = فِيَّ *fiyya* “in me”
- إِلَى + يَ = إِلَيَّ *ilayya* “to me”
- عَلَى + يَ = عَلَيَّ *ecalayya* “on me”
- لَدَى + يَ = لَدَيَّ *ladayya* “at me”.

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

- × كَهْ *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 *fi* “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 *fi l-madīnati* but sometimes we can also say بِالْمَدِينَةِ *bi l-madīnati* with the same meaning. As you keep learning, practicing, and reading Arabic, you will learn how to choose which preposition to use, if Allāh wills.

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

- مِنْ *min* “from”
- عَنْ *ean* “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  
fi -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 فِي fi “in” only puts the noun after it (الْبَيْتِ <sup>albayti</sup> “the house”) in the i-state. It has no effect on the state of the noun before it (رَجُلٌ <sup>rajulun</sup> “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  
<sup>arrajulu fi -lbayti</sup>  
(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.  
<sup>arrajulu fi -lbayti muallim.</sup>  
“The man in the house is a teacher<sub>m</sub>.”

## 5.7 Sentences with an indefinite subject

We said, in section 4.6, 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  
*ʾilayya wa ʾilā -lghulāmi*  
 “to me and to the boy”

إِلَيَّ وَإِلَيْهِ  
*ʾilayya wa ʾilayhi*  
 “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 *einda* “at”
- لَدَى *ladā* “at”
- مَعَ *maʿa* “together with”

Here are some examples:

لِلْغُلَامِ أَبٌ.  
*li -lghulāmi ʾab.*

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

عِنْدَ الرَّجُلِ كِتَابٌ.

*einda -rrajuli kitāb.*

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

*maea -ljāriyati luebah.*

“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”:

- *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

*للرَّجُلِ 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.

- *einda* “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.*

*einda -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.

- *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.

- *maea* “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.

*maea -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 *inda* as it is the more commonly used.





## Chapter 6

# Form 1 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 فَعَلَ *fael*. The أَمْر *ʿamr* “a matter” is derived from the root «عمر». Its pattern is also فَعَلَ *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>zahaba</i>	“went”
«كتب»	كَتَبَ <i>kataba</i>	“wrote”
«قرأ»	قَرَأَ <i>qaraʿa</i>	“read”
«جلس»	جَلَسَ <i>jalasa</i>	“sat”
«سأل»	سَأَلَ <i>saʿala</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 فَعُلَ.

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.

*zahaba -lghulām.*

“The boy went.”

ذَهَبَ *zahaba* “went” is the verb and الْعُلَامُ *alghulāmu* “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.

*zahaba rajulun ʾila -ssūq.*

“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.

*zahabat jāriyah.*

“A girl went.”

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

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

جَلَسَتْ الْهَرَّةُ عَلَى الْكَرْسِيِّ.

*jālasati -lhirratu ʿala -lkursiyyi.*

“A cat 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 does

### 6.5.1 Direct does

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 it comes directly after the verb without an intermediate preposition. A doee is the noun to whom the action of 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 doee. 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 doe*. An indirect doe 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 doe because it is preceded by the preposition “at”. Similarly, in Arabic, we will say:

نَظَرَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى الْقَمَرِ.  
*naẓara -rrajulu ʾilā -lqamar.*

“The man looked at the moon.”

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

Note also, that the verb “looked” in English used the preposition “at” whereas the Arabic verb نَظَرَ *naẓara* 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.  
*naẓara -rrajulu fi -lʾamri.*

“The man looked into the matter.”

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

نَظَرَ الرَّجُلُ الْمَكْتُوبَ فِي الْكِتَابِ.  
*naẓara -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 verb 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.”

الْمُعَلِّمَةُ *ʿalmueallimata* “the teacher<sub>f</sub>” is the direct doee, and therefore it is in the a-state. أَمْرٍ *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 هُ, هَا, 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: visible and invisible.

Here we list the singular doer pronouns in Arabic.

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

*zahaba -rrajul.*

“The man went.”

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

ذَهَبَ.

*zahab.*

“[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 *invisible* and automatically comes into place when we omit the doer noun.

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



قَرَأَتِ الْجَارِيَةُ كِتَابًا.  
*qara<sup>ʔ</sup>ati -ljāriyatu kitābā.*  
 “The girl read a book.”

we get:

قَرَأَتْ كِتَابًا.  
*qara<sup>ʔ</sup>at kitābā.*  
 “[She] read a book.”

### 6.6.1.1 Explanation of invisible pronouns

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

The reason is that making the statement that these pronoun exist but are invisible is useful to us from the perspective of the grammar theory that we are building.

That is: we need to be able to state, as a rule of grammar, that every verb needs to have a doer, whether visible or not. And that doer shall come after the verb in sentence word order.

If we are able to make this a rule, then we will see, if Allāh wills, that it will help us later. For example, when we study verbs with plural doers.

### 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 invisible for completed-action verbs. The doer pronouns for the singular addressee and speaker participants are visible. When visible, the doer pronouns are attached to the verb.

Here we show how the visible 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 visible singular doer pronouns modify the verb by replacing the *a*-mark َ on its final letter by a *u*-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 visible doer pronouns:

كَتَبْتَ كِتَابًا.

*katabta kitābā.*

“You<sub>m</sub> wrote a book.”

ذَهَبْتُ.

*zahabt.*

“I went.”

The above sentence ends with the doer pronoun, so the vowel-mark on the doer pronoun is not pronounced (*zahabt*). 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 ُ of femininity does not. So make sure you see the difference in the following two sentences:

قَرَأْتَ الْكِتَابَ.

*qaraʿti -lkitāb.*

“You<sub>f</sub> read the book.”

قَرَأَتِ الْكِتَابَ.

*qaraʿati -lkitāb.*

“She read the book.”

### 6.6.3 Assimilation of the doer pronoun

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

«سَكَتَ» *sakata* “became quiet”

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

سَكَّتُ

*sakattu*

“I became quiet”

سَكَّتَ

*sakatta*

“You<sub>1,m</sub> became quiet”

سَكَّتِ

*sakatti*

“You<sub>1,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 - <i>hu</i> “him”
Fem. absentee	هَا - <i>hā</i> “her”
Masc. addressee	كَ - <i>ka</i> “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	كِ - <i>ki</i> “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<sup>3</sup>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<sup>3</sup>altuk.*

“I asked you<sub>f</sub>.”

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

سَأَلَهَا.

*sa<sup>3</sup>alahā.*

“He asked her.”

سَأَلْتُكِ.

*sa<sup>3</sup>alatki.*

“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<sup>3</sup>altih*

“You<sub>f</sub> asked him.”

- An intervening ن is always used between the verb and the speaker-participant doee pronoun variants يِ -ī and يِ -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 نِي -niya respectively. For example:

سَأَلَنِي رَجُلٌ.

*sa<sup>3</sup>alanī rajul.*

“A man asked me.”

سَأَلَنِي الرَّجُلُ.

*sa<sup>ʔ</sup>alaniya -rrajul.*

“The man asked me.”

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

سَأَلْتَنِي.

*sa<sup>ʔ</sup>altanī*

“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. مِنْ *minnī*, عَنْ *ʿannī*, and لَدُنِّي *ladunnī*

Even though, the variant يَ -ī is, in general, more commonly used, 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 -ī when it was not followed by a connecting *hamzah* (سَأَلْتَنِي).

This preference is not mandatory. So it is allowed for يَ -ī to be used when followed by a connecting *hamzah*. When this happens, the long vowel -ī will be shortened to -i in connecting it to the next word, although the يَ is retained in writing. For example,

سَأَلَنِي الرَّجُلُ.

*sa<sup>ʔ</sup>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>ʔakala</i>	“ate”
«شرب»	شَرِبَ <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 الْعُرْفَةَ 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 *وَ* *wa-* “and”, or *فَ* *fa-* “so”/“and then”, etc. We chose *فَ* *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 الْعُرْفَةَ فَأَكَلَتْ فَشَرِبَتْ فَخَرَجَتْ.  
*dakhlati -ljāriyatu -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* *aljāriyatu* “the girl”. The subsequent verbs all have doers too but they are the invisible doer pronouns for the singular feminine absentee participant. That is why we don't write them. Note also that every verb has the *تْ* 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-doeer-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 الرَّجُلُ *arrajulu* “the man” is the subject of the sentence, and كَتَبَ كِتَابًا *kataba kitāban* “he wrote a book”, itself a verbal sentence with an invisible doer pronoun, is the information about the subject. So the translation of the sentence is technically:

“The man, he wrote a book.”

However, this is 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 would we say الرَّجُلُ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا *arrajulu kataba kitāban*. instead of the more normal كَتَبَ الرَّجُلُ 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 الرَّجُلُ الْكِتَابَ.

*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 father 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 الْكِتَابَ 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 الْكِتَابَ.

*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 4.4.4) that they are definite nouns. In fact they are stronger in definiteness than words that are made definite using *أل*. 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 doee noun *الْكِتَابَ* <sup>2</sup>*alkitāba* “the book” is replaced with the pronoun “it”, the doee pronoun must be attached to the verb, and then the doer noun follows the doee 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 doee. Again, the normal order of words in a sentence is verb, doer noun, preposition, doee noun. For example,

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ.

*zahaba -lghulāmu <sup>2</sup>ila -lmdrasah.*

“The boy went to the school.”

Now, if we replace the indirect doee noun *الْمَدْرَسَةِ* <sup>2</sup>*almdrasati* “the school”



with the pronoun “it”, the indirect doer pronoun **هَـ** *-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.  
*zahaba -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.  
*zahaba ilayha -lghulāmu.*  
 “The boy went to it.”

This is because the pronoun **هَـ** *-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 zahaba -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 zahaba -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 **إِيَّ** *ʾiyyā*. So then we get the following doee pronouns:

Person	Doee pronoun
Absent person (masc.) “him”	إِيَّاهُ <i>ʾiyyāhu</i>
Absent person (fem.) “her”	إِيَّاهَا <i>ʾiyyāhā</i>
Addressed person (masc.) “you <sub>masc.</sub> ”	إِيَّاكَ <i>ʾiyyāka</i>
Addressed person (fem.) “you <sub>fem.</sub> ”	إِيَّاكِ <i>ʾiyyāki</i>
Speaking person (masc. and fem.) “me”	إِيَّايَ <i>ʾiyyāya</i>

Note that for the speaking person “me”, there is no intervening ن between the prefix **إِيَّ** *ʾiyyā* and the doee pronoun. Note also that only **يَ** *-ya* is allowed to be attached to the prefix **إِيَّ** *ʾiyyā*. This is because **يَ** *-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 **إِيَّ** *ʾiyyā* 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:

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

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

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

إِيَّايَ صَرَبَتْ.  
*ʾiyyāya ḍarabat.*  
 “She hit *me*.”

## 6.13 TODO

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



# 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 *ō*, 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 *ō* 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 *δ*, 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 *δ*. For example:

- ابْن *ibn* “a son” and ابْنَة *ibnah* “a daughter”.
- مُعَلِّم *muallim* “a teacher<sub>m</sub>” and مُعَلِّمَة *muallimah* “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 ابْن/ابْنَة), then this is only a coincidence. We alluded to this in section 3.6.1.1.

### 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>ʿarabīyy</i>	an Arab



Arabic adjectival noun	Meaning
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 7.3 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:

describer  
 الصَّغِيرُ
 

 describee  
 الْبَيْتُ

descriptive noun-phrase

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

Note the following:

- The adjectival noun describer الصَّغِيرُ *ʿaṣṣaghīr* “the small one<sub>m</sub>” comes after the describee الْبَيْتُ *ʿalbayt* “the house”.
- Both the adjectival noun describer الصَّغِيرُ *ʿaṣṣaghīr* “the small one<sub>m</sub>” and the describee الْبَيْتُ *ʿalbayt* “the house” get the definite article ال “the”.
- The adjectival noun describer الصَّغِيرُ *ʿaṣṣaghīr* “the small one<sub>m</sub>” is genderized to match the describee الْبَيْتُ *ʿalbayt* “the house” in gender.
- The adjectival noun describer الصَّغِيرُ *ʿaṣṣaghīr* “the small one<sub>m</sub>” matches the describee الْبَيْتُ *ʿalbayt* “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:

أَخَذَتْ الْجَارِيَةُ الصَّغِيرَةُ كِتَابًا جَدِيدًا مِنَ الْأُمِّ الطَّيِّبَةِ.  
*ʾakhazati -ljāriyatu -ṣṣaghīratu kitāban jadīdan mina -lʾummi -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. الْجَارِيَةُ الصَّغِيرَةُ  
*ʾaljāriyatu -ṣṣaghīratu*  
 “the little girl”

In this phrase the definite feminine noun الْجَارِيَةُ *ʾaljāriyatu* is the doer of the verb أَخَذَ *ʾakhaza* “took”. Therefore it is in the u-state. It is also the describee in the descriptive noun-phrase. Its describer الصَّغِيرَةُ *ʾaṣṣaghīratu* 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 *ʾakhaza* “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  
*ʾalʾummi -ṭṭayyibati*  
 “the good mother”

In this phrase the definite feminine noun الْأُمُّ *ʾalʾummi* is following the preposition مِنْ *min* “from”. Therefore it is in the i-state. It is also the describee in the descriptive noun-phrase. Its describer الطَّيِّبَةُ *ʾalṭayyibah*

<sup>ʔ</sup>*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 *ɔ* ending. The feminine adjectival noun describer *ٱلطَّيِّبَةُ* <sup>ʔ</sup>*attayyibah* is still formed using the feminine marker *ɔ*, despite the feminine describee *ٱللَّامُ* not having the *ɔ* 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:

ٱلْجَارِيَةُ شَخْصٌ طَيِّبٌ.  
<sup>ʔ</sup>*aljāriyatu shakhṣun tayyib*.  
 “The girl is a good person.”

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

## 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.

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} \text{information} \\ \text{subject} \end{array} \right\} \text{ٱلْبَيْتُ صَغِيرٌ.}$$

“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 *un*-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 (الْبَيْتُ) 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.  
<sup>al</sup>jāriyatu <sup>ṣ</sup>aghīrah

“The girl is a little one<sub>f</sub>.” = “The girl is little.”

In the above example the subject (الْجَارِيَةُ “the girl”) was feminine. Therefore, we feminized the masculine adjectival noun صَغِير <sup>ṣ</sup>aghīr with the feminine marker َ to get the feminine adjectival noun صَغِيرَةٌ <sup>ṣ</sup>aghīrah “a little one<sub>f</sub>” 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 <sup>ash</sup>shajaratu -<sup>l</sup>qadīmiyatū “the old tree”. And the information is الْكَبِيرَةُ <sup>al</sup>kabīratu “the big one”. When we put the two together we get:

الشَّجَرَةُ الْقَدِيمَةُ الْكَبِيرَةُ  
<sup>ash</sup>shajaratu -<sup>l</sup>qadīmatu -<sup>l</sup>kabīratu

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 4.5.

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.  
*ʿashshajaratu -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 -lʾummu -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 وَوَعِظَ الْغُلَامَ.

*qadima -lkabīru wawaʿaza -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 حَسَنَةٌ *ḥasanah* (fem.) “a good one” is re-used as a common noun meaning “a good deed”. So we can use it in a sentence:

الصَّيَامُ حَسَنَةٌ.

*ʿaṣṣiyāmu ḥasanah.*

“Fasting is a good deed.”

The subject in this sentence is the masculine noun الصَّيَامُ *ʿaṣṣiyām* “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.

*ʿaṣṣadaqatu ḥasanah.*

The feminine gender of the subject الصَّدَقَةُ *ʿaṣṣadaqah* “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 kabīrun waṭawīlun wawāsiʿun*

“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 a 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.

*qara<sup>2</sup>a kitāban ṣaghīran mina -lmaktabati.*

AND

قَرَأَ كِتَابًا مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ صَغِيرًا.

*qara<sup>2</sup>a kitāban mina -lmaktabati ṣaghīran.*

“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	رَجُلٍ	الرَّجُلِ

As you can see, the noun has *n*-marks 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	صَحْرَاءُ	الصَّحْرَاءُ
i-state	صَحْرَاءُ	الصَّحْرَاءُ

As you can see, when صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrāʾ* is indefinite, it does not have an *n*-mark. 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 does not have an *n*-mark.
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 looped-*tāʾ* ٲ. When a singular noun ends with ٲ, 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»	جَارِيَةٌ “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”	—

Root	Feminine noun	Masculine noun from same root (if any)
«صغر»	صَغِيرَةٌ <i>adj.</i> “small <sub>f</sub> ”	صَغِير <i>adj.</i> “small <sub>m</sub> ”

As you can see, the feminine marker *ø* 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 *ø* to the end of a masculine noun.

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

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

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

Root	Feminine noun	Masculine noun (if any)
«صحراء»	صَحْرَاءُ “a desert”	—
«حمر»	حَمْرَاءُ <i>adj.</i> “red <sub>f</sub> ”	أَحْمَر <i>adj.</i> “red <sub>m</sub> ”
«ذكر»	ذِكْرَى “a remembrance”	—
«غضب»	غَضَبَى <i>adj.</i> “very angry <sub>f</sub> ”	غَضَبَان <i>adj.</i> “very angry <sub>m</sub> ”

When extrinsic to the word’s root, *ء* and *ئ* are feminine markers, just like *ø*. However, one important difference from *ø* is that sometimes *ء* and *ئ* 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»	الْهُدَى (masc.) “the guidance”	الْفُعْلُ
«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*, *ء*).

Otherwise, when extrinsic to the word’s root, *ء*, *ئ* and *ø* are consistently feminine markers, just like *ø*.

Also, just like  $\delta$ ,  $\text{ء}$  and  $\text{ة}$  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  $\delta$  is that when  $\text{ء}$  and  $\text{ة}$  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  $\text{حُمْرَاء}$  *adj.* “red<sub>f</sub>” is not formed simply by adding the feminine marker  $\text{ء}$  to the end of the masculine noun  $\text{أَحْمَر}$  *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:  $\text{صَحْرَاء}^2$  *ṣaḥrāʾ<sup>2</sup>*. This is to indicate their semi-flexibility.

#### 8.3.1 Nouns that end with an extrinsic $\text{ء}$

If a noun ends with an  $\text{ء}$ , 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:  $\text{صَحْرَاء}^2$  *ṣaḥrāʾ<sup>2</sup>* “a desert”. The root of this noun is « $\text{صحر}$ ». You can see that the ending  $\text{ء}$  is not part of the root. Therefore it is a semi-flexible noun.

Furthermore, we have also learned that this  $\text{ء}$ , which is extrinsic to the word’s root, is a feminine marker for singular nouns, just like  $\delta$ , except that  $\delta$  does not generally make a noun semi-flexible.

Here is an example sentence with this noun:

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى صَحْرَاءٍ وَاسِعَةٍ.  
*zahaḇa -rrajulu ʾilā ṣaḥrāʾa wāsiʿah.*  
 “The man went to a wide desert.”

Note that the vowel mark on the final letter of  $\text{صَحْرَاء}^2$  *ṣaḥrāʾ<sup>2</sup>* is  $\text{َ}$ , not  $\text{ِ}$ ,

even though it is indefinite and in the i-state (because it is preceded by the preposition إلى <sup>2</sup>ilā “to”). This is because it is a semi-flexible noun.

<sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءَ *ṣaḥrāʾ*<sup>2</sup> in this sentence is also a describee, whose describer is وَاسِعَةً *wāsiʿatin* “wide”. The final vowel mark َ on the describee <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءَ *ṣaḥrāʾ*<sup>2</sup> has no effect on the final vowel mark on the describer وَاسِعَةً *wāsiʿatin* “wide”. All that matters in this regard is the state of the describee.

Note, also, that the describer وَاسِعَةً *wāsiʿatin* is feminine to match the gender of the describee <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءَ *ṣaḥrāʾ*<sup>2</sup>.

Note, as well, that the describer وَاسِعَةً *wāsiʿatin* has an *n*-mark as it is indefinite and fully-flexible. The inability of its describee <sup>2</sup>صَحْرَاءَ *ṣaḥrāʾ*<sup>2</sup> to have an *n*-mark (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 خِيَاءَ *khībāʾ* “a tent” from the root «خبء» on the pattern خِيَاءَ. 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 ى

If a noun ends with an ى 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 *zīkrāʾ*<sup>2</sup> “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 ى, which is extrinsic to the word’s root, is a feminine marker for singular nouns.

Since <sup>2</sup>ذِكْرَى *zīkrāʾ*<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 ذِكْرٌ جَمِيلٌ.

*ʾalkitābu zikrā 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 *ذِكْرٌ zikrā*.

Beware also that, just like in the case of *ء*, there are some words where *ي* may be part of the word's root, e.g. *الْهُدَى ʾalhudā* “the guidance” whose root is «هـدي». Because here the *ي* in *الْهُدَى* is part of the word's root, therefore it shall not be a semi-flexible noun. So, when it is indefinite, it will have an *n*-mark when it is indefinite: *هُدًى hudan* “a guidance”. Also, for the same reason, *ي* 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 *ʾafeal* 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 *ʾafeal*. And the feminine adjectival noun is on the pattern فَاعِلَاءَ *faelāʾ* (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
«بيض»	أَبْيَضٌ <sup>2</sup>	بَيْضَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	white
«عرج»	أَعْرَجٌ <sup>2</sup>	عَرْجَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	lame
«حور»	أَخْوَرٌ <sup>2</sup>	خَوْرَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	beautiful eyed
«بكم»	أَبْكَمٌ <sup>2</sup>	بَكْمَاءُ <sup>2</sup>	mute

Example:

لَبِيسَ الرَّجُلُ قَمِيصًا أَبْيَضًا.  
*labisa -rrajulu qamīsan ʿabyad.*  
 “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 «ثعي» 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 «جبن», 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 نَدْمَان *nadmān* “regretful”, an adjectival-noun from the root «ندم», is not a semi-flexible noun, because its feminine is نَدْمَانَة *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»	غَضْبَان <sup>2</sup>	غَضْبَى <sup>2</sup>	very angry
«عطش»	عَطْشَان <sup>2</sup>	عَطْشَى <sup>2</sup>	very thirsty
«جوع»	جَوْعَان <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:

- مَسَاجِدُ *masājid*<sup>2</sup> “mosques”
- مَفَاتِيحُ *mafātīḥ*<sup>2</sup> “keys”

These patterns are only used for plurals and we will study them in more detail in chapter 11 , if Allāh wills.

Work in progress. Not ready for study.



# 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>

States	Indefinite	Definite
a- and i-states	بَيْتَيْنِ <i>baytayni</i>	الْبَيْتَيْنِ <i>albaytayni</i>

Note that indefinite duals don't have *n* marks. The only difference between definite and indefinite duals is the definite article اَلْ “the”.

Here are examples of duals in sentences:

- u-state:

الْكِتَابَانِ فِي الْحَقِيْبَةِ.  
*alkitābāni fi -lḥaqībah.*  
 “The books<sub>2</sub> are in the bag.”

- a-state:

قَرَأَ الْغُلَامُ كِتَابَيْنِ.  
*qara<sup>a</sup> -lghulamū kitābayn.*  
 “The boy read two books.”

- i-state:

عَظِيبَتُ الْأُمِّ عَلَى الْجَارِيَتَيْنِ.  
*ghaḍībati -l<sup>a</sup>ummu eala -ljāriyatayn.*  
 “The mother became angry at the girls<sub>2</sub>.” ### Nouns ending in ة

If a noun ends with a looped *tā<sup>o</sup>* ة, then it is converted to an open *tā<sup>o</sup>* 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 -lḥadiqah.*  
 “The trees<sub>2</sub> are in the garden.”

If a feminine noun does not have a looped  $tā^2$  then it will simply be appended with اَنِ -*āni* and اَيْنِ -*ayni*. For example, dualizing اُمُّ *umm* “a mother” in order to get “mothers<sub>2</sub>”, we get:

- u-state: اُمَّانِ *ummāni*
- a-state and i-state: اُمَّيْنِ *ummayni*

There are some nouns that end with an *ʿalif* before the *ö*, like فَتَاةٌ *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)
«صحراء»	صَحْرَاءُ <i>ṣaḥrāʿ</i> “a desert”	صَحْرَاوَانِ <i>ṣaḥrāwāni</i>	صَحْرَاوَيْنِ <i>ṣaḥrāwayni</i>
«حمر»	حَمْرَاءُ <i>ḥamrāʿ</i> “red”	حَمْرَاوَانِ <i>ḥamrāwāni</i>	حَمْرَاوَيْنِ <i>ḥamrāwayni</i>

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

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

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

### 9.2.2 Nouns ending with ي

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

Root	Singular	Dual (u-state)	Dual (a- and i-states)
«غضب»	غَضَبِي <i>ghaḍbā</i> “very angry <sub>f</sub> ”	غَضَبَيَانِ <i>ghaḍbayāni</i>	غَضَبَيْنِ <i>ghaḍbayayni</i>
«ذكر»	ذِكْرِي <i>zīkrā</i> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرَيَانِ <i>zīkrayāni</i>	ذِكْرَيْنِ <i>zīkrayayni</i>

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

- «هدي» (masc.) الْهُدَى “the guidance”, pattern: الْفُعْلُ

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.  
*zahaḥtu ʾila -lmaḍīnati -lqadīmah.*  
“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:

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

قَرَأَ الْعَلَامُ كِتَابَيْنِ ثَقِيلَيْنِ قَدِيمَيْنِ.  
*qaraʾa -lghulāmu kitābayni ṭhaqīlatayni qadīmatayni.*  
“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 an adjectival noun, then the information will typically match the subject in being a dual. For example:

الْأُمَّانُ كَرِيمَتَانِ.

<sup>ʔ</sup>al<sup>ʔ</sup>ummāni karīmatān.

“The mothers<sub>2</sub> are generous.”

الْكِتَابَانِ الْكَبِيرَانِ ثَقِيلَانِ.

<sup>ʔ</sup>alkitābāni -lkabīrāni thaqīlān.

“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,

الرِّجُلَانِ مُعَلِّمَانِ.

<sup>ʔ</sup>arrujulāni 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.

<sup>ʔ</sup>alwisadatāni 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 <sup>ʔ</sup> anta “you <sub>m,1</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	أَنْتِ <sup>ʔ</sup> anti “you <sub>f,1</sub> ”
Speaker	أَنَا <sup>ʔ</sup> ana “I”

Singular participant	Detached pronoun
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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>ʾantumā</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 الرِّجُلَانِ.

*humā -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 لِلجَارِيَتَيْنِ أَنْتُمَا قَرِيبَتَانِ مِنِّي.

*qālati -lʾummu liljāriyatayni ʾantumā 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”
Fem. absentee	هَا <i>-hā</i> “her”
Masc. addressee	كَ <i>-ka</i> “you <sub>m,1</sub> ”
Fem. addressee	كِ <i>-ki</i> “you <sub>f,1</sub> ”
Speaker	ي <i>“me”</i>

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	كُما <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 هُمَا *-humā*.
- Just like the absentee-participant singular masculine attached pronoun هُوَ *hu* “him”, the dual absentee-participant attached pronoun “them<sub>2</sub>” هُمَا *-humā* becomes هِمَا *-himā* when preceded by the vowels اَ -i, يَ -ī, or the semi-vowel اِ -ay. Examples:
  - بِهِمَا *bihimā* “with them<sub>2</sub>”
  - فِيهِمَا *fihimā* “in them<sub>2</sub>”
  - إِلَيْهِمَا *ilayhimā* “to them<sub>2</sub>”
- The preposition لَ *li* “for” becomes لَ *la* when followed by the dual attached pronouns:
  - لَهُمَا *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 ۙ. Example:

– ذَهَبَ إِلَيْكُمَا الرَّجُلُ.  
*zāhaba ʾilaykuma -rrajulu.*  
 “The man went toward you<sub>2</sub>.”

### 9.6.1 Dual doee pronouns

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

سَأَلَهُمَا الرَّجُلُ.  
*saʾalahuma -rrajulu.*  
 “The man asked them<sub>2</sub>.”

سَأَلْتُكُمَا.  
*saʾaltukumā*  
 “I asked you<sub>2</sub>.”

سَأَلَتْكُمَا.  
*saʾalatkumā.*  
 “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.  
*zāhaba -lghulāmu.*  
 “The boy went.”

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ.  
*zāhabat jāriyatun*  
 “A girl went.”



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

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامَانِ.  
*zāhaba -lghulāmāni.*  
 “The boys<sub>2</sub> went.”

ذَهَبَتِ جَارِيَتَانِ.  
*zāhabat 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	لَا - <i>ā</i>	“them <sub>2</sub> ”	masc.: فَعَلَا <i>faʿalā</i> , fem: فَعَلَاتَا <i>faʿalatā</i>
Addressee	تُمَا - <i>tumā</i>	“you <sub>2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُمَا <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 (لَا -*ā*) is used for a feminine doer, it is attached to the verb with an intervening ت of femininity thus: فَعَلَاتَا *faʿalatā* “they<sub>f,2</sub> did” Here are some examples of the dual doer pronouns:

سَأَلْتُمَانَا

*sa<sup>2</sup>altumānā*

“You<sub>2</sub> asked us”

سَأَلْتَاكُمَا

*sa<sup>2</sup>alatakumā*

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

سَأَلَهُمَا

*sa<sup>2</sup>alāhumā*

“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:

ذَهَبَا إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*zahabā<sup>2</sup> ilā baytin.*

“They<sub>2</sub> went to a house.”

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلَانِ إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*zahabā<sup>2</sup> -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 zahabā<sup>2</sup> 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 وَشَرَبَا وَذَهَبَا.

*akala<sup>2</sup> -rrajulāni washaribā wazahabā.*

“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.

<sup>ʔ</sup>arrajulāni <sup>ʔ</sup>akalā washaribā wazahabā.

“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.”



# 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 *ُونَ* -*ūna* to the singular noun when it is in the u-state, and *ِينَ* -*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 *mueallim* “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>mueallimūna</i>	اَلْمُعَلِّمُونَ <i>ʾalmueallimūna</i>
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمِينَ <i>mueallimīna</i>	اَلْمُعَلِّمِينَ <i>ʾalmueallimīna</i>

Note that, just like for duals, the indefinite *ūn* sound plural doesn’t have *n* marks. The only difference between the definite and indefinite *ūn* sound plural is the definite article اَلْ “the”.

The duals of مُعَلِّم *mueallim* “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>mueallimāni</i>	اَلْمُعَلِّمَانِ <i>ʾalmueallimāni</i>

State	Indefinite <i>ūn</i> sound plural “teachers <sub>m,2</sub> ”	Definite <i>ūn</i> sound plural “the teachers <sub>m,2</sub> ”
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمِينَ <i>muʿallimayni</i>	الْمُعَلِّمِينَ <i>ʾalmuʿallimayni</i>

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

- u-state:

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

- a-state:

سَأَلَ الْغُلَامُ مُعَلِّمِينَ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.  
*saʾala -lghulamū muʿallimīna fi ʾamr.*  
 “The boy asked some teachers about a matter.”

- i-state:

طَلَبَ الْغُلَامُ مِنَ الْمُعَلِّمِينَ عِلْمًا.  
*ṭalaba -lghulamū 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:

- عَالَم *ʿālam* “a world” forms the *ūn* plural عَالَمُونَ *ʾālamūna* “worlds”.
- أَرْض *ʾarḍ* (fem.) “a land”, “an earth” forms the *ūn* plural أَرْضُونَ *ʾarḍūna* “lands”, “earths”.
- أَهْل *ʾahl* “a family” forms the *ūn* plural أَهْلُونَ *ʾahlūna* “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 حَيَوَان *ḥayawān* “an animal”:

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

Note that:

- Unlike the *ūn* sound plural, the *āt* sound plural takes *n* marks. 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 *an*-mark ً. Instead the *i*-mark ِ and the *in*-mark ٍ-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	الْحَيَوَانُ <i>alḥayawāna</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتِ <i>alḥayawānāti</i>
i-state	الْحَيَوَانِ <i>alḥayawāni</i>	الْحَيَوَانَاتِ <i>alḥayawānāti</i>

### 10.3.1 Nouns ending in ة

If a noun ends with a looped *tāʾ* 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>almuʿallimātu</i>
a- and i-states	مُعَلِّمَاتٍ <i>muʿallimātīn</i>	الْمُعَلِّمَاتِ <i>almuʿallimāti</i>

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

- u-state:



فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ مُعَلِّمَاتٌ .  
*fi -lmadrasati muʿallimātun.*  
 “In the school are teachers.”

- a-state:

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

- i-state:

نَظَرَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَى الْخَيَْوَانَاتِ.  
*naẓara -lghulāmu ʿila -lḥayawānāti.*  
 “The boy looked at the animals.”

There are some nouns that end with an <sup>ʿ</sup>alif before the ʾ, like فَتَاة *fatāh* “a young woman”. We will learn how to pluralize these nouns later, if Allāh wills.

### 10.3.2 Nouns ending with ة

Consistent with what we learned for duals in section 9.2.1, if a noun ends with the feminine marker ة which is extrinsic to the word’s root then the ة shall be replaced with a و when forming the āt sound plural. Example:

Root	Singular	āt sound plural
«صحر»	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 9.2.2, If a noun ends with ي which is extrinsic to the word’s root then the ي shall be changed to ا ي when forming the āt sound plural. Examples:

Root	Singular	āt sound plural
«ذكر»	ذِكْرَى <sup>2</sup> <i>zikrāʾ</i> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرَايَاتٍ <i>zikrayāt</i>

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

Common nouns of the patterns فُعْلَة/فُعْل, 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 فُعْل *fael* or فُعْلَة *faelah*, then the Ø-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 نَحَلَات *naḥalāt* “bees”, not × نَحَلَات *naḥlāt*.
- ضَرْبَة *ḍarbah* “a strike” becomes ضَرْبَات *ḍarabāt* “strikes”, not × ضَرْبَات *ḍarbāt*.
- صَفْحَة *ṣafḥah* “a page” becomes صَفْحَات *ṣafahāt* “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 *fiel*, فُعْلَة *fielah*, فُعْل *fuel*, or فُعْلَة *fuelah* then the Ø-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 *ẓulmah* “a darkness” can become, optionally, either ظُلُمَات *ẓulmāt* or ظَلُمَات *ẓulamāt*, or ظُلُمَات *ẓulumāt* “darknesses”.
- كِسْرَة *kisrah* “a piece” can become, optionally, either كِسْرَات *kisarāt* or كِسِرَات *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  $\emptyset$ -mark when forming the  $\bar{a}t$  sound plural. So صَعْب *ṣaʿb* and صَعْبَةٌ *ṣaʿbah* “a difficult one” become only صَعَبَات *ṣaʿbāt*, not × صَعَبَات *ṣaʿabāt*.

### 10.3.5 Applicability of the $\bar{a}t$ sound plural

We had mentioned that the  $\bar{u}n$  sound plural is used, with very few exceptions, only for male intelligent beings. Conversely, the  $\bar{a}t$  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  $\bar{u}n$  sound plural and an  $\bar{a}t$  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 $\bar{u}n$ sound plural

The  $\bar{u}n$  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  $\bar{u}n$  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 10.2.1), the only common nouns that *may* be allowed to form  $\bar{u}n$  sound plurals are those that denote male intelligent beings, and whose feminine is formed by adding a  $\bar{o}$  to the masculine noun. So, غُلَام *ghulām* “a boy” is disqualified from forming a  $\bar{u}n$  sound plural because its feminine counterpart is جَارِيَةٌ *jāriyah* “a girl”,

not × *غُلَامَة* *ghulāmah*. In addition, a further restriction is imposed, which we will explain below:

We learned in section 3.6.1.1 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 *ō* to the masculine noun):

Arabic word	Definition
ابن <i>ibn</i>	a son
طفل <i>tifl</i>	a child
إنسان <i>insān</i>	a human being
حر <i>hurr</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 *ō* 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 condition, as we have explained it, is somewhat imprecise. For example, the word *حر* *hurr* (masc.) “a free man” seems to have a meaning that is derived from the adjective “free” and it forms its feminine by adding *ō* to it thus: *حُرَّة* *hurrah* (fem.) “a free woman”. Yet it is considered a primitive noun, and thus does not form an *ūn* sound plural.

In later chapters, once we have studied the patterns of the derived nouns, we will try to make this condition more precise, if Allāh wills.

#### 10.4.1.2 Adjectival nouns

If an adjectival noun forms its feminine by adding the feminine marker *ō* 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 *ō* 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 *ō* 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 *ō* to masculine noun. These are:

- <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَان *faelān*<sup>2</sup>, whose feminine is on the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَى *faelā*<sup>2</sup>. Example: <sup>2</sup>غَضَبَان *ghaḍḍbān*<sup>2</sup> (masc.) “very angry” whose feminine is <sup>2</sup>غَضَبَى *ghaḍḍbā*<sup>2</sup>.
- <sup>2</sup>أَفْعَل *afeal*<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 *ō* to the masculine noun, therefore the masculine nouns don’t form the *ūn* sound plural. We will see, 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 ى are able to form an *āt* plural. Examples are:

Singular	<i>āt</i> sound plural
حَسَنَةٌ <i>hasanah</i> adj. “a good one <sub>f</sub> ”	حَسَنَات <i>hasanāt</i>
حَسَنَةٌ <i>hasanah</i> (common noun) “a good deed”	حَسَنَات <i>hasanāt</i>
صَدِيقَةٌ <i>ṣadiqah</i> “a friend <sub>f</sub> ”	صَدِيقَات <i>ṣadiqāt</i>
صَحْرَاءُ <i>ṣaḥrāʾ</i> <sup>2</sup> “a desert”	صَحْرَاوَات <i>ṣaḥrāwāt</i>
ذِكْرَى <i>zikrāʾ</i> <sup>2</sup> “a remembrance”	ذِكْرِيَات <i>zikrayāt</i>

The following are exceptions to this general rule, and don't form *āt* sound plurals:

- Adjectival nouns of the pattern <sup>2</sup>فَعْلَاءَ which is the feminine of the masculine adjectival noun pattern <sup>2</sup>أَفْعَل. For example, حَمْرَاءُ «حمر» *ḥamrāʾ* “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, غَضَبَى «غضب» *ghaḍbā* “very angry<sub>f</sub>”.
- The following exceptional nouns:
  - أُمَّة <sup>2</sup>*ummah* “a nation”
  - أَمَةٌ <sup>2</sup>*amah* “a female slave”
  - شَفَةٌ *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 صَعَبَات *ṣaʿbāt* “difficult ones”.

By the way, note that both the masculine adjectival noun صَعْب *ṣaʿb*, and its feminine صَعْبَة *ṣaʿbah* form the same *āt* sound plural صَعَبَات *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>ʾanta</i> “you <sub>1,m</sub> ”
Addressee sing. fem.	أَنْتِ <i>ʾanti</i> “you <sub>1,f</sub> ”
Addressee dual	أَنْتُمَا <i>ʾantumā</i> “you <sub>2</sub> ”
Speaker sing.	أَنَا <i>ʾana</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>ʾantum</i> “you <sub>3,m</sub> ”
Addressee pl. fem.	أَنْتُنَّ <i>ʾantunna</i> “you <sub>3,f</sub> ”

Participant	Detached pronoun
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 muʿallimāt.*

“They<sub>3,f</sub> are teachers<sub>f</sub>.”

أَنْتُمْ لَاعِبُونَ.

*ʔantum laʿibūn.*

“You<sub>3,m</sub> are players<sub>3,m</sub>.”

أَنْتُنَّ صَدِيقَاتٌ.

*ʔantunna 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 مُسْلِمَاتٌ.

*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 “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 هُ *hu* “him” and هُمَا -*humā* “them<sub>2</sub>”, the plural absentee-participant attached pronouns هُمْ -*hum* “them<sub>3,m</sub>” and هُنَّ -*hunna* “them<sub>3,f</sub>” become هِمَا -*himā* and هِنَّ -*hinna* respectively, when preceded by the vowels اَ -*i*, اِ -*i*, or the semi-vowel اِ -*ay*. Examples:
  - بِهِم *bihimā* “with them<sub>3,m</sub>”
  - فِيهِنَّ *fihinna* “in them<sub>3,f</sub>”
  - إِلَيْهِمْ *ilayhim* “to them<sub>3,m</sub>”
- The final Ø-mark on the م in the masculine plural pronouns (هُمْ *hum*, أَنْتُمْ *antum*, and كُمْ -*kum*) becomes a u-mark (هُمْ *humu*, أَنْتُمْ *antum*, and كُمْ -*kumu* respectively) when followed by a connecting hamzah. Examples:

– هُمُ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ.

*humu -lmueallimūn.*

“They<sub>pl. masc.</sub> are the (male) teachers.”

– ذَهَبَ إِلَيْكُمْ الرَّجُلُ.

*zahaḥaba ʾilaykumu -rrajul.*

“The man went to you<sub>3,m.</sub>”

– أَنْتُمْ الْمُسْلِمُونَ.

*ʾantum -lmuslimūn.* “You<sub>3,m</sub> are the Muslims<sub>3,m.</sub>”

- When the speaker plural attached pronoun ى is attached to a word that ends with a ن with a 0-mark, there is only one ن written and it is doubled with a doubling mark ّ on it. So we get:

– نَا + مِنْ = مِئْنَا *minnā*

– نَا + عَنْ = عَنَّا *ʿannā*

– نَا + لَدُنْ = لَدُنَّا *ladunnā*

- The preposition لَ *li* “for” becomes لَ *la* when followed by the plural attached pronouns:

– لَهُمْ *lahum* “for them<sub>3,m</sub>”

– لَهُنَّ *lahunna* “for them<sub>3,f</sub>”

– لَكُمْ *lakum* “for you<sub>3,m</sub>”

– لَكُنَّ *lakunna* “for you<sub>3,f</sub>”

– لَنَا *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:

سَأَلَهُمُ الرَّجُلُ.

*saʾalahumu -rrajul.*

“The man asked them<sub>3,m.</sub>”

سَأَلْتُكُمْ.

*saʾaltukum*

“I asked you<sub>3,m.</sub>”

سَأَلَتْكِ.

*saʾatkunn.*

“She asked you<sub>3,f.</sub>”

سَأَلَانَا.

*saʾalānā.*

“They<sub>2,m</sub> asked us.”

سَأَلْتَاهُ.

*saʾalatāh.*

“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.

*zahaba -lghulāmu.*

“The boy went.”

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ.

*zahabat jāriyatun*

“A girl went.”

ذَهَبَ الْغُلَامَانِ.

*zahaba -lghulāmāni.*

“The boys<sub>2</sub> went.”

ذَهَبَتِ جَارِيَتَانِ.

*zahabat jāriyatāni.*

“Two girls went.”

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

ذَهَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ.

*zahaba -lmueallimūn.*

“The teacherm<sub>3,m</sub> went.”

ذَهَبَتِ مُعَلِّمَاتٌ.

*zahabat mueallimāt.*

“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	لَا - <i>ā</i>	“them <sub>2</sub> ”	masc.: فَعَلَا <i>faʿalā</i> , fem: فَعَلَتَا <i>faʿalatā</i>
Addressee sing. masc.	تَ - <i>ta</i>	“you <sub>m,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتَ <i>faʿalta</i>
Addressee sing. fem.	تِ - <i>ti</i>	“you <sub>f,2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتِ <i>faʿalti</i>
Addressee dual	تُما - <i>tumā</i>	“you <sub>2</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُمَا <i>faʿaltumā</i>
Speaker sing.	تُ - <i>tu</i>	“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 - <i>na</i>	“they <sub>3,m</sub> ”	فَعَلُوا <i>faʿalū</i>
Absentee pl. fem.	نَ - <i>na</i>	“they <sub>3,f</sub> ”	فَعَلْنَ <i>faʿalna</i>
Addressee pl. masc.	تُمْ - <i>tum</i>	“you <sub>m,3</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُمْ <i>faʿaltum</i>
Addressee pl. fem.	تُنَّ - <i>tunna</i>	“you <sub>f,3</sub> ”	فَعَلْتُنَّ <i>faʿaltunna</i>
Speaker pl.	لَا - <i>nā</i>	“we”	فَعَلْنَا <i>faʿalnā</i>

Note the following regarding the plural doer pronouns:

- The ة of femininity does not attach to the absentee plural feminine doer pronoun ۚ-na “they<sub>3,f</sub>” فَعَلْنَ. Example:

– ذَهَبْنَ *zāhabna* “they<sub>3,f</sub> went”

This is different from the behavior of the absentee dual doer pronoun ۚ-ā “them<sub>2,f</sub>” which, for a feminine doer, does attach to the ة of femininity. Example:

– ذَهَبَتَا *zāhabatā* “they<sub>2,f</sub> went”

- The final Ø-mark on the ۚ in the masculine plural doer pronoun تُم -*tum* becomes a u-mark تُم -*tumu* when followed by a connecting *hamzah*. Examples:

– أَكَلْتُمْ خُبْزًا.  
*ʔakaltum khubzā.*  
“You<sub>3,m</sub> ate some bread.”

– أَكَلْتُمُ الْخُبْزَ.  
*ʔakaltumu -lkhubz.*  
“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 *ʔalif* after it which is written only and not pronounced. This *ʔalif* is dropped when a doee pronoun is attached. For example:

– صَرَبُوا الرَّجُلَ.  
*ḍarabu -rrajul.*  
“They<sub>3,m</sub> hit the man.”

– صَرَبُوهُ.  
*ḍarabūh.*  
“They<sub>3,m</sub> hit him.”

- The plural masculine verb doer pronoun for the addressed person “you<sub>3,m</sub>” تُم -*tum* becomes تُمُ *tumū* when a doee pronoun is attached. For example:

– صَرَبْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ.  
*ḍarabtumu -rrajul.*  
“You<sub>3,m</sub> hit the man.”

– صَرَبْتُمُوهُ.  
*ḍarabtumūh.*  
“You<sub>pl. masc.</sub> hit him.”

- The plural speaking participant doer pronoun *ū -nā* is the same as the plural speaking participant attached pronoun *ū -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 *Ø*-mark. Consider the following two sentences:

سَأَلْنَا.

*saʾalnā.*

“We asked.”

سَأَلْنَا.

*saʾalanā.*

“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.

*zahaba -lmueallimūna ʾilā madrasah.*

“The teachers<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school.”

ذَهَبُوا إِلَى مَدْرَسَةٍ.

*zahabā ʾilā madrasah.*

“They<sub>3,m</sub> went to a school.”

لَعِبَتِ الصَّدِيقَاتُ فِي الْبَيْتِ.

*laʿibatī -ṣṣadiqātu fi -lbayt.*

“The friends<sub>3,f</sub> played in the house.”

لَعِبْنَ فِي الْبَيْتِ.

*laʿibna 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.

*ʾalmueallimūna zahabū ʾilā 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.  
*ʾaṣṣadiqātu laʿibna 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:

أَكَلُ اللَّاعِبُونَ وَشَرِبُوا وَذَهَبُوا.  
*ʾakala -llāʿibūna waṣharibū wazahabū.*

“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.

اللَّاعِبُونَ أَكَلُوا وَشَرِبُوا وَذَهَبُوا.  
*ʾallāʿibūna ʾakalū waṣharibū wazahabū.*

“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 wazahabn.*

“The players<sub>3,f</sub> ate and they<sub>3,f</sub> drank and they<sub>3,f</sub> went.”

and

اللَّاعِبَاتُ أَكَلْنَ وَشَرِبْنَ وَذَهَبْنَ.  
*ʾallāʿibātu ʾakalna waṣharibna wazahabn.*

“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 وَالْعَلَامُ.

*zahabati -lʾummu wa-lghulāmu.*

“The mother and the boy went.”

ذَهَبَ الْعَلَامُ وَالْأُمُّ.

*zahaba -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.

*zahabtu 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 تـ *-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.

*ʾanta wahuwa zahabtumā.*

“You<sub>1,m</sub> and he, you<sub>2</sub> went.”

أَنَا وَمُحَمَّدٌ ذَهَبْنَا.

*ʾana wamuḥammadun zahabnā.*

“I and Muḥammad, we went.”



الْأُمُّ وَالْجَارِيَةُ ذَهَبَتَا.

<sup>2</sup>al<sup>2</sup>ummu wa-ljāriyatu zāhabatā.

“The mother and the girl went.”

الْأُمُّ وَالْجَارِيَتَانِ ذَهَبْنَ.

<sup>2</sup>al<sup>2</sup>ummu wa-ljāriyatāni zāhabna.

“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 وَالْعُلَامُ ذَهَبُوا.

<sup>2</sup>al<sup>2</sup>ummu wa-ljāriyatu wa-lghulāmu zāhabū.

“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 «فعل» to show word patterns. For example, the noun رَجُل *rajul* “a man” is formed from the root «رجل» on the pattern فَعْل *faʿul*.

Most nouns in Arabic are *fully-flexible*. This means that, when indefinite, they take *n*-marks and the *i*-state is shown by an *in*-mark ِ at the end of the noun. For example, رَجُل *rajul* “a man” and بَيْت *bayt* “a house” are fully-flexible nouns. So, you can see, below, that they take *n*-marks, and the indefinite *i*-state is indicated by an *in*-mark ِ:

ذَهَبَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى بَيْتٍ.

*zahaḇa rajulun ʾilā bayt.*

“A man went to a house.”

Some nouns are *semi-flexible*. This means that they don’t take *n* marks, and also, the indefinite *i*-state is indicated by an *a* mark َ. Examples of such nouns are:

- 2 غَضَبِي *ghaḍḇāʾ* *adj.* (fem.) “a very angry one<sub>f</sub>” from the root «غضب»
- 2 صَحْرَاءُ *ṣaḥrāʾ* (fem.) “a desert<sub>f</sub>” from the root «صحّر»

ذَهَبَتْ جَارِيَةٌ غَضَبِي إِلَى صَحْرَاءٍ.

*zahaḇat jāriyatun ghaḍḇā ʾilā ṣaḥrāʾ.*

“A very angry girl went to a desert.”

When definite, semi-flexible nouns are identical to fully-flexible nouns:

ذَهَبَتْ الْجَارِيَةُ الْغَضَبِي إِلَى الصَّحْرَاءِ.

*zahaḇati -l jāriyatu -l ghaḍḇā ʾila -ṣ ṣaḥrāʾ.*

“The very angry girl went to the desert.”

All nouns that have the endings ء and ِي, that are extrinsic to the word’s root, are semi-flexible. ء and ِي are also feminine markers for singular nouns, just like ِ. (Except that ِ does not, in general, make a noun semi-flexible.)

It is important to note that ِ, ء, and ِي 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 ِي,

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 فَفَاف and فَفَافِيف 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 8.3.5.

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 root فَعْلال. 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. The singular and plural and given together separated by a colon character “:”, the singular on the right, and its plural on the left.

#### 1. فُعْل *fuʿal*. Examples:

صُورَة: صُور	a picture	دَوَلَة: دُول	a dynasty/state
أُمَّة: أُمَم	a nation	رُكْبَة: رُكَب	a knee

#### 2. فُعْل *fuʿal*. Examples:

أَحْمَر, 2, حَمْرَاء: 2, حُمْر	red	أَعْمَى, 2, عَمْيَاء: 2, عُمَي	blind
أَحْوَر, 2, حَوْرَاء: 2, حُور	a beautiful eyed one	أَصَم, 2, صَمَاء: 2, صُم	deaf
أَسْوَد, 2, سَوْدَاء: 2, سُود	black	أَبْكَم, 2, بَكْمَاء: 2, بُكَم	mute
أَبْيَض, 2, بَيْضَاء: 2, بِيض	white	نَاقَة: نُوق	a camel <sub>f</sub>

#### 3. فُعْل *fuʿul*. Examples:

كِتَاب: كُتِبَ	a book	رَسُول: رُسِلَ	a messenger
جِدَار: جُدِرَ	a wall	سَفِينَة: سُفِنَ	a ship

4. **فِعْل** *fiʿal*. Examples:

قِطْعَة: قُطِعَ	a piece	سَبِيلَة: سَبِيَ	a course of life
هَرَّة: هُرِرَ	a cat <sub>f</sub>		

5. **فِعَال** *fiʿāl*. Examples:

رَجُل: رَجُلٌ	a man	حَسَن: حَسَنٌ	<i>adj.</i> a good one <sub>m</sub>
أَمْرَأَة: نِسَاء	a woman	حَسَنَة: حَسَنَاتٌ	<i>adj.</i> a good one <sub>f</sub>
أُنْثَى: إِنَاتٌ	a female	صَعَب: صَعَابٌ	<i>adj.</i> a difficult one <sub>m</sub>
عَبْد: عِبَادٌ	a slave <sub>m</sub>	صَعْبَة: صَعَابٌ	<i>adj.</i> a difficult one <sub>f</sub>
أَمَة: إِمَاءٌ	a slave <sub>f</sub>	صَغِير: صِغَارٌ	<i>adj.</i> a small one <sub>m</sub>
جَبَل: جِبَالٌ	a mountain	صَغِيرَة: صِغَارٌ	<i>adj.</i> a small one <sub>f</sub>
ثَوْب: ثِيَابٌ	a garment	كَبِير: كِبَارٌ	<i>adj.</i> a big one <sub>m</sub>
رِيح: رِيَّاحٌ	a wind	كَبِيرَة: كِبَارٌ	<i>adj.</i> a big one <sub>f</sub>
مَرَّة: مَرَارٌ	an occasion	ضَعِيف: ضِعَافٌ	<i>adj.</i> a weak one <sub>m</sub>
بَحْر: بَحَارٌ	a sea	ضَعِيفَة: ضِعَافٌ	<i>adj.</i> a weak one <sub>f</sub>
عَمُود: عِمَادٌ	a pillar	كَرَام: كَرِيمٌ	<i>adj.</i> a generous one <sub>m</sub>
رَوْضَة: رِيَاضٌ	a garden	غَضَبَان: غَضَابٌ	<i>adj.</i> a very angry <sub>m</sub>
رَمَح: رِمَاحٌ	a spear	غَضَبَان: غَضَابٌ	<i>adj.</i> a very angry <sub>f</sub>

6. **فُعُول** *fuʿūl*. Examples:

أَمْر: أُمُورٌ	a matter	جَيْش: جُيُوشٌ	an army
بَيْت: بُيُوتٌ	a house	قَلْب: قُلُوبٌ	a heart
حَقّ: حَقُوقٌ	a truth, a right	رَأْس: رُؤُوسٌ	a head
مَلِك: مُلُوكٌ	a king	شَهْر: شُهُورٌ	a month
سَيْف: سَيُوفٌ	a sword	نَفْس: نَفُوسٌ	a self
شَيْخ: شُيُوخٌ	an old man	عَيْن: عُيُونٌ	a (water) spring
شَاهِد: شُهُودٌ	a witness		

7. **فُعَل** *fuʿʿal*. Examples:

رَاكِعٌ: رَكْعٌ	one who bowes <sub>m</sub>	غَائِبٌ: غَيْبٌ	absent
رَاكِعَةٌ: رَكْعٌ	one who bowes <sub>f</sub>		

8. **فُعَال** *fuʿʿāl*. Examples:

قَارِئٌ: قُرَاءٌ	a reader <sub>m</sub>	كَافِرٌ: كُفَّارٌ	a disbeliever <sub>m</sub>
تَاجِرٌ: تِجَارٌ	a trader <sub>m</sub>	جَاهِلٌ: جُهَّالٌ	an ignorant one <sub>m</sub>
عَامِلٌ: عُمَالٌ	a worker <sub>m</sub>		

9. **فَعَلَة** *faʿalah*. Examples:

سَاحِرٌ: سَحَرَةٌ	a magician <sub>m</sub>	قَاتِلٌ: قَتَلَةٌ	a killer <sub>m</sub>
عَامِلٌ: عَمَلَةٌ	a labourer <sub>m</sub>	سَيِّدٌ: سَادَةٌ	a chief <sub>m</sub>

10. **فُعَلَة** *fuʿalah*. Examples:

قَاضٍ: قُضَاةٌ	a judge <sub>m</sub>	رَاوٍ: رَوَاةٌ	a narrator <sub>m</sub>
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11. **فِعَلَة** *fiʿalah*. Examples:

دَبٌّ: دَبَّيَّةٌ	a bear	قِرْدٌ: قِرْدَةٌ	a monkey
هَرٌّ: هِرَّةٌ	a cat <sub>m</sub>		

12. **فِعَلَة** *fiʿalah*. Examples:

أَخٌ: إِخْوَةٌ	a brother	فَتًى: فُتَيَّةٌ	a young man
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13. **أَفْعُل** *ʾaʿfʿul*. Examples:

رَجُلٌ: أَرْجُلٌ	a leg	شَهْرٌ: أَشْهُرٌ	a month
نَفْسٌ: أَنْفُسٌ	a self	عَيْنٌ: أَعْيُنٌ	an eye

14. أَفْعَالٌ *ʾafeāl*. Examples:

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
بُئْرٌ: آبَارٌ	a (water) well		

15. أَفْعِلَةٌ *ʾafeilāh*. Examples:

لِسَانٌ: أَلْسِنَةٌ	a tongue	طَعَامٌ: أَطْعِمَةٌ	a food
إِمَامٌ: أِمَمَةٌ	a leader <sub>m</sub>	إِلَهٌ: آلِهَةٌ	a god

16. فَوَاعِلٌ *fawāʿil*<sup>2</sup>. (Semi-flexible because of فَعَاِف pattern.) Examples:

صَاحِبَةٌ: صَوَاحِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	a companion <sub>f</sub>	عَامِلٌ: عَوَامِلٌ <sup>2</sup>	a factor
جَارِيَةٌ: جَوَارٍ <sup>2</sup>	a girl	شَاهِدٌ: شَوَاهِدٌ <sup>2</sup>	a corroborating evidence
أَمْرٌ: أَوَامِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a command	خَاتَمٌ: خَوَاتِمٌ <sup>2</sup>	a ring (jewelry)
نَادِرَةٌ: نَوَادِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a joke, a witticism	فَارِسٌ: فَوَارِسٌ <sup>2</sup>	a horseman

17. فَاعِلٌ *faʿāʿil*<sup>2</sup>. (Semi-flexible because of فَعَاِف pattern.) Examples:



حُرَّة: حَرَائِر <sup>2</sup>	a free woman	جَزِيرَة: جَزَائِر <sup>2</sup>	an island
صُرَّة: صَرَائِر <sup>2</sup>	a co-wife	رِسَالَة: رِسَائِل <sup>2</sup>	a message
حَدِيقَة: حَدَائِق <sup>2</sup>	a garden	حَاجَة: حَوَائِج <sup>2</sup>	a need
حَقِيبَة: حَقَائِب <sup>2</sup>	a bag	دَلِيل: دَلَائِل <sup>2</sup>	an evidence
كَبِيرَة: كَبَائِر <sup>2</sup>	a major sin	خَلِيفَة: خَلَائِف <sup>2</sup>	a successor
كَرِيمَة: كَرَائِم <sup>2</sup>	a generous one <sub>f</sub>		

18. فُعْلَان *fielān*. Examples:

غُلَام: غُلَمَان	a boy	ثَوْر: ثَوْرَان	a bull
جَار: جِرَان	a neighbor	عَرَاب: عَرَبَان	a crow
أَخ: إِخْوَان	a brother	فَأْر: فُئْرَان	a mouse

19. فُعْلَان *fuelān*. Examples:

بَلَد: بُلْدَان	a country	شُجَاع: شُجْعَان	a brave one
جِدَار: جُدْرَان	a wall	شَاب: شَبَاب	a young man

20. فُعْلَاء<sup>2</sup> *fuelā<sup>2</sup>*. Examples:

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>
ضَعِيف: ضُعَفَاء <sup>2</sup>	a weak one <sub>m</sub>		

21. أَفْعِلَاء<sup>2</sup> *afeilā<sup>2</sup>*. Examples:

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: أَشَقِيَاء <sup>2</sup>	a wretched one <sub>m</sub>

22. **فَعْلَى<sup>2</sup>** *faelā<sup>2</sup>*. Examples:

مَرِيضٌ: مَرَضَى <sup>2</sup>	a sick one <sub>m</sub>	جَرِيحٌ: جَرَحَى <sup>2</sup>	a wounded person
أَسِيرٌ: أُسِرَى <sup>2</sup>	a captive		

23. **فَعَالِي<sup>2</sup>** *faēālī<sup>2</sup>*. (Semi-flexible because of <sup>2</sup>فَفَافٍ pattern.) Examples:

لَيْلَةٌ: لَيَّالٍ <sup>2</sup>	a night	أَرْضٌ: أَرَضَى <sup>2</sup>	a land, an earth
أَهْلٌ: أَهَالٍ <sup>2</sup>	a family		

24. **فَعَالَى<sup>2</sup>** *faēālā<sup>2</sup>*. Examples:

صَحْرَاءٌ: صَحَّرَأَى <sup>2</sup>	a desert	فُتُوَى <sup>2</sup> : فُتَّوَى <sup>2</sup>	a formal legal opinion
يَتِيمٌ: يَتَّامَى <sup>2</sup>	an orphan	هَدِيَّةٌ: هَدَّأَى <sup>2</sup>	a gift

25. **فَعِيل** *faēil* (rare). Examples:

عَبْدٌ: عَبِيدٌ	a slave <sub>m</sub>	حِمَارٌ: حَمِيرٌ	a donkey <sub>m</sub>
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26. **فُعُولَةٌ** *fuēūlah* (rare). Examples:

بُعْلٌ: بُعُولَةٌ	a husband
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27. **فِعَالَةٌ** *fiēālāh* (rare). Examples:

حَجَرٌ: حِجَارَةٌ	a stone
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28. **فَعَلَ** *faēal* (rare). Examples:

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حَلَقَةٌ: حَلَقَ a circular ring

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29. فَعَلَ *fael* (very rare). Examples:

---

صَاحِبٌ: صَحَّبَ a companion

---

30. فَعَفِيفٌ *fafāfiḥ*<sup>2</sup>. Includes the sub-patterns:

- فَعَالِلٌ *faēālil*<sup>2</sup>
- أَفَاعِلٌ *ʾafāēil*<sup>2</sup>
- تَفَاعِلٌ *tafāēil*<sup>2</sup>
- مَفَاعِلٌ *mafāēil*<sup>2</sup>

Examples:

فَعَالِلٌ: نَعَالِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	a fox	تَجَرِبَةٌ: تَجَارِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	an experience
عَنَّاكِبٌ: عَنَّاكِبٌ <sup>2</sup>	a spider	مَسَاجِدٌ: مَسَاجِدٌ <sup>2</sup>	a mosque
دِرْهَمٌ: دِرْهَمٌ <sup>2</sup>	a dirham	مَعْنَى: مَعْنَى <sup>2</sup>	a meaning
جَوْهَرٌ: جَوْهَرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a gem	مَحَالٌ: مَحَلَّةٌ <sup>2</sup>	a locality
إِصْبَعٌ: أَصَابِعٌ <sup>2</sup>	a finger	مَعِيشَةٌ: مَغَايِشٌ <sup>2</sup>	a means of subsistence
أَنْمَلَةٌ: أَنْمَلٌ <sup>2</sup>	a finger tip		

31. فَعَفِيفٌ *fafāfiḥ*<sup>2</sup>. Includes the sub-patterns:

- فَعَالِيلٌ *faēālīl*<sup>2</sup>
- أَفَاعِيلٌ *ʾafāēīl*<sup>2</sup>
- تَفَاعِيلٌ *tafāēīl*<sup>2</sup>
- مَفَاعِيلٌ *mafāēīl*<sup>2</sup>
- يَفَاعِيلٌ *yafāēīl*<sup>2</sup>
- فَوَاعِيلٌ *fawāēīl*<sup>2</sup>

Examples:

سُلْطَانٌ: سَلَاطِينٌ <sup>2</sup>	a sultan	إِعْصَارٌ: أَعَاصِيرٌ <sup>2</sup>	a whirlwind
شَيْطَانٌ: شَيَاطِينٌ <sup>2</sup>	a devil	تَأْرِيخٌ: تَوَارِيخٌ <sup>2</sup>	a history

سُكَّيْن: سَكَاكِين <sup>2</sup>	a knife	تَصَوِير: تَصَاوِير <sup>2</sup>	a picture
دِينَار: دَنَانِير <sup>2</sup>	a dinār	مِفْتَاح: مَفَاتِيح <sup>2</sup>	a key
مُسْكِين: 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	يُنْبُوع: يَنَابِيع <sup>2</sup>	a (water) spring
أُمْنِيَّة: أَمَانِي <sup>2</sup>	a wish	جَامُوس: جَوَامِيس <sup>2</sup>	a buffalo

### 32. فَعَالِلَة *faeālilah*. Examples:

أُسْتَاذ: أُسَاتِذَة	a professor	مَلَك: مَلَائِكَة	an angel
فِيلَسُوف: 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 فَعَال *feāl* has both singular nouns, like كِتَاب *kitāb* “a book” and broken plurals, like رِجَال *rijāl* “men”
- The broken plural patterns فُعْلَان *felān* and فُعْلَان *fuelān* 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 فَعْلَان, and that also fulfil the other conditions listed in section 8.3.4, 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 أَفْعَال<sup>2</sup> *afeāl*<sup>2</sup> and فَعْلَاء<sup>2</sup> *faelā*<sup>2</sup> that denote colors and physical characteristics, have broken plurals on the pattern فُعْل *fuel*. Example:

Singular	Plural
أَحْمَرٌ <sup>2</sup> , حَمْرَاءُ <sup>2</sup> “red”	حُمُرٌ
أَبْكُمْ <sup>2</sup> , بَكْمَاءُ <sup>2</sup> “mute”	بُكْمٌ

- Singular nouns that have four or more consonant letters (excluding ة) regularly form their broken plurals on the patterns فُقَافِفٌ<sup>2</sup> and فُقَافِيفٌ<sup>2</sup>. The pattern فُقَافِيفٌ<sup>2</sup> is used when there is an intermediate long vowel between the consonants. Examples:

Singular	Plural
إِصْبَعٌ “a finger”	أَصَابِعٌ <sup>2</sup>
مِفْتَاحٌ “a key”	مَفَاتِيحٌ <sup>2</sup>

- Singular nouns of the patterns فُعْلَةٌ *fielah* and فُعْلَةٌ *fuelah* regularly form their broken plurals on the pattern فُعَلٌ *fielal* and فُعَلٌ *fuelal* respectively. Examples:

Singular	Plural
قِطْعَةٌ “a piece”	قِطَعٌ
رُكْبَةٌ “a knee”	رُكَبٌ

Other times, this correlation is more like a tendency:

- Singular nouns on the pattern فَاعِلَةٌ *faēlah* tend to form broken plurals on the pattern فَعَائِلٌ<sup>2</sup> *faēāl*<sup>2</sup>. Examples:

Singular	Plural
حَدِيقَةٌ “a garden”	حَدَائِقٌ <sup>2</sup>
حَقِيبَةٌ “a bag”	حَقَائِبٌ <sup>2</sup>

- Singular nouns on the pattern فَاعِلٌ *fāēil*, that denote male intelligent beings, tend to form broken plurals on the pattern فُعَلٌ *fuelal*, فُعَالٌ *fueāl*, and فُعْلَةٌ *faēalah*. Examples:

Singular	Plural
غَائِب “absent”	غُتِبَ
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<sup>2</sup> فَوَارِس 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
«دَبّ»	دَبَّ “a bear”	فُعْل
«حَلّ»	مَحَلَّة “a locality”	مَفْعَلَة
«أَمّ»	إِمَام “a leader”	فِعَال
«حَقّ»	حَقَّ “a truth, a right”	فُعْل
«هَرّ»	هَرَّ “a cat <sub>m</sub> ”	فُعْل

We will discuss doubled roots in detail in chapter ???. 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
دَبَّ “a bear”	دِبَبَة
هَرَّ “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
إِمَام “a leader <sub>m</sub> ”	أَيَّامَة

- The doubled letter may modify the basic word pattern somewhat. For example:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
«شَدَّ»	أَفْعَلَاء <sup>2</sup>	أَشْدَدَاء <sup>2</sup> ×	أَشْدَاء <sup>2</sup>
«حَلَّ»	مَفَاعِل <sup>2</sup>	مَخَالِل <sup>2</sup> ×	مَخَال <sup>2</sup>
«صَمَّ»	أَفْعَل <sup>2</sup>	أَضَمَم <sup>2</sup> ×	أَصَم <sup>2</sup>

- We have previously learned that the endings ة, ء, and ى 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
لِسَان “a tongue”	أَلْسِنَة
هَرَّ “a cat <sub>m</sub> ”	هِرَزَة
أَمِير “a commander <sub>m</sub> ”	أُمَرَاء
صَدِيق “a friend <sub>m</sub> ”	أَصْدِقَاء

- 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
شَهْر	أَشْهُر، شُهُور
عَيْن	أَعْيُن، عُيُون، أَعْيَان
عَامِل	عَامِلُونَ، عَوَامِل <sup>2</sup> ، عَمَلَة، عَمَّال

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”	مَكَايِب <sup>2</sup>
مَكْتَبَة “a library”	مَكَايِب <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
«أرخ»	تَأْرِخ	تَوَارِيخ <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	× بُيُض	بَيْض

- The weak letter ي, when followed by the ى ending, usually modifies (in writing) it to an <sup>3</sup>alif instead. The pronunciation is the same. For example:

Root	Word pattern	Expected word	Actual word
«هدي»	فَعَالِي <sup>2</sup>	× هَذَاي <sup>2</sup>	هَذَايَا <sup>2</sup>

- A ي at the end of a word, in some states, gets omitted and replaced by an *in*-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 accept an *n* mark). 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
عَنْكَبُوت “a spider”	عَنَّاكِبٌ <sup>2</sup>

- Some words have individual irregularities as well and we will discuss them below:
  - The word اِمْرَأَةٌ and its plural نِسَاء are both irregular and we will discuss them separately in chapter 13.
  - The broken plural أَشْيَاءٌ<sup>2</sup> *ashyāʾ* (of the singular noun شَيْءٌ *shayʾ* “a thing”) is irregular in that it is semi-flexible. Otherwise its pattern أَفْعَالٌ *afeāl* 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: مَلَأٌ *malʾak* that is used to form the plural.
  - The broken plural of the singular noun دِينَارٌ “a dīnār” is دِنَانِيرٌ<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 «بَار». The pattern of its broken plural is أَفْعَالٌ. Based on its root letters, its plural on this pattern ought regularly to have been أَبَارٌ *abʾār*. 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	جُدُر، جُدْرَان
شَهْر	a month	أَشْهُر، شُهُور
ضَعِيف	a weak one <sub>m</sub>	ضِعَاف، ضُعَفَاء <sup>2</sup>
أَمْر	a matter; a command	أُمُور، أَوَامِر <sup>2</sup>
عَيْن	an eye; a (water) spring; an eminent person	أَعْيُن، عَيْون، أَعْيَان
عَامِل	a worker; a labourer; a factor	عَامِلُون، عَوَامِل <sup>2</sup> ، عَمَلَة، 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، جُدْرَان. Either could be used, more or less, interchangeably.
2. Sometimes, the usage of one of the plurals may be restricted. For example, ضِعَاف and ضُعَفَاء are both broken plurals of the masculine adjectival noun ضَعِيف “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 ضُعَفَاء 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 ضَعِيفَة “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 أَمْر *ʾamr* has two distinct meanings, each with its own plural:

- i. “a matter”. This has the broken plural **أُمُور** *ʾumūr*.
  - ii. “a command”. This has the broken plural **أَوَامِر** *ʾawāmīr*<sup>2</sup>.
- The word **عَيْن** *ʾayn* 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** *ʾaʿeyun* but it may also use the plural **عُيُون** *ʿuyūn*, and rarely also the plural **أَعْيَان** *ʾaʿyān*.
    - ii. “a (water) spring”. This meaning primarily uses the plural **عُيُون** *ʿuyūn* but it may also use the plural **أَعْيُن** *ʾaʿeyun*, and rarely also the plural **أَعْيَان** *ʾaʿyān*.
    - iii. “an eminent person”. This meaning only uses the plural **أَعْيَان** *ʾaʿyān*.
  - The word **عَامِل** *ʿāmil* has the following meanings and plurals:
    - i. “a worker<sub>m</sub>”. Generally, this has the plural **عُمَال** *ʿummāl*.
    - ii. “a labourer<sub>m</sub>”. This uses the plural **عَمَلَة** *ʿamalah*.
    - iii. “a factor”. This uses the plural **عَوَامِل** *ʿawāmīl*<sup>2</sup>.
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** *fiʿlah*
  - ii. **أَفْعُل** *ʾafeul*
  - iii. **أَفْعَال** *ʾafeāl*
  - iv. **أَفْعِلَة** *ʾafeilāh*

For example:

- i. **شَهْر** *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	قَتَلَةٌ
كَافِر	a disbeliever	كَافِرُونَ	كُفَّار
كَبِير	a big one <sub>m</sub>	كَبِيرُونَ	كِبَار
كَبِيرَةٌ	a big one <sub>f</sub>	كَبِيرَات	كِبَار
صَغِير	a small one <sub>m</sub>	صَغِيرُونَ	صِغَار
صَغِيرَةٌ	a small one <sub>f</sub>	صَغِيرَات	صِغَار
رَاكِع	one who bows <sub>m</sub>	رَاكِعُونَ	رُكَّع
رَاكِعَةٌ	one who bows <sub>f</sub>	رَاكِعَات	رُكَّع
صَاحِبَةٌ	a companion <sub>f</sub>	صَاحِبَات	صَوَاجِب <sup>2</sup>
جَارِيَةٌ	a girl	جَارِيَات	جَوَار <sup>2</sup>
حَدِيقَةٌ	a garden	جَدِيقَات	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 10 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, قَتَلَةٌ 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 10.4.2 that, generally, all nouns that end with feminine markers (ة, ة, and ة) 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>أَفْعَل. For example, «حوراء» *ḥawrāʾ* “a beautiful eyed one<sub>f</sub>” uses the broken plural حُور *ḥūr*
- 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, «غضبى» *ghaḍbā* “very angry<sub>f</sub>” uses the broken plural غَضَاب *ghidāb*.
- The following exceptional nouns:
  - نِسَاء *nisāʾ* “a woman”, broken plural: نِسَاء
  - إِمَاء *imāʾ* “a slave<sub>f</sub>”, broken plural: إِمَاء

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 صَغَار for the adjectival noun صَغِيرَة “a small one<sub>f</sub>”

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:
  - <sup>2</sup>فَوَاعِل *fawāʿil*
  - <sup>2</sup>فَعَائِل *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 <sup>2</sup>جَوَارٍ “girls” may be used freely as the plural of جَارِيَّةٌ “a girl” and is not preferred over by جَارِيَّاتٍ. Similarly, <sup>2</sup>صَوَاحِبٌ may freely be used as the plural of صَاحِبَةٌ.

Only a few nouns denoting male intelligent beings have broken plurals on these patterns, like:

- فَوَارسٌ “a horseman”, plural: <sup>2</sup>فَوَارِسٌ
- خَلِيفَةٌ “a successor”, plural: <sup>2</sup>خَلَائِفٌ

In conclusion, with the general preference of using the *āt* sound plural over the broken plural for female intelligent beings, you will find that نِسَاءٌ *nisāʾ*<sup>2</sup> “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 حَدِيقَاتٍ *hadīqāt* as the plural of حَدِيقَةٌ, though both are correct.

## 11.6 Usage of plurals of intelligent beings

We will now discuss how plurals are used in Arabic. Using plurals is more complicated than using duals.

In order to explain their usage systematically, we will treat plurals of intelligent beings separately from the plurals of non-intelligent beings.

The usage of plurals of intelligent beings is more straightforward and in line with what we have studied for duals. We will discuss descriptive noun-phrases, subject-information sentences, and verbal sentences.

### 11.6.1 Plurals 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.  
*laʿiba -ttiflu -ṣṣaghīru maʿa -lghilmāni -lkibār.*  
 “The small child played with the big boys.”

أَخَذَ التِّلْمِيزُ الْعِلْمَ عَنِ الْمُعَلِّمِينَ الْكَرَامِ.  
*ʾakhaza -ttilmīzu -leilma ʿani -lmueallimīna -lkirām.*  
 “The pupil took knowledge from the noble teachers.”

لِلْجَارِيَةِ صَوَاحِبٌ طَيِّبَاتٌ.  
*liljāriyati ṣawāhibu ṭayyibāt.*  
 “The girl has good companions.”

فِي السُّوقِ تُجَّارٌ صَادِقُونَ.  
*fi -ssūqi tujjārūn ṣadiqūn.*  
 “In the market are honest traders.”

حَدَّمَ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ الْغَنِيِّ الْفُقَرَاءَ الضَّعَافَ مِنَ الْيَتَامَى الصَّغَارِ.  
*khadama -rrajulu -ṣṣālīhu -lghāniyyu -lfuqarāʾa -ddiʿāfa mina -lyatāmā -ṣṣighār.*  
 “The rich righteous man served the weak poor ones from the little orphans.”

### 11.6.2 Plurals 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.  
*ʾalghilmānu ʾatfālūn ṭayyibūn.*  
 “The boys are good children.”

الرِّجَالُ أَغْنِيَاءُ.  
*ʾarrijālu ʾaghniyāʾ.*  
 “The men are rich.”

الْمُعَلِّمَاتُ عَالِمَاتُ.  
*ʾalmueallimātu ʿālimāt,*  
 “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:



اَلْمُسْلِمُونَ اُمَّةٌ.

*ʿalmuslimūna ʿummah.*

“The Muslims are a nation.”

اَلْجِيرَانُ الطَّيِّبُونَ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنَ اَللّٰهِ.

*ʿaljirānu -ṭṭayyibūna niʿmatun mina -llāh.*

“Good neighbors are a blessing from Allah.”

With regards to detached pronouns, the same detached pronouns are used with detached plurals that we learned for in section 10.5 for sound plurals.

Examples:

أَنْتُنَّ نِسَاءٌ كَرِيمَاتٌ.

*ʿantunna nisāʿun karīmāt.*

“You<sub>3,f</sub> are generous women.”

أَنْتُمْ شُبَّانٌ شَجْعَانٌ.

*ʿantum shubbānun shujeānun*

“You<sub>m,3</sub> are courageous young men.”

اَلشَّيَاطِينُ هُمْ اَلْمَلَاِئِنَ.

*ʿashshayāṭīnu humu -lmalāʾīn.*

“The devils are the accursed ones.”

هُنَّ نِسَاءٌ غَنِيَّاتٌ.

*hunna nisāʿun ghaniyyāt.*

“They<sub>3,f</sub> are rich women.”

نَحْنُ غُلَمَانٌ اَصْدِقَاءٌ.

*naḥnu ghilmānun ʿaṣḍiqāʿ.*

“We are boys who are friends.”

### 11.6.3 Plurals with verbs

We have already studied verbs with sound plurals in section 10.7. 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.

*qaraʿati -nnisāʿu wakatabn.*

“The women read and wrote.”

الْغُلَمَانُ لَعِبُوا بِكُرَّةٍ حَمْرَاءَ.

*ʾalghilmānu laʿibū bikuratin ḥamrāʾ.*

“The boys, they played with a red ball.”

طَبَخَتِ النِّسَاءُ طَعَامًا لِلرِّجَالِ فَأَكَلُوهُ وَشَكَرُوهُمْ.

*ṭabakhati -nnisāʾu ṭaʿāman lirrijālī faʾakalūhu washakarūhunn.*

“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.

*ẓalama -ljabābiratu -lmasākina waqatalūhum.*

“The tyrants wronged the needy ones<sub>3,m</sub> and killed them<sub>3,m</sub>.”

## 11.7 Usage of plurals of non-intelligent beings

We now turn our attention to plurals of non-intelligent beings. Their treatment of plurals of non-intelligent beings is very different from everything we have learned so far. 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:

- i. grammatically feminine singular
- ii. grammatically feminine plural

It is optional which of the above two treatments one uses. However, the former option (feminine singular) is more common and is generally preferred.

For the second option (feminine plural), in addition to the sound feminine plural of adjectival nouns, broken plurals are allowed to be used as well, as long as their meaning allows them to be used for non-intelligent beings.

So, for example, the noun بَيْت *bayt* denotes the inanimate object “a house”. Its plural is بُيُوت. This plural is treated as either feminine singular or feminine plural. 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.

الْبُيُوتُ كَبِيرَاتٌ.

الْبُيُوتُ كِبَارٌ.

“The houses are big.”

سَكَنُوا فِي بُيُوتٍ صَغِيرَةٍ.  
 سَكَنُوا فِي بُيُوتٍ صَغِيرَاتٍ.  
 سَكَنُوا فِي بُيُوتٍ صِغَارٍ.  
 "They<sub>3,m</sub> lived in small houses."

سَقَطَتِ الْبُيُوتُ.  
 "The houses fell."

الْبُيُوتُ سَقَطَتْ.  
 الْبُيُوتُ سَقَطْنَ.  
 "The houses, they fell."

هِيَ بُيُوتٌ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ.  
 هُنَّ 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 وَحَشَةٌ.  
 هِيَ ثِيَرَانٌ وَحُوشٌ.  
 هُنَّ ثِيَرَانٌ وَحَشَاتٌ.  
 "They are wild bulls."

الْهَرَّةُ شَرَبَتِ الْخَلِيبَ.  
 الْهَرَّةُ شَرَبْنَ الْخَلِيبَ.  
 "The cats<sub>m</sub>, they drank the milk."

الْهَرَّةُ شَرَبَتِ الْخَلِيبَ.  
 الْهَرَّةُ شَرَبْنَ الْخَلِيبَ.  
 "The cats<sub>f</sub>, they drank the milk."

السُّفُنُ طَوِيلَةٌ.  
 السُّفُنُ طَوَالٌ.  
 السُّفُنُ طَوِيلَاتٌ.  
 "The ships are tall."

فِي الصَّنْدُوقِ أَشْيَاءٌ عَجِيبَةٌ.  
 فِي الصَّنْدُوقِ أَشْيَاءٌ عَجِيبَاتٌ.  
 "In the box are wonderful things."

(Note how أَشْيَاءٌ<sup>2</sup> is indefinite but has no *n*-mark. 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):

× الْحَيَوَانَاتُ صَغِيرَةٌ وَكَبِيرَةٌ. الْكَبِيرَةُ وَحْشَةٌ.

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 الظَّبْيَ.

“The lions<sub>2</sub> ate the gazelle.”

not

× أَكَلَتِ الْأَسَدَانِ الظَّبْيَ.

### 11.7.1 Preferring the feminine plural instead of the feminine singular

In most cases we will prefer to use the feminine singular over the feminine plural for plurals of non-intelligent beings. So,

الْأُسُودُ أَكَلَتِ الظَّبْيَ.

“The lions, they ate the gazelle.”

is generally preferred over

الْأُسُودُ أَكَلْنَ الظَّبْيَ.

“The lions, they ate the gazelle.”

However, there may be a couple of reasons to prefer the feminine plural instead of the feminine singular. We will explain them below.

#### 11.7.1.1 Using the feminine plural to indicate fewness

In some circumstances the feminine plural may be used to indicate fewness whereas the feminine singular will be used to indicate a multitude.

So if we say,

الْأُسُودُ أَكَلْنَ الظَّبْيَ.

“The lions, they ate the gazelle.”

then this would indicate that there were only a few lions (say ten or less).

And if, instead, we said:

الْأُسُودُ أَكَلَتِ الظَّبْيَ.

“The lions, they ate the gazelle.”

then this would indicate that there were many lions.

This may seem counter-intuitive at first but you may understand it this way:

If there are many lions then we treat them as *one* group.

And if there are only a few lions, then we treat them *one-by-one*.

### 11.7.1.2 Using the feminine plural to avoid confusion

Sometimes, if the plural noun is not immediately mentioned, then using the feminine singular may be misinterpreted to only mean one instead of the plural. For example, consider the following example:

شَرَبَتِ الْهَرَّةُ الْحَلِيبَ وَمَا شَرَبَتْهُ هِرَّةٌ.

“The cats<sub>f</sub> drank the milk and one cat<sub>f</sub> didn’t drink it.”

If we want to follow this sentence with another sentence: “Then they went.”, if we use the feminine singular:

تُمَّ ذَهَبَتْ.

then this might be misinterpreted to mean that only one cat (the one that didn’t drink the milk) went.

So we might prefer to say, instead:

تُمَّ ذَهَبْنَ.

# Chapter 12

## Annexation

### 12.1 Introduction

Consider the following expression:

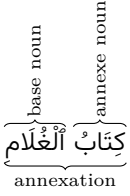
“the boy’s book”

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 الْعَلَام. 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 الْعَلَامِ ثَقِيلٌ.

“The boy’s book is heavy.”

(The annexe noun is in the u-state.)

أَخَذَتِ الْبَارِيَةُ كِتَابَ الْعَلَامِ.

“The girl took the boy’s book.”

(The annexe noun is in the a-state.)

كَتَبَ الْمُعَلِّمُ فِي كِتَابِ الْعَلَامِ.

“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 الْعَلَامِ

“the boy’s book”



The base noun **الْعَلَامُ** is definite because it is prefixed by **أَلْ** “the”. Therefore we have translated it as “the boy”. The annexe noun **كِتَاب** is not made definite by **أَلْ**. Nor is it made indefinite by an *n*-mark. Rather, it is defined by the base noun. Because the base noun **الْعَلَامُ** 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 عَلَّامٍ**  
“a boy’s book”

In the above example, the base noun **عَلَّامٍ** is indefinite because it has the *n*-mark **ِ** and because it does not prefixed by **أَلْ**. Therefore we have translated it as “a boy”. The annexe noun **كِتَاب** has neither an *n*-mark, nor the prefix **أَلْ**. It is defined by the base noun. Because the base noun **عَلَّامٍ** 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 الْوَلَدُ 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 لِلرَّجُلِ.

“The boy went to a house of the man.”

فَتَحَ الثُّبَّ شُبَّانًا مِّنَ 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 **ā** and **ī** in the a-state. Here are some examples:

حَيَوَانَاتُ الْغَابَةِ وَحَشَّةٌ.

“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 الْخِزَانَةِ 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 12.10

## 12.6 Describers in an annexation

### 12.6.1 Describing the base noun

Consider the following expression:

كِتَابُ الْبَارِيَةِ

“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 الْبَارِيَةِ “the girl” with the adjectival noun صَغِير “a small one”. Here is how we will express this in Arabic:

كِتَابُ الْبَارِيَةِ 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 الْبَارِيَةِ “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 Qurʾān.”

جَلَسَ الرَّجُلُ فِي ظِلِّ شَجَرَةٍ عَرِيضَةٍ وَسَيْعَةٍ.  
“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 كِتَابُ “book” with the adjectival noun صَغِيرُ “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 الصَّغِيرِ matches the annexe noun كِتَابُ in state and gender. Note also how the describer is definite with an اَلْ. This is because it is matching the annexe noun كِتَابُ in definiteness. The annexe noun كِتَابُ is definite, not with اَلْ, but rather because of the definite base noun الْجَارِيَةِ “the girl”. We’ve already learned this rule in section 12.4 above.

Similarly, if we describe the annexe noun كِتَابُ in an indefinite annexation, we get:

كِتَابُ جَارِيَةٍ صَغِيرٍ  
“a girl’s small book”

This time the describer صَغِيرٌ is indefinite with an *un*-mark ُ. This is because the annexe noun كِتَابٌ is indefinite. It is indefinite because base noun جَارِيَةٌ “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 كَبِيرٌ is meant to describe the annexe noun بَيْتٌ or the base noun الرَّجُلُ? The annexe noun بَيْتٌ and the base noun الرَّجُلُ 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 كَرِيمٌ “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 وَرَقَةُ 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 وَرَقَةُ)

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 don’t take *n*-marks and that when indefinite, the i-state is indicated by an *a*-mark َ. But when definite with ال then they behave just like fully-flexible nouns. Example of the semi-flexible noun صَحْرَاءُ “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 “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 صَحْرَاءٍ.

“The bedouin drank some water from a desert’s well.”

As you can see, when  $صَحْرَاءُ^2$  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 أَرْضِ بَعِيدَةٍ.

“The bedouin came from the desert of a far land.”

In the above example,  $صَحْرَاءُ^2$  “a desert” is indefinite because it is the annexe noun to an indefinite base noun  $أَرْضِ$  “a land”. It is in the i-state because it is preceded by the preposition مِنْ “from”. Nevertheless, it takes an *i*-mark ِ, not an *a*-mark, which would be incorrect:  $\times$  مِنْ صَحْرَاءِ 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:

مِفْتَاحُ بَابِ الْبَيْتِ

$\underbrace{\hspace{1.5cm}}_{b_2} \quad \underbrace{\hspace{0.5cm}}_{a_2} \quad \underbrace{\hspace{0.5cm}}_{a_1}$

“the house’s door’s key”

The above annexation consists of three nouns. It may be divided into two sub-annexations:

- i. مِفْتَاحُ “door’s key”. Its annexe noun  $a_1$  is مِفْتَاحُ and its base noun  $b_1$  is بَابِ.
- ii. بَابِ الْبَيْتِ “the house’s door”. Its annexe noun  $a_2$  is بَابِ and its base noun  $b_2$  is الْبَيْتِ.

The noun باب “door” is common to both sub-annexations. It is the base noun of the first sub-annexation بابِ مِفْتَاحٍ “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 an *n* mark. 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.

مِفْتَاحُ بَابِ بَيْتٍ  
“a house’s door’s key”

All the nouns except the first annexe noun must be in the i-state. Consistent with section 12.7.2 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 *a*-mark َ. Example:

مِنْ بَيْتٍ صَحْرَاءَ أَرْضٍ  
“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:

كِتَابُ الْغُلَامِ  
“the boy’s book”

The difference is that we would like to replace the base noun الْغُلَامِ “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 4.4.5 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 *ة* 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 <sup>2</sup>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>فَتَاوِي "legal opinions":

كَتَبَ تَلَامِذَةُ الشَّيْخِ فَتَاوَاهُ 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.  $\bar{y}$  -ي
- ii.  $ya$  -يَ

The first (ي  $\bar{y}$ ) 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 (ي  $\bar{y}$ ) is disallowed and only (يَ  $ya$ ) shall be used. Example with the semi-flexible broken plural هَدَايَا<sup>2</sup> “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 4.4.4 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 الْقَزِيَّةِ 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 12.5.

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:

لَجِئِ الْمَظْلُومُونَ الضُّعَفَاءُ فِي بِلَادِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْأَمْنَةِ.  
“The weak wronged ones took refuge in the secure lands of the Muslims.”

أُخْتُ الْعُلَامَيْنِ 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 an *n*-mark 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* ٱ, 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.  
 gara<sup>tu</sup> kitābayi -rrajul  
 “I read the man’s books<sub>2</sub>.”

Here are some more examples including *ūn* sound plurals:

مُعَلِّمُو الْغُلَامِ كِرَامٌ.  
 muʿallimu -lghulāmi kiram.  
 “The boy’s teachers<sub>3</sub> are noble.”

(Note that there is no silent <sup>ʔ</sup>*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 أَبْنَا الرَّجُلِ مَعَ لَاعِبِي مَدِينَتِهِمْ.  
 laʿiba -bna -rrajuli masa laʿibi 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.”

لَعَبَتِ 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.)

فَرَأْتُ كِتَابِيَّ

(Note how ي + كِتَابِيَّ becomes كِتَابِيَّ.)

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 ي 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:

مُعَلِّمِيَّ

We don't say × مُعَلِّمُوِيَّ for the u-state. Examples:

مُعَلِّمِيَّ كِرَامٍ.

“My teachers<sub>3,m</sub> are noble.”

(u-state)

سَأَلْتُ مُعَلِّمِيَّ

“I asked my teachers<sub>3,m</sub>.”

(a-state)

أَخَذْتُ كِتَابًا مِنْ مُعَلِّمِيَّ

“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 نفس “self”

صَرَبَا أَنْفُسَهُمَا

قَالَتْ لِي نَفْسِي

**12.12.4 annexation of material**

خَاتَمٌ ذَهَبٍ

خَاتَمٌ ذَهَبٌ

خَاتَمٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ

**12.12.5 مَدِينَةُ دَمَشَقْ****12.12.6 مجرد ترفيه**



# 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.

We have learned that regular nouns have three states: the u-state, a-state, and i-state. For singular nouns, the u-state is marked by the *u*-mark ُ, the a-state is marked by the *a*-mark َ, and the i-state is marked by the *i*-mark ِ. The *n*-marks ْ, ِ, and ُ are only but extensions of ُ, َ, and ِ respectively.

We now present the five irregular nouns that behave differently.

#### 13.2.1 أَبٌ *ʿab*, أَخٌ *ʿakh*, and حَمٌ *ham*

The first three nouns that we will talk about are:

- i. أَبٌ *ʿab* “a father” (root: «أبو»)

- ii. أَخ <sup>ʾ</sup>*akh* “a brother” (root: «أخو»)
- iii. حَم <sup>ʾ</sup>*ham* “a father-in-law” (root: «حمو»)

The final root letter of all three of these nouns is و. 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 و, these nouns display their state like regular nouns. Here are some examples:

لِلْجَارِيَةِ أَبٌ كَبِيرٌ وَأَخٌ صَغِيرٌ.  
*liljāriyati ʾabun kabīrun waʾakhun ṣaghīr*  
 “The girl has an old father and a young brother.”

ضَرَبَ الْغُلَامُ أَخًا لَهُ.  
*ḍaraba -lghulamū ʾakhan 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 اُ, ِ, and ٍ, they display their state using the long vowels و *ū*, ا *ā*, and ي *ī* instead. Here are some examples:

هُوَ أَخُو الْجَارِيَةِ.  
*huwa ʾakhu -ljāriyah*  
 “He is the girl’s brother.”

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا صَدِيقِي عَنْ أَمْرٍ.  
*saʾaltu ʾabā ṣadīqī ʿan ʾamr.*  
 “I asked my friend’s father about a matter.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ حَمِي الرَّجُلِ.  
*zahaḥbtu 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

<sup>ʔ</sup>*akhānā*

“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

<sup>ʔ</sup>*akhī*

“my brother” (u-state, a-state, and i-state).

أَبِي

<sup>ʔ</sup>*abī*

“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.

<sup>ʔ</sup>*akhūhu ṭawīlun waʔakhūhā qaṣīrun waʔakhī kabīr.*

“His brother is tall and her brother is short and my brother is big.”

سَأَلَ أَخَاهُمْ وَأَخَانَا.

*saʔaltu ʔakhāhum waʔakhānā.*“I asked their<sub>m,3+</sub> brother and our brother.”

شَكَرَ أَخِي أَبِي.

*shakara ʔakhī ʔabī.*

“My brother thanked my father.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ أَخِيهِنَّ.

*zahabtu ʔilā bayti ʔakhīhin.*“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 the *n*-marks *ٌ*, *ً*, and *ٍ*, when indefinite. . Examples:

بَيْتُ الْأَخِ كَبِيرٌ.

*baytu -l<sup>ʔ</sup>akhi kabīr.*

“The brother’s house is big.”

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ أَخٍ.

*zāhabtu <sup>ʔ</sup>ilā bayti <sup>ʔ</sup>akh.*

“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 <sup>ʔ</sup> ab	أَبَوَانِ <sup>ʔ</sup> abawāni	أَبَوَيْنِ <sup>ʔ</sup> abayayni	آبَاءَ <sup>ʔ</sup> ābā <sup>ʔ</sup>
أَخ <sup>ʔ</sup> akh	أَخَوَانِ <sup>ʔ</sup> akhawāni	أَخَوَيْنِ <sup>ʔ</sup> akhawayni	إِخْوَةٌ <sup>ʔ</sup> ikhwah, إِخْوَانِ <sup>ʔ</sup> ikhwān
حَم <sup>ʔ</sup> ham	حَمَوَانِ <sup>ʔ</sup> hamawāni	حَمَوَيْنِ <sup>ʔ</sup> hamawayni	أَحْمَاءَ <sup>ʔ</sup> aḥmā <sup>ʔ</sup>

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.

*zāhaba -l<sup>ʔ</sup>akhawāni fi -lmasjidi.*

“The brothers<sub>2</sub> went to the mosque.”

سَأَلْتُ أَخَوَيَّ عَنْ أَمْرٍ

*sa<sup>ʔ</sup>altu <sup>ʔ</sup>akhawayya ʔan <sup>ʔ</sup>amrin.*

“I asked my brothers<sub>2</sub> about a matter.”

شَكَرْتُ لِأَبَوَيْهِ

*shakartu li<sup>ʔ</sup>abayhi.*

“I thanked his parents.”

### 13.2.2 ذُو *zū* and ذَات *zāt*

The fourth irregular noun from “the five nouns” is the masculine noun ذُو *zū* and its feminine counterpart ذَات *zāt*. The words ذُو *zū* and ذَات *zāt* mean “owner of” or “possessor of”.

So, for example, ذُو الْمَالِ *zu -lmāli* means “possessor<sub>m</sub> of wealth” or “wealthy person<sub>m</sub>”. The singular, dual, and plural of ذُو *zū* in all three states is shown in the table below:

State	Singular	Dual	Plural
u-state	ذُو <i>zū</i>	ذَوَا <i>zawā</i>	ذَوُو <i>zawū</i>
a-state	لَا <i>zā</i>	ذَوَي <i>zaway</i>	ذَوِي <i>zawī</i>
i-state	ذِي <i>zī</i>	same as a-state	same as a-state

The noun ذُو *zū* 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.  
*ṛarrujulu zu -lmāl.*

“The man is the possessor of wealth.” = “This man is wealthy.”

The word ذَات *zāt* is the feminine of ذُو *zū*. When used as an annexe noun, its states, duals, and plurals are as in the table below:

State	Singular	Dual	Plural
u-state	ذَات <i>zātu</i>	ذَوَاتَا <i>zawātā</i>	ذَوَاتُ <i>zawātu</i>
a-state	ذَات <i>zāta</i>	ذَوَاتِي <i>zawātay</i>	ذَوَاتِ <i>zawāti</i>
i-state	ذَات <i>zāti</i>	same as a-state	same as a-state

Examples:

هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةُ ذَاتُ ثَمَرٍ كَثِيرٍ.  
*hāzihī -shshajaratu zātu thamarin kathīrin.*

“This tree is the possessor of much fruit.” = “This tree is very fruitful.”

As opposed to ذُو *zū* which is only an annexe noun, ذَات *zāt* 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 دُو which can't be annexed to attached pronouns, دَات can be annexed to attached pronouns. Examples:

### 13.2.3 فَم fam

The fifth of “the five nouns” is فَم fam “a mouth”. It is the most irregular of “the five nouns”.

In some ways, the word فَم 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.  
eala -lwajhi famun wafi -lfami lisān

“On the face is a mouth, and in the mouth 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 النَّهْرَيْنِ كَبِيرَانِ.  
fama -nnahrayni kabīrāni.

“The mouths<sub>2</sub> of the rivers<sub>2</sub> are big.”

Let's now see its irregular behavior.

When فَم 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 النَّهْرِ كَبِيرٌ.  
fu -nnahri kabīr.

“The mouth of the river is big.”

فُوهَا جَمِيلٌ.  
fūhā jamīl.

“Her mouth is beautiful.”

فَتَحَ فَاهُ.  
fataḥa fāh.

“He opened his mouth.”

جَعَلَتْ أُمُّ لُحْمَةٍ طَعَامٌ فِي فِي ابْنَتِهَا.  
ja'alati -l'ummu luqmata ṭaeāmin fī fī -bnatihā.

“The mother put a morsel of food in her daughter’s mouth.”

When the attached pronoun for the speaking person **فِي** is attached to **فُو** *fū*, **فَا** *fā*, or **فِي** *fī* the combination is always **فِيَّ** *fiyya* in all three states. Examples:

فِيَّ مَفْتُوحٌ.  
fiyya maftūh.

“My mouth is open.”

فَتَحْتُ فِيَّ.  
fataḥtu fiyy.

“I opened my mouth.”

أَكَلْتُ بِفِيَّ.  
ʾakaltu bifīyy.

“I ate with my mouth.”

In addition to the above irregular behavior, it is permissible, but less common, to treat **فَم** regularly as an annexe noun in an annexation. So it is permissible to also say:

فَمُ النَّهْرِ كَبِيرٌ.  
famu -nnahri kabīr.

“The river’s mouth is big.”

فَمِي مَفْتُوحٌ.  
famī maftūhun.

“My mouth is open.”

فَمُهَا جَمِيلٌ.  
famuhā jamīlun.

“Her mouth is beautiful.”

فَتَحَ فَمَّهُ.

*fataḥa famahu.*

“He opened his mouth.”

جَعَلَتِ الْأُمُّ لُقْمَةً طَعَامٍ فِي فَمِ ابْنَتِهَا.

*jaʿalati -lʾummu luqmata ṭaʿāmin fī fami -bnatihā.*

“The mother put a morsel of food in her daughter’s mouth.”

The other irregularity of فَمِ *fam* “a mouth” is that its broken plural is أَفْوَاهٍ *ʾafwāh*.

Note that the letter م has not been used to form the broken plural, and instead a ʔ, and a ه 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 أُوْلُو *ʾulū* and أَوْلَاتُ *ʾulāt*

أُوْلُو *ʾulū* (first syllable has a short vowel with a silent و) means “people<sub>m</sub> of”. It is only used as a masculine plural annexe noun, similar in meaning to ذَوُو *zawū* which we discussed in section 13.2.2 above. There is no singular or dual of this noun.

Here is its form in the different states:

u-state	a-and i-state
أُوْلُو <i>ʾulū</i>	أُولِي <i>ʾulī</i>

Example:

لِأُولِي الْأَرْحَامِ حُقُوقٌ.

*liʾulī -lʾarḥāmī ḥuqūq.*

“The people of the wombs (i.e. blood relatives) have rights.”

The feminine counterpart of أُوْلُو *ʾulū* is أَوْلَاتُ *ʾulāt* “women of”. The first syllable again has a short vowel with a silent و.



u-state	a-and i-state
أُولَاتُ ʔulātu	أُولَاتٍ ʔulāti

لأُولَاتِ الْحَمْلِ حُقُوقٌ عَلَى بُعُولَتِهِنَّ.  
*liʔulāti -lḥamli ḥuqūq ʿalā buʿūlatihinn.*

“The women of pregnancy (i.e. pregnant women) have rights upon their husbands.”

### 13.3.2 أُمّ ʔumm

The noun أُمّ ʔumm “a mother” forms two *āt* sound plural variants:

- i. أُمّهَات ʔummahāt
- ii. أُمّات ʔummāt

The first variant أُمّهَات ʔummahāt is more commonly used. Example:

أُمّهَاتُ الْعِلْمَانِ طَيِّبَاتُ.  
*ʔummahātu -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 10.2.1 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>	سِنُون <i>sinūna</i>	سِنِينَ <i>sinīna</i>

Either of the two plurals may be used interchangeably. Here are some examples:

### 13.3.4 مَاء māʔ

مَاء māʔ “a water” forms its broken plural irregularly: مِيَاه *miyāh* “waters”.

### 13.3.5 شَفَّة *shafah*

شَفَّة *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 *abnāʾ* “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 **الْأَنَاسُ** *ʿannās* tends to be used, and **الْأُنَاسُ** *ʿalʿunās* is unused.

Here are some examples using these nouns:

### 13.3.8 The nouns **إِمْرَأَة** and **إِمْرَأ**

The nouns **إِمْرَأ** *ʿimraʿ* (masc.) “a man, a person” and **إِمْرَأَة** *ʿimraʿah* (fem.) “a woman” are quite irregular.

Firstly, **إِمْرَأَة** *ʿimraʿah* “a woman” is, from the perspective, of its meaning, the feminine counterpart of **رَجُل** *rajul* “a man (male human being)”.

**إِمْرَأ** *ʿimraʿ*, 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, **إِمْرَأ** *ʿimraʿ* “a man, a person” has no plural. **أُنَاسُ/نَاسُ** “a people” and **قَوْمُ** “a population” may be used when a plural is required.

**إِمْرَأَة** *ʿimraʿah* “a woman” irregularly forms the broken plurals **نِسَاء** *nisāʿ* and **نِسْوَة** *niswah* “women”. The former (**نِسَاء** *nisāʿ*) is more commonly used.

Like **شَفَة** *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 **الْ**. When **الْ** 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 <b>إِمْرَأ</b>	Definite of <b>إِمْرَأَة</b>
u-state	<b>الْمَرْءُ</b> <i>ʿalmarʿu</i>	<b>الْمَرْأَةُ</b> <i>ʿalmarʿatu</i>
a-state	<b>الْمَرْءَا</b> <i>ʿalmarʿa</i>	<b>الْمَرْأَاتَا</b> <i>ʿalmarʿata</i>
i-state	<b>الْمَرْءِي</b> <i>ʿalmarʿi</i>	<b>الْمَرْأَاتِي</b> <i>ʿalmarʿati</i>

The masculine noun **إِمْرَأ** *ʿimraʿ* 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	أَمْرًا ʿimraʿun	أَمْرُو ʿimruʿun
a-state	أَمْرَاءَ ʿimraʿan	أَمْرَاءَ ʿimraʿan
i-state	أَمْرًا ʿimraʿin	أَمْرِي ʿimriʿin

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	عَائِشَة <sup>2</sup>
سَعِيد	فَاطِمَة <sup>2</sup>
أَلْحَسَن	حَفْصَة <sup>2</sup>
أَلنُّعْمَان	سُمَيَّة <sup>2</sup>
طَلْحَة <sup>2</sup>	جَمِيلَة <sup>2</sup>
أَسَامَة <sup>2</sup>	زَيْنَب <sup>2</sup>
عُثْمَان <sup>2</sup>	مَرْيَم <sup>2</sup>
عُمَر <sup>2</sup>	سُعَاد <sup>2</sup>
إِبْرَاهِيم <sup>2</sup>	أَسْمَاء <sup>2</sup>
عَبْدُ اللَّهِ	لَيْلَى <sup>2</sup>
أَبُو بَكْر	أُمُّ حَبِيبَة <sup>2</sup>
Place names	Misc. names
مَكَّة <sup>2</sup>	رَمَضَان <sup>2</sup>
Mecca	Ramādān (a month)

Place	names	Misc.	names
دِمَشْق <sup>2</sup>	Damascus	أُحُد	Uḥud (a mountain)
مِصْر <sup>2</sup>	Egypt	النَّيْل	the Nile (a river)
القَاهِرَة	Cairo	الفَاتِحَة	the Fātiḥah (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 ²).
- Some names consist of more than a single word, like عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ° Abd 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 have an *n* mark, despite being definite.

The above points are exemplified in the following sentence:

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْكَرِيمِ وَزَيْنَبَ الطَّيِّبَةِ.  
*zahabtu 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 an *in*-mark ِ in the i-state.
- زَيْنَب is semi-flexible so it does not have an *n*-mark, 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:

- مُحَمَّدُ Muḥammad “a highly praised one<sub>m</sub>”
- سَعِيدُ Saʿīd “a happy (fortunate) one<sub>m</sub>”
- الْحَسَنُ al-Ḥasan “the good one<sub>m</sub>”
- طَلْحَةُ Ṭalḥah “an acacia (tree)”
- جَمِيلَةُ 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.  
zahabat jamīlatu ʾila -lbayt.

This sentence can only be understood to use جَمِيلَةٌ with its proper noun meaning:

“Jamīlah 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 an *un*-mark ُ and the sentence would be:

ذَهَبَتْ جَمِيلَةٌ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ.  
zahabat jamīlatun ʾila -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 ?? below.





### 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 8. 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>	Khadijah	مَيْمُونَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Maymūnah
فَاطِمَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Faṭimah	صَفِيَّةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ṣafiyyah
عَائِشَةٌ <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
أُسَامَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Uṣamah	عِكْرِمَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	ʿIkrimah
طَلْحَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	Ṭalḥah	عُبَادَةٌ <sup>2</sup>	ʿUbādah

Example:

طَلْحَةُ الطَّوِيلُ يَغُلُ جَمِيلَةَ الْكَرِيمَةِ.

“The tall Ṭalḥah is the husband of the generous Jamīlah.”

#### 14.4.2.2 Names ending with an extrinsic اء or ئ

Similar to common nouns and adjectival nouns, all names ending with an extrinsic اء or ئ shall be semi-flexible. These are usually feminine names. Examples:

<sup>2</sup> أَسْمَاءُ	Asmā <sup>o</sup>	<sup>2</sup> لَيْلَى	Laylā
<sup>2</sup> دَرْدَاءُ	Dardā <sup>o</sup>	<sup>2</sup> سَلْمَى	Salmā

Examples in sentences:

ذَهَبَتْ سَلْمَى إِلَى بَيْتِ أَسْمَاءَ.

“Salmā went to Asmā<sup>o</sup>’s house.”

Sentence word order is usually pretty flexible. For stylistic reasons, it is permissible for a doer to precede the doer. For example,

سَأَلْتُ دَرْدَاءَ أَسْمَاءَ.

“Asmā<sup>o</sup> asked Dardā<sup>o</sup>”

But because words that end with <sup>2</sup> never display any state, then for these words the sentence word order becomes more rigid. So the following sentence:

سَأَلْتُ 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 8.3.4. There only adjectival nouns of the pattern فَعْلَان and whose feminine was not formed by adding ة to it were considered semi-flexible nouns.

Examples:

<sup>2</sup> عُثْمَانُ	‘Uthmān	<sup>2</sup> رَمَضَانُ	Ramaḍān
<sup>2</sup> سُفْيَانُ	Sufyān	<sup>2</sup> شَعْبَانُ	Sha <sup>c</sup> bān

Example:

جَلَسَ عُثْمَانُ مَعَ سُفْيَانَ فِي رَمَضَانَ.

“‘Uthmān sat with Sufyān in Ramaḍān.”

#### 14.4.2.4 Names on the pattern أَفْعَلْ

All names on the pattern أَفْعَلْ shall be semi-flexible. Examples:

أَحْمَدٌ <sup>2</sup> Aḥmad	أَسْعَدٌ <sup>2</sup> Asʿad
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#### 14.4.2.5 Names of the pattern فُعْل

Names of the pattern فُعْل shall be semi-flexible. Examples:

عُمَرُ <sup>2</sup> ʿUmar	مُضَرٌ <sup>2</sup> Muḍar
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Interestingly, the fully-flexible name ʿAmr is written with a silent ʾ at its end: عَمْرُو when in the u- and i-states in order to distinguish it from the more common name ʿUmar. Otherwise, both names would appear identical when written without vowel marks, thus: عمر.

Name	u-state	a-state	i-state
ʿAmr	عَمْرُو <i>eamrun</i>	عَمْرًا <i>eamran</i>	عَمْرِي <i>eamrin</i>
ʿUmar	عُمَرُ <i>eumaru</i>	عُمَرَا <i>eumara</i>	عُمَرِي <i>eumara</i>

#### 14.4.2.6 Names that are originally verbs

Names that are originally verbs are semi-flexible. Examples:

- يَزِيدٌ<sup>2</sup> Yazīd “He increases”
- يَعِيشُ<sup>2</sup> 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:

جَبْرِيلٌ <sup>2</sup>	Jibrīl	زَكَرِيَّا <sup>2</sup>	Zakariyyā
إِبْرَاهِيمُ <sup>2</sup>	Ibrāhīm	يَحْيَى <sup>2</sup>	Yahyā
إِسْمَاعِيلُ <sup>2</sup>	Ismāʿīl	هَاجِرٌ <sup>2</sup>	Hājar
إِسْحَاقُ <sup>2</sup>	Is-ḥāq	مَرْيَمُ <sup>2</sup>	Maryam
يَعْقُوبُ <sup>2</sup>	Yaʿqūb	يَا جُوجُ <sup>2</sup>	Yaʿjūj
يُوسُفُ <sup>2</sup>	Yūsuf	مَا جُوجُ <sup>2</sup>	Maʿjūj
يُونُسُ <sup>2</sup>	Yūnus	إِبْلِيسُ <sup>2</sup>	Iblīs
إِدْرِيسُ <sup>2</sup>	Idrīs	فِرْعَوْنُ <sup>2</sup>	Pharoah
أَيُّوبُ <sup>2</sup>	Ayyūb	هَرَقْلُ <sup>2</sup>	Heraclius
مُوسَى <sup>2</sup>	Mūsā	كِسْرَى <sup>2</sup>	Chosroes
عِيسَى <sup>2</sup>	ʿĪsā	قَيْصَرُ <sup>2</sup>	Caesar

Note that فِرْعَوْنُ<sup>2</sup> “Pharoah” as قَيْصَرُ<sup>2</sup> “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 Ø-mark. Such a name will be fully-flexible. Example:

- نُوحُ Nūḥ

#### 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 ي, so we will provide other examples here:

زَيْنَبُ <sup>2</sup>	Zaynab	مَرْيَمُ <sup>2</sup>	Maryam
سُعَادُ <sup>2</sup>	Suʿād	هَاجِرُ <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 Ø-mark. Such a name is permitted to be optionally fully-flexible or semi-flexible. Examples:

- هِنْدُ Hind
- دَعْدُ Daʿd

Example of usage:

ذَهَبْتُ هُنْدٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ دَعْدٍ.

or

ذَهَبْتُ هُنْدٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ دَعْدٍ.

“Hind went to Da<sup>c</sup>d’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 فُلَانَةٌ<sup>2</sup> is used.

صَدَقَتْ فُلَانَةٌ.

“So-and-so<sub>f</sub> told the truth.”

## 14.6 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 ??.

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:

أَخَذَ الْغُلَامُ 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 ‘Alī’s house.”

In this sentence, the name عَلِيٍّ ‘Alī is the replacement of the replacee عَمِّ “uncle”. Note, again, that the replacement comes after the replacee and matches it in state. However, the replacement does not need to come directly after the replacee. We can see that there is the pronoun هِ “his” between them.

Here is another example:

سَأَلَ الطَّالِبُ مُعَاذَ الْمُعَلِّمِ سَعْدًا.

“The student Mu‘āz asked the teacher Sa‘d.”

## 14.7 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:

### 14.7.1 “Slave of” names

Some names are formed by annexing the noun عَبْدَ *‘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 عَبْدَ is variable, depending on it’s function in the sentence. Example:

عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَخُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ. “Abd Allāh is the brother of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.”

### 14.7.2 “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 has an *in*-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 سُؤَالَ.

“I asked Abū Ruqayyah a question.”

(Note how رُقَيْيَةَ 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) اُمُّ حَبِيبَةَ<sup>2</sup> Umm Ḥabībah was called thus because she had a daughter named حَبِيبَةَ<sup>2</sup> 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 أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> Abū Hurayrah.

### 14.7.3 “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<sup>2</sup> ʿUmar had a son named عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ʿAbd Allāh. He is commonly known as ابْنُ عُمَرَ<sup>2</sup> 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 عَمَّار was affectionately called <sup>2</sup>ابْنُ سُمَيَّةِ 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 كَثِيرِ Ibn Kathīr is referred to by his grandfather’s name كَثِيرِ Kathīr.
- a human being is called ابْنُ آدَمَ<sup>2</sup> based on his being a descendent of the first man, the Prophet Adam.

#### 14.7.3.1 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 زَيْدُ “Zayd” has lost its *n* mark.
- The word بْنُ “son” is not written with its initial connecting hamzah أ.

These peculiarities are only when forming a full name in this manner. Consider for example the following sentence:

زَيْدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ.  
“Zayd is the son of ʿAlī.”

In the above example, the name زَيْدُ has its *n*-mark and ابْنُ is written with its connecting hamzah أ. Therefore this is not an expression of the full name in a replacee-replacement format. Rather, ابْنُ أَحْمَدَ here is the information of the sentence.

For women, the word بِنْتُ is used instead of ابْنُ.

Example:

قَرَأَتِ 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 بِن. For example:

اِسْمُ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اَللّٰهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اَلْمُطَّلِبِ.

“Our prophet’s name is Muḥammad the son of ʿAbd Allāh the son of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.”

(Note that the second بِن is in the i-state to match the state of the annexe noun عَبْد اَللّٰهِ in عَبْد اَللّٰهِ.)

We will deal with complete full names in section 14.14 below.

### 14.7.4 Other annexed names

Other words besides عَبْد, اَب, اُم, and اِبْن may be used in annexed names too. Here are some examples:

- ذُو اَلْقَرْنَيْنِ Zu l-Qarnayn “He of the two horns”
- مَدِيْنَةُ النَّبِيِّ *madīnatu -nnabiyyi* “The City of the Prophet”, frequently reduced to simply اَلْمَدِيْنَةُ “Medina”.

Context is used to infer whether by اَلْمَدِيْنَةُ is meant “Medina” or “the city”.

- اَمْرُو اَلْقَيْسِ Imruʾ al-Qays “The man of al-Qays”, a pre-Islāmic poet.

## 14.8 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:

الْحَسَنُ حَفِيدُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

“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-Nu‘mān about a matter.”

(a-state displayed with َ.)

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى بَيْتِ النُّعْمَانَ.

“I went to al-Nu‘mān’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 ???. 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<sup>2</sup> is actually دَرْدَاءُ Dardā<sup>2</sup>, not الدَّرْدَاءُ.
- The son of the uncle of the Prophet (may Allāh grant peace and confer blessing upon him) اَلْعَبَّاسُ al-‘Abbās is called ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ Ibn ‘abbās, not ابْنُ الْعَبَّاسِ.

However, the son of اَلزُّبَيْرِ al-Zubayr is called ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ Ibn al-Zubayr with the اَلْ.

## 14.9 Place names

Place names are generally feminine. Because of their feminine gender, those not beginning with اَلْ will be semi-flexible according to section 14.4.2.8 above.

Examples of place names are:

مَكَّة <sup>2</sup>	Mecca	الْمَدِينَةُ	Medina
دِمَشْقُ <sup>2</sup>	Damascus	الْقَاهِرَةُ	Cairo
بَغْدَادُ <sup>2</sup>	Baghdād	الْهِنْدُ	India

مِصْر <sup>2</sup>	Egypt	الصِّين	China
فَارِس <sup>2</sup>	Persia	الرُّوم	Rome
تَبُوك <sup>2</sup>	Tabūk	البَصْرَة	Başrah

Example of use:

ذَهَبَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى مَكَّةَ الْمُكْرَمَةِ وَالْمَدِينَةِ الْمُنَوَّرَةِ.

“The man went to the ennobled Mecca and the illuminated Medina.”

While most place names are feminine, a few are masculine. Among these are:

اليَمَن	Yemen	الشَّام	the Levant
العِرَاق	Iraq		

## 14.10 Names of tribes

Here are examples of names of tribes:

قُرَيْش	Quraysh	الأَوْس	al-Aws
بَنُو تَمِيم	Banū Tamīm	الْخَزْرَج	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, <sup>2</sup>إِسْرَائِيل Isrāʾīl is a name of the Prophet <sup>2</sup>يَعْقُوب Yaʿqūb. The *ūn* sound plural <sup>2</sup>بَنُونَ “sons/children” is annexed to the name <sup>2</sup>إِسْرَائِيل Isrāʾīl to get the name of the tribe <sup>2</sup>بَنُو إِسْرَائِيل Banū Isrāʾīl “the children of Isrāʾīl”. In the a- and i-states, this becomes <sup>2</sup>بَنِي إِسْرَائِيل Banī Isrāʾīl.

Not all tribe names have <sup>2</sup>بَنُونَ “sons” annexed to them, but many do. And often it is optional to keep or drop the annexed <sup>2</sup>بَنُونَ. Examples:

- قُرَيْش Quraysh usually does not have <sup>2</sup>بَنُونَ annexed to it.
- بَنُو تَمِيم Banū Tamīm may optionally drop the annexed <sup>2</sup>بَنُونَ and be called simply تَمِيم Tamīm.

### 14.10.1 Flexibility of tribe names

The flexibility of tribe names depends on the name. Here are some examples:

- <sup>2</sup>إِسْرَائِيل Isrāʾīl is a name of foreign origin and is therefore semi-flexible.

Example:

بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.

“Allāh sent Mūsā to the children of Isrāʾīl.”

- قُرَيْش Quraysh and تَمِيم 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>فَعَاوِف and is therefore semi-flexible.

### 14.10.2 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 Mecca and they worshipped idols.”

## 14.11 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:

النَّبِيّ	Prophet	الإمام	Imām
الْمَلِك	King	الشَّيْخ	Shaykh

الْأَمِير	Commander	الْحَافِظ	Hāfiẓ
الْقَاضِي	Judge	الْأَسَاز	Professor

Some Arabic titles are left untranslated in English like

- الْإِمَام Imām (a leader)
- الشَّيْخ Shāykh (a venerable man)
- الْحَافِظ Hāfiẓ (one who has memorized, and preserved religious texts)

#### 14.11.1 Titles as replacees

Titles are usually placed in front a proper noun and made definite with ال to match the proper noun. For example,

سَأَلَ رَجُلٌ الْإِمَامَ مَالِكًا عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

“A man asked Imām Mālik about a matter.”

In the above sentence, the title الْإِمَام Imām is a replacee and the name مَالِك Mālik is the replacement.

Some titles are formed from annexations. Examples:

خَلِيفَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ	the Successor of the Messenger of Allah	سَيْفُ اللَّهِ	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 اللَّهِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ.

“The Mother of the Believers ʿĀʾishah is the daughter of the Successor of the Messenger of Allāh Abū Bakr.”

### 14.11.2 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 replacements 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 الْجَارِيَةُ سُورَةَ الْفَاتِحَةِ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ.  
“The girl read the Sūrah of al-Fātiḥah in the month of Ramaḍān.”

### 14.12 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 الصَّديق “the steadfast affirmer of the truth”.

Nicknames usually come after a person's name as a replacement.

أَبُو بَكْرٍ الصَّديقُ 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 Qurʾān.”

### 14.13 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 Meccan	تَمِيمِيّ	a Tamīmian
دِمَشْقِيّ	a Damascan	إِسْرَائِيلِيّ	an Isrā'īlite
شَافِعِيّ	a Shāfi'ite	حَنَفِيّ	a Hanafī
مَالِكِيّ	a Mālikī	حَنْبَلِيّ	a Hanbalī

Note the following about affiliate adjectival nouns:

- Generally, the ending يّ -yy is suffixed to a noun to create an affiliate adjectival noun.
- The ة ending is removed before adding the يّ -yy suffix.
- Sometimes there are other internal changes to the word before this suffix is added. For example,
  - قُرَيْش becomes قُرَشِيّ
- 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 Ḥanīfah is called حَنَفِيّ “a Ḥanafī”.
  - A follower of the school of thought of أَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is called حَنْبَلِيّ “a Ḥanbalī”.

We will treat adjectival nouns more fully in 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 الدَّمَشْقِيُّ مُفَسِّرٌ وَمُؤَرِّخٌ.

“Ibn Kathīr the Damascan is an exegete and a historian.”

## 14.14 Complete full names

We have already studied how a basic full name is formed in section 14.7.3.1. 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 الْمَجُوسِيُّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبَا حَفْصٍ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ.

"Abū Luʾluʾah, the Magian killed the Commander of the Believers, Abū Ḥafṣ, ʿUmar the son of al-Khaṭṭāb."

كَتَبَ الْخَافِظُ الْمَوْرُخُ الْمَفَسِّرُ عِمَادُ الدِّينِ أَبُو الْفِدَاءِ إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ كَثِيرٍ الْقُرَشِيُّ الدَّمَشْقِيُّ الشَّافِعِيُّ تَفْسِيرًا.

"The Ḥāfiẓ, the historian, the exegete, the Pillar of the Faith, the father of al-Fidāʾ, Ismāʿīl the son of ʿUmar the son of Kathīr, the Qurayshite, the Damascan, the Shāfiʿite wrote an exegesis."

(Note how the second **بْن** is in the i-state because it is a replacement of **عُمَرَ** which is in the i-state because it is a base noun of the first **بْن**.)



# Chapter 15

## Addressing by name

### 15.1 Introduction

When directly addressing someone in Arabic and calling out to him by name, 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 have an *n*-mark, then the *n*-mark is dropped. So, for example, the name زَيْدٌ *zaydun* “Zayd” usually has an *n*-mark. But when used for being called out to, the *n*-mark is dropped and it becomes:

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا زَيْدُ.

*ʿassalāmu 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 غُلَامُ.

*ʿassalāmu ʿalaykum yā ghulamū.*

“Peace be upon you, O you boy.”

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا جَارِيَّةُ.

*ʿassalāmu ʿalaykum 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:

يَا رِجَالُ، قَدْ حَدَثَ أَمْرٌ.

*yā rijālu qad ḥadathā ʿamrun.*

“O you men, a matter has occurred.”

Note how the word رِجَالُ *rijālu* “men” does not have an *n*-mark because the word is used to call out to the specific persons.

Similarly,

يَا لَاعِبَانِ بَدَأْتُمَا اللَّعِبَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُمَا الْعَمَلَ.

*yā lāʿibāni badaʿtuma -llaeiba wamā faʿaltuma -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 اَلْ. In this case, the particle يَا *yā* is modified to اَيُّهَا *ʾayyuhā*, or sometimes اَيُّهَا *yā ʾayyuhā*. Examples:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْأُسْتَاذُ، قَدْ فَعَلْتُ الْوَاجِبَ.  
*yā ʾayyuhā -lʾustāzu, qad faʿaltu -lwājiba*

“O you the Professor, I have done the obligatory [work].”

أَنَا سَقِيمٌ أَيُّهَا الطَّبِيبُ.  
*ʾana saqimūn, ʾayyuhā -ṭṭabībū.*

“I am ill, O you the Doctor.”

If the person being called out to is feminine, then أَيُّهَا *ʾayyuhā* is modified to أَيُّهَا *ʾayyatuhā*. For example:

أَيُّهَا الْمُعَلِّمَةُ، هَذَا كِتَابِي.  
*ʾayyatuhā -lmueallimatu, hāzā kitābi.*

“O you the teacher, 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 *n*-mark, if any, is preserved. Examples:

مَا عَرَفْتُ ذَٰلِكَ الرَّجُلَ، يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ.  
*mā ʿaraftu zālīka -rrajula, yā ʿabdu -llāhi.*

“I have not recognized that man, O ʿAbd Allāh.”

يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، أَنْتَ رَجُلٌ كَرِيمٌ.  
*yā ʾabā bakrīn, ʾanta rajulun karīmūn*

“O Abū Bakr, You are a noble man.”

يَا صَلَاحَ الدِّينِ، صَبَرْتَ فَتَصَرَّكَ اللَّهُ.  
*yā salāḥa -ddīni, ṣābarta fanaṣaraka -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.  
*yā -bna ʾakhī, qad saqaṭa qalamuka.*

“O my nephew, your pen has fallen on the ground.”

يَا تَلَامِيذَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ، الْعِلْمُ أَمَانَةٌ.  
*yā talāmīza -lmadrasati, -leilmu 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 *n*-mark, if any, is preserved. So if you want to address any unspecific 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 لَعَبٍ، الْوَقْتُ ثَمِينٌ.  
*yā lāʿibī luʿabīni, -lwaqtu ṭhamīnun.*

“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, suʿāluka jayyidun.*

“O Zayd, your question is excellent.”

it is permissible to say:

زَيْدُ، سُؤْالُكَ جَيِّدٌ.  
*zaydu, suʿāluka jayyidun.*

“Zayd, your question is excellent.”

Note that even when يَا yā is omitted the name زَيْدُ zaydu “Zayd” is in the u-state without any *n*-mark.

This usage is especially common when supplicating to Allāh with the word رَبُّ 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 قَوْم

*yā qawmī*

“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 اَللّٰهُ

*yā ʿallāhu*

“O Allāh”

Note that the word اَللّٰهُ *ʿallāhu* now has a regular *hamzah* ا instead of a connecting *hamzah* إ.

However, instead of saying يَا اَللّٰهُ *yā ʿallāhu* for “O Allāh”, it is in fact more common to use a special word:

اَللّٰهُمَّ

*ʿallāhumma*

“O Allāh”

Examples:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ.

*ʿallāhumma ʿanta -ssalāmu waminka -ssalāmu.*

“O Allāh, You are Peace and from You is peace.”

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ.

*ʿallāhumma ʿanta -ṣṣāhibu fi -ssafari.*

“O Allāh, You are the companion in the journey.”

# Chapter 16

## Pointing nouns

### 16.1 Introduction

Consider the following expression:

this book  
└──┬──┘  
pointing noun pointed-to noun

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:

Participant	State	Near point- ing noun	Far point- ing noun
sing. masc.	all	هَذَا this one <sub>m</sub>	ذَلِكَ that one <sub>m</sub>
sing. fem.	all	هَذِهِ this one <sub>f</sub>	تِلْكَ that one <sub>f</sub>
dual masc.	u	هَذَانِ these ones <sub>2,m</sub>	ذَئِكَ those ones <sub>2,m</sub>
dual masc.	a,i	هَذَيْنِ these ones <sub>2,m</sub>	ذَئِيكَ those ones <sub>2,m</sub>
dual fem.	u	هَاتَانِ these ones <sub>2,f</sub>	تَايِكَ those ones <sub>2,f</sub>
dual fem.	a,i	هَاتَيْنِ these ones <sub>2,f</sub>	تَايِيكَ 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 *ʿalif* َ. For most of them, this is how they must be written. It would be incorrect to write هَذَا as هَاذَا. *hāzā* as هَاذَا.
- All the near pointing nouns begin with a ه. And all the far pointing nouns end with ك.
- The و in أُولَئِكَ *ʿulāʿika* 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 *hāzayni* (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 اَلْ.

Remember, however, from section 12.9.1, 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:

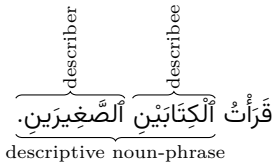
	Near point- ing noun	Far point- ing noun		
sing. fem.	all	هَذِهِ	this one <sub>f</sub>	تِلْكَ that one <sub>f</sub>
plural	all	هَؤُلَاءِ	these ones <sub>3</sub>	أُولَئِكَ those ones <sub>3</sub>

The singular feminine pointing noun is usually preferred, unless the plural 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 7 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.



“I read the small books.”)

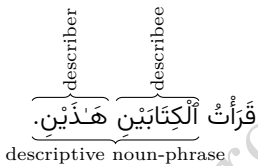
We will now see how this same descriptive noun-phrase can be used with pointing nouns.

### 16.5.1 Pointing to a single noun

We will first deal with nouns that are single words, like الْكِتَابَيْنِ above. In section 16.5.2 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 16.3 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 14.6), and the pointed-to noun is its replacement.

Example:

$$\begin{array}{cc} \text{replacement} & \text{replacee} \\ \hline \text{قَرَأْتُ هَٰذَيْنِ الْكِتَابَيْنِ.} \end{array}$$

“I read these books.”

(literally: “I read the books: these-ones.”)

In the above example, the pointing noun هَٰذَيْنِ is a replacee. It is definite, in the a-state, masculine, and dual.

The pointed-to noun الْكِتَابَيْنِ 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 اَلْ:

هَٰذَا الرَّجُلُ الْكَرِيمُ إِمَامٌ.

الرَّجُلُ الْكَرِيمُ هَٰذَا 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 اَلْ. For example:

زَيْدٌ	Zayd	اَلْحَارِثُ	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 اَلْ 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 Mecca.”

If the name begins with اَلْ then both orders are permitted.

هَذَا اَلْحَارِثُ

اَلْحَارِثُ هَذَا

“this al-Hārith”

### 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 16.5.1.1, above.

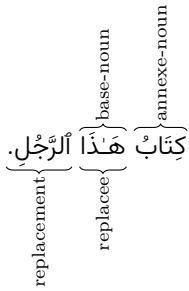
The second phrase كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ هَذَا, although correct, would only rarely be used with this meaning. (In fact, it has another meaning: “this book of the man” which we will learn in section 16.5.2.1.2, below.)

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”)

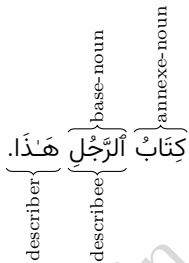
As you can see the pointing noun هَذَا has taken the place of الرَّجُلِ as the base noun in the annexation. In addition to being the base noun, هَذَا is also a replacee, whose replacement is الرَّجُلِ. The literal, word-for-word, translation of this phrase is:

“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”)

الرَّجُلِ, here, keeps its place as the base noun in the annexation. In addition to being the base noun, الرَّجُلِ is also a describee, 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”

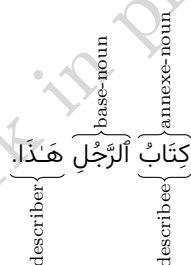
But wait! Didn’t we see in section 16.5.2.1.1 above that this expression has the meaning “the book of this man”?

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”)

كِتَاب, 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 كِتَاب or the base noun الرَّجُل 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 اَلْ

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

“this book of 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 أَلْ

Consider, now, that the base noun is definite but does not begin with أَلْ. There are two such types of nouns that we will discuss:

- i. Proper nouns not beginning with أَلْ
- ii. Pronouns

#### 16.5.2.2.1 The base noun is a proper noun not beginning with أَلْ

We will first deal with proper nouns that don’t begin with أَلْ. Consider the annexation:

كِتَابُ زَيْدٍ

“the book of Zayd”

Because the base noun زَيْدٍ does not begin with أَلْ, 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 4.4.4, that pronouns are always definite, despite not beginning with أَلْ.

We have also learned, in section 12.9, that a pronoun may be a base noun in an annexation. Example:

كِتَابُهُ  
“his book”

Neither the annexe noun كِتَاب, nor the attached pronoun هُ begin with اَلْ. 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 12.9.1 that pronouns may not be describees in a descriptive noun phrase.

So, we are left with only one option: the annexe noun كِتَاب is the describee. And the meaning of the phrase is:

كِتَابُهُ هَذَا  
“this book of his”

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{هَذَا} \\ \text{كِتَابُهُ} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{base-noun} \\ \text{annexe-noun} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{describer} \\ \text{describee} \end{array} \right\}$$

“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:

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:

هَاتَانِ جَارِيَتَانِ.

“These are girls<sub>2</sub>.”

أُولَئِكَ مُعَلِّمُونَ.

“Those are teachers.”

هَؤُلَاءِ أَقْلَامٌ.

“These are pens.”

تِلْكَ بُيُوتٌ.

“Those are houses.”

هَذَانِ صَغِيرَانِ.

“These are small ones<sub>2</sub>.”

The information may be a single word (as above) or more complex (as below):

ذَٰلِكَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

“That is the commander of the believers.”

أُولَئِكَ أَكَلْنَ 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 **أَنَّ** 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 4.5, 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 الْجَارِيتَانِ.  
 “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:

بَلَّغَنَا خَبْرَ الْمَطَرِ عَلَى الْجِبَالِ. ذَٰلِكَ بُشْرَى لِلزُّرَّاعِ.

“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:

ذَٰلِكَ بُشْرَى

“That is a good tiding.”

The information بُشْرَى “a good tiding” is a feminine noun but the subject ذَٰلِكَ is masculine. This is because ذَٰلِكَ is actually referring to خَبْرَ 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 ذَٰلِكَ.

“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 فَرَعْتُ مِنْ ذَٰلِكَ.

“The difficult work occupied me and I did not get done with that.”



# Chapter 17

## Form 1 incomplete-action verbs— u-state

### 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 «فعل», 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 ي *ya-* to the beginning of the verb. This extra letter can change, as we will see soon, to the letters ت *ta-*, ن *na*, or أ *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”
- عَمِلَ *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,

- يَكْتُبُ كَتَبَ *kataba yaktubu* “he wrote, he writes”
- يَذْهَبُ ذَهَبَ *zahaba yaz-habu* “he went, he goes”
- يَكْشِفُ كَشَفَ *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,

- يَعْمَلُ عَمِلَ *ʿamila yaʿmalu* “he worked, he works”
- يَحْسِبُ حَسِبَ *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,

- يَكْبُرُ كَبُرَ *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.  
*saʿala -lghulāmu -rrajula ʿan shayʿin.*

“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. *الرَّجُلَ* *arrujala* 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* *shayʿin* is directly preceded by a preposition so it is in the i-state and this is indicated by the *in*-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. Two of the states are in common with nouns: the u-state and the a-state. The third state is different from nouns and it is called the  $\emptyset$ -state (null-state).

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  $\emptyset$ -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 الْغُلَامُ فِي كِتَابِهِ.  
*yaktubu -lghulāmu fī kitābihi*  
 “The boy writes in his book.”

يَعْمَلُ الرَّجُلَانِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ.  
*yaʿmalu -rrajulāni fī lmadīnati.*  
 “The men<sub>dual</sub> work in the city.”

يَكْتُبُ الْجَارِيَةُ فِي كِتَابِهَا.  
*yaktubu -ljāriyatu fī kitābihā.*  
 “The girl writes in her book.”

تَعْمَلُ النِّسَاءُ فِي بُيُوتِهِنَّ.  
*taʿmalu -nnisāʾu fī 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 الْغُلَامُ الرَّجُلَ سُؤْلاً.  
*yasʾalu -lghulāmu -rrajula suʾālan.*  
 “The boy asks the man a question.”

يَسْأَلُهَا الْغُلَامُ سُؤْلاً.  
*yasʾaluha -lghulāmu suʾālan.*  
 “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 <i>faʿala</i>	<i>invisible</i>	يَفْعَلُ <i>yafʿalu</i>
she	<i>invisible</i>	فَعَلَتْ <i>faʿalat</i>	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ <i>tafʿalu</i>
you <sub>sing. masc.</sub>	تَ - <i>ta</i>	فَعَلْتَ <i>faʿalta</i>	<i>invisible</i>	تَفْعَلُ <i>tafʿalu</i>
you <sub>sing. fem.</sub>	تِ - <i>ti</i>	فَعَلْتِ <i>faʿalti</i>	يِ - <i>i</i>	تَفْعَلِينَ <i>tafʿalīna</i>
I	أَ <i>tu</i>	فَعَلْتُ <i>faʿaltu</i>	<i>invisible</i>	أَفْعَلُ <i>ʾafʿalu</i>
they <sub>dual masc.</sub>	أَ - <i>ā</i>	فَعَلَا <i>faʿalā</i>	أَ - <i>ā</i>	يَفْعَلَانِ <i>yafʿalāni</i>
they <sub>dual fem.</sub>	أَ - <i>ā</i>	فَعَلَتَا <i>faʿalatā</i>	أَ - <i>ā</i>	تَفْعَلَانِ <i>tafʿalāni</i>
you <sub>dual</sub>	أُمَّا - <i>tumā</i>	فَعَلْتُمَا <i>faʿaltumā</i>	أَ - <i>ā</i>	تَفْعَلَانِ <i>tafʿalāni</i>
they <sub>pl. masc.</sub>	وُ - <i>ū</i>	فَعَلُوا <i>faʿalū</i>	وُ - <i>ū</i>	يَفْعَلُونَ <i>yafʿalūna</i>
they <sub>pl. fem.</sub>	نَ - <i>na</i>	فَعَلْنَ <i>faʿalna</i>	نَ - <i>na</i>	يَفْعَلْنَ <i>yafʿalna</i>
you <sub>pl. masc.</sub>	أَنْتُمْ - <i>tumā</i>	فَعَلْتُمْ <i>faʿaltum</i>	وُ - <i>ū</i>	تَفْعَلُونَ <i>tafʿalūna</i>
you <sub>pl. fem.</sub>	أَنْتُنَّ - <i>tunna</i>	فَعَلْتُنَّ <i>faʿaltunna</i>	نَ <i>na</i>	تَفْعَلْنَ <i>tafʿalna</i>
we	أَنَا <i>nā</i>	فَعَلْنَا <i>faʿalnā</i>	<i>invisible</i>	نَفْعَلُ <i>naʿalu</i>

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 it's 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 yaʾkulūna 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  
*yaẓ-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 سَ sa- and سَوْفَ sawfa that can be placed before the verb. They provide a meaning of "will" or "will soon". سَ sa-, being a single letter particle, is attached to the verb.

For example,

سَيَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ  
*sayaz-habu -rrajulu.*  
 and

سَوْفَ يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ

*sawfa yaz·habu -rrajulu.*

“The man will go.” or

“Soon the man will go.”

The difference in usage of *sa-* and *sawfa* can be thought of as one of emphasis. *sawfa* is more emphatic than *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 *لَا mā*

As with completed-action verbs, incomplete-action verbs too can be negated by placing the particle *لَا* before them. This negates the meaning of the verb usually for the present tense. For example,

مَا يَذْهَبُ الرَّجُلُ

*mā yaz·habu -rrajulu.*

“The man does not go.” or,

“The man is not going.”

### 17.9.2 Negation using *لَا lā*

In addition to *لَا 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 yaz·habu -rrajulu.*

“The man does not go.” or,

“The man is not going.” or,

“The man will not go.”

The particles *sa-* and *sawfa* may not be combined with *لَا mā* and *لَا lā* when negating verbs.



# 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”	ذَهَاب “going”

The doing verbal-noun associated with this verb is ذَهَاب *zahāb*. 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 doee, 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 doee). In this case:
  - a. The doing verbal-noun for many verbs, in general, tends to be *فَعْلٌ 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 doee, 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 *فَعْلٌ faʿal*. Examples:
      - *تَعَبَ يَتْعَبُ تَعَبًا* “to become tired”
      - *جَزَعُ 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 *فُعْلَةٌ fuʿlah*. Examples:
      - *خَضِرَ يَخْضَرُ خُضْرَةً* “to be green”
      - *سَمِرَ يَسْمَرُ سَمْرَةً* “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 *فُعُولٌ fuʿul*. Example:
      - *قَدِمَ يَقْدُمُ قُدُومًا* “to arrive”
    - iv. If, instead, the meaning of the verb denotes some static qual-



ity, then the doing verbal-noun tends to be of the pattern فُعُولَةٌ *fueūlah*. Example:

- يَبْسُ يَبْسُ يَبْسُ “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 *fueūl*. 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 *fueāl*. Examples:
    - سَعَلَ يَسْعُلُ 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 يَرْحَلُ 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 *faʿīl* 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 فَعَالَةٌ *faʿālah*. Examples:
  - تَجَرَ يَتَجَرُّ تَجَارَةً “to trade”
  - أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ إِمَارَةً “to be a commander”
4. If the completed-action verb is of the pattern فَعَّلَ *faʿʿala*, then the doing verbal noun tends to be of the pattern فُعُولَةٌ *fueūlah* or فَعَالَةٌ *faʿālah*. 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 “to eat”. We can use its doing verbal noun in a sentence like this:

فَرَعَ زَيْدٌ مِنَ الْأَكْلِ.  
*faragha zaydun mina -lʔakli.*  
 “Zayd got done with eating.”

Note how the doing verbal noun الْأَكْلُ *ʔalʔakli* 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 *ʔalʔakli* instead of saying أَكْلٌ *ʔaklin* for the meaning of “eating”. This is because, as we explained in section 3.5, 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 عَمِلَ يَعْمَلُ “to work”, we can say:

فَرَعَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ صَعْبٍ.  
*faragha min ʔamalin ʕaʕbin.*  
 “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 “to read”. We can say:

سَمِعْتُ قِرَاءَةَ زَيْدٍ.  
*samietu qirāʔata 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.

*samietu qirā'atahu.*

“I heard his reading.”

### 18.3.3 With an indirect doee

If a verb uses a particular preposition with indirect doees, and the doing verbal-noun of that verb is to be used with an indirect doee, 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 *ilā* “to” with an indirect doee 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.

*taeibtu mina -zzahābi ila -lmadīnati -lbaēīdati.*

“I became tired from going to the far city.”

If a doer is used along with the indirect doee, 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 zahābi zaydin ila madīnatin baēīdatin.*

“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.

*faragha zaydun min qirāʿati -lkitābi.*

“Zayd got done with reading the book.”

In this sentence, الْكِتَابِ *ʿalkitābi* “the book” is the direct doer of the doing verbal-noun قِرَاءَةِ *qirāʿati* “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 doer الْكِتَابِ *ʿalkitābi* “the book” is allowed to be put in an annexation with the doing verbal noun thus: قِرَاءَةِ الْكِتَابِ *qirāʿati -lkitābi* “reading the book”.

Instead of a noun, the direct doer may be a pronoun instead. For example,

قَرَأَ زَيْدٌ الْكِتَابَ فَفَرَغَ مِنْ قِرَائَتِهِ.

*qaraʿa zayduni -lkitāba fafaragha min qirāʿatihi*

“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 doer? Well, for many verbs the meaning of the verbal-noun and the noun is sufficient. For example, in the phrase قِرَاءَةِ الْكِتَابِ *qirāʿati -lkitābi* “reading the book”, the meaning of “reading” makes it clear that الْكِتَابِ *ʿalkitābi* can only be a doer, 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 doer. Consider the verb ضَرَبَ يَضْرِبُ ضَرْبًا “to beat (ه s.o.)”. If we form an annexation using its doing verbal-noun, thus: ضَرْبُ زَيْدٍ *ḍarbu zaydin*, we cannot know whether Zayd is the doer (the one doing the beating), or the doer (the one getting beaten). In this case, we will need more context to help us determine whether Zayd is the doer or the doer. Here are a few sentences that may help illustrate this point:

ضَرَبَ زَيْدٌ عَمْرًا. سَمِعَ الْأَبُ ضَرْبَ زَيْدٍ فَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ. فَتَدِمَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ ضَرْبِ عَمْرٍو.

*ḍaraba zaydun ʿamran. samiea -lʿabu 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 ضَرَبَ زَيْدٌ *darba zaydin*, Zayd is the doer, and in ضَرَبَ عَمْرُو *darbi 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:

ضَرَبَ زَيْدٌ عَمْرًا. سَمِعَ الْأَبُ ضَرَبَ زَيْدٍ عَمْرًا فَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ. فَتَدِمَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ ضَرَبِهِ عَمْرًا.  
*daraba zaydun ʿamran. samiʿa l-ʾabu darba zaydin ʿamran faḡhaḍiba ʿalayhi. fa nadima zaydun min darbihi 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 ضَرَبِهِ عَمْرًا *darbihi 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 إِيَّ *ʾiyyā*, here too this prefix is used. For example,

أَلِمَ عَمْرُو مِنْ ضَرَبِ زَيْدٍ إِيَّاهُ.  
*ʿalima ʿamrun min darbi 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 -lqiraʿati 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 doer to be placed in an annexation, in the manner we have already learned.

فَرَعْتُ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ كِتَابٍ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ .

*faraghtu min qirāʿati 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

لِ *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 لِ *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 قِرَاءَةٍ لِلْكِتَابِ .

*faraghtu min qirāʿatin lilkitubi.*

“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 قِرَاءَةُ الْكِتَابِ *qirāʿati -lkitubi* 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 ضَرْبِ زَيْدٍ لَهُ .

*ʿalima ʿamrun 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 ضَرْبِ زَيْدٍ إِتَاهُ .

*ʿalima ʿamrun min ḍarbi zaydin ʿiyyāhu.*

“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:

تَعَبَ زَيْدٌ مِنْ حَمَلِهِ لِلْكِتَابِ الثَّقِيلَةِ.  
*taeiba zaydun min hamlihi lilkutubi -ththaqilati.*  
 “Zayd became tired from his carrying the heavy books.”

There exists another meaning for this verb with its own doing verbal-noun: *حَمَلَ يَحْمِلُ حَمَلَةً* which means “to launch an attack (عَلَى 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 -laduwwi ealayhim.*  
 “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 (هـ 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 faeala zayduni -lwājiba lijahlihi iyyāhu.*  
 “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 -lmushrikīna.*  
 “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 faeālah* 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 سُؤَالٌ means “to question or ask (عن هـ s.o. about s.th.)”. The doing verbal-noun سُؤَالٌ *suʾālun* can be used with its verbal meaning: “questioning”. For example,

سَيِّمُ الْأَبُ مِنْ كَثْرَةِ سُؤَالِ ابْنِهِ إِيَّاهُ.  
*saʾima -lʾabu min kathrati suʾāli -bnihi ʾiyyāhu.*

“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 أسْئَلَةٌ *ʾasʾilah* “questions”. So, for example, we can say:

كَتَبَ الْأُسْتَاذُ سُؤَالًا عَلَى السَّبُّورَةِ.  
*kataba -lʾustāzu 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 يَفْعَلُ “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 -lʾustāzu mina -ttalāmīza fiʿla -lwājibi.*

“The professor wanted from his students the doing of the obligatory [work].”



## 18.7 TODO

Add multiple does with masdar

Work in progress. Not ready for study.



# Chapter 19

## The verbal-nouns of the doer and the doee

### 19.1 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 *qāriʾ* “a reader”.

### 19.2 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 pastern فَاعِلٌ *fāʿil*. Also, the doer verbal-noun is modified for gender and number. Its forms its feminine by appending *ō* 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>

### 19.3 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 *sa'ala* “to question”. Its doer verbal-noun is سَائِلٌ *sā'ilun*. 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'ālan.*

“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 الْفَقِيهَ سَائِلَةٌ عَنْ أَمْرٍ.

*sa'alati -lfaqiha sā'ilatun 'an 'amrin.*

“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 nounal 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 “to kill (ه s.o.)”. Its doer verbal-noun is قَاتِل “a killer<sub>m</sub>”. Its sound plural is قَاتِلُونَ *qātilūna* and its broken plurals are قَتَّال *quttāl* and قَتَلَة *qatalah*. Any of these could be used but the broken plural is often preferred.

هَرَبَ قَتَلَةُ الرَّجُلِ إِلَى مَخْبِئِهِمْ.  
*haraba qatalatu -rrajuli ʿilā makhbaʿihim.*

“The killers of the man fled to their hideout.”

## 19.4 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.

### 19.4.1 Usage of the doer verbal-noun as a present tense verb

Consider the following sentence:

يَذْهَبُ زَيْدٌ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ.  
*yaz-habu zaydun ʿilā -lmadrasati.*  
 “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.  
*yaz-habu zaydun ʿilā -lmadrasati.*  
 “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 *zāhibun* 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 hāza -lkursiyyi.*  
 “Zaynab is sitting on this chair.”

this indicates that Zaynab is sitting on this chair at present. And if we say,

تَجْلِسُ زَيْنَبٌ عَلَى هَذَا الْكُرْسِيِّ.  
*tajlisu zaynabu ʿala hāza -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.

### 19.4.2 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”.

#### 19.4.2.1 With an indirect doer

Here is an example of the usage of the doer verbal-noun as a future tense verb with an indirect doer:

أَنَا ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى بَيْتِ صَدِيقِي فِي الصَّبَاحِ.  
*ʾana zāhibun ʾilā bayti ṣadīqī fi-ṣṣabāḥi.*

“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-ṣṣabāḥi* “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 كُرَةٌ 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.”

#### 19.4.2.2 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.  
*saʾaz-habu ʾilā bayti ṣadīqī.*

“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 ...  
*ʾana zāhibun ...*

“I will [definitely] go ...”

or

“I’m going to go ...”

سَأَذْهَبُ ...  
*saʔaz·habu ...*  
 “[Soon] I will go ...”

### 19.4.2.3 With a direct doee

If a verb takes a direct doee, and we wish to use the direct doee 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 doee in a-state following the doer verbal-noun

The most basic method of dealing with a direct doee 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 dakhala -lmadīnata rajulun sharīrun. hua qātilun sukkānahā.*  
 “An evil man has entered the city. He is going to kill its residents.”

#### 2. The direct doee in i-state annexed to the doer verbal-noun

The combination of the doer verbal-noun and following direct doee in the a-state is often replaced with an annexation of the doer verbal-noun to the i-state direct doee. So, for example, instead of the above example, we can say:

قَدْ دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ رَجُلٌ شَرِيرٌ. هُوَ قَاتِلٌ سُكَّانِهَا.  
*qad dakhala -lmadīnata rajulun sharīrun. 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 ends with an *n*-mark, and the direct doee begins with اَلْ *al* “the”, then the annexation usage becomes predominant over the basic a-state usage. So we will be more likely to see:



أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ.  
 ʾana fāʿiluhu.

instead of:

أَنَا فَاعِلٌ إِنِّي أَه.  
 ʾana fāʿilun ʾiyyāhu.

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 doer 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 doer can follow the doer verbal-noun in the i-state preceded by the preposition ل *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 ل *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.”

### 19.4.3 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 doee:

قَدِمَ زَيْدٌ الْأَذَاهِبُ إِلَى الْجَامِعَةِ.  
*qadima zayduni -zzāhibu ʿila -ljāmiʿati.*  
 “Zayd, the one who goes to the university, has arrived.”

With a direct doee in the a-state:

هَرَبْتُ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ الْأَكِلِ الْإِنْسَانَ.  
*harabtu mina -lʿasadi -lʿākilu -lʿinsāna.*  
 “I fled from the lion, the one that eats man.”

With a direct doee in the i-state preceded by the preposition لِ li:

سَيَنْجَحُ الطَّالِبُ الْتَّارِكُ لِلْهُو.  
*sayanjahu -ttālibu -ttāriku lillahwi.*  
 “The student, the one who leaves idle amusement, will succeed.”

### 19.4.4 Plurals of the doer verbal-noun when used as a verb

We mentioned in section 19.3 that doer-verbal nouns when used with their nounal 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 قَاتِلُونَ *qātilūna* and the broken plurals قُتِلَ *quttāl* and قَتَلَةً *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).

## 19.5 The doee verbal-noun

The doee verbal-noun for form 1 verbs is on the pattern مَفْعُول *mafeūl*. 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 فَتْلًا “to kill (ه s.o.)” is مَقْتُول *maqtūl* and means “a killed person”.

### 19.5.1 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 مَقْتُولَات *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 مَفَاعِيل<sup>2</sup> *mafāeīl*<sup>2</sup>. For example, the doee verbal-noun for the verb لَعَنَ يَلْعَنُ “to curse (ه s.o.)” is مَلْعُون *maleūn* “accursed” and its plural is مَلَاعِين<sup>2</sup> *malāeīn*<sup>2</sup>.

### 19.5.2 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.

### 19.5.3 The doee verbal-nouns of indirect doee verbs

Consider the verb سَأَلَ يَسْأَلُ سُؤَالًا “to question (عن s.o. about s.th.).”

Here it is used in a sentence:

سَأَلَ زَيْدٌ زَيْنَبَ عَنْ حَادِثَةٍ.  
*saʿala zaydun zaynaba ʿan ḥādithah.*  
 “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 *sāʾil* “a questioner<sub>m</sub>”. Next, زَيْنَبُ *zaynaba* “Zaynab” is the direct doee. The corresponding doee verbal-noun that refers to her is مَسْئُولَةٌ *masʾulah* “a questioned person<sub>f</sub>”. But how, now, do we refer to the indirect doee: حَادِثَةٌ *ḥādithatin* “an accident”? The answer is that the doee verbal-noun referring to this indirect doee is مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهَا *masʾul ʿanhā* “a thing<sub>f</sub> questioned about”.

Let’s analyze this term مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهَا *masʾul ʿanhā* “a thing questioned about” carefully. The first word is مَسْئُولٌ *masʾul* 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 *ḥādithatin* “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.  
*naẓara zaydun ʾila -rrijāli.*  
 “Zayd looked at the men.”

then, the doee verbal-noun that refers to الرِّجَالِ *arrijāli* “the men” is مَنْظُورٌ إِلَيْهِمْ *manẓūr ʾilayhim* “persons<sub>m</sub> looked at”.

If doee verbal-nouns of indirect doees are used in sentences then it is the first word (in this case مَنْظُورٌ *manẓūrun*) that changes for definiteness and

state (but not for gender or number, as already discussed). Here are some examples:

From the verb لَعِبَ يَلْعَبُ لَعِبًا “to play (هـ s.th.)”:

هَذِهِ الْكُرَى هِيَ الْمَلْعُوبُ بِهَا.  
*hāzi -lkurā hiya -lmaʿlūbu bihā.*

“These balls are the ones played with.”

From the verb أَمَرَ يَأْمُرُ أَمْرًا “to order (هـ s.o. ب to do s.th.)”:

فَعَلَ الْغُلَامُ الْمَأْمُورَ بِهِنَّ.  
*faʿala -lghulāmu -lmaʿmūra 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 *al-maʿmūra bihinna*, you may find the word *al-maʿmūrāt* 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 *سأله عنه* is also valid as “the questioner about it”.

## 19.6 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
نَعَمَ يَنْعَمُ نُعُومَةً “to be soft”	نَاعِم	“soft”
يَبَسُ يَبِيبُ يَبُوسَةً “to be dried up”	يَابِس	“dried up”
حَاضِرٌ 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، هـ، هـ s.o., s.th.)”	مَشْهُور	“famous”

### 19.6.1 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 مَفْتُوحَةٌ  
nāfizatun 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 حَامِلٌ ḥāmīl “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.  
almarʿatu ḥāmīl.  
“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.

*ʾalmarʾatu ḥāmilatu -lmāʾ.*

“The woman will carry the water.”

or

“The woman is the water-carrier.”

### 19.6.2 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 *ʿaqala yaʿqilu ʿaqlan* means “to make sense (هـ of s.th.)”. Its doer verbal-noun عَاقِلٌ *ʿāqil* 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 ḡulāmun ʿāqil.*

“Zayd is a sensible boy.”

Its doee verbal-noun مَعْقُولٌ *maʿqūl* 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 مَنَهْجٌ مَعْقُولٌ.

*hāzā manhajun maʿqūl.*

“This is a sensible approach.”

## 19.7 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 سَأْلاً *saʾala yasʾalu suʾālan* is سَائِلٌ *sāʾil* “a questioner” with the sound plural سَائِلُونَ *sāʾilūna* and the broken plurals سُؤَالٌ *suʾāl* and سَأَلَةٌ *saʾalah*.

The word سَائِلٌ *sāʾil* “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. سَائِل *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 “to know (هـ s.th.)”	عَالِم	عُلَمَاء <sup>2</sup>	“a scholar”
طَلَبَ “to seek (هـ s.th.)”	طَالِب	طُلَّاب، طَلَبَة	“a student”
لَعِبَ “to play (هـ s.th.)”	لَاعِب	لَاعِبُونَ	“a player”
جَمَعَ “to gather (هـ s.th.)”	جَامِعَة	جَامِعَات	“a university”
جَمَعَ “to gather (هـ s.th.)”	جَامِع	جَوَامِع <sup>2</sup>	“a mosque (in which the Friday prayers are performed)”
حَدَثَ “to happen”	حَادِثَة	خَوَارِث <sup>2</sup>	“an accident”
شَرِبَ “to drink (هـ s.th.)”	شَارِب	شَوَارِب <sup>2</sup>	“a moustache”
سَحَلَ “to abrade (هـ s.th.)”	سَاحِلٌ	سَوَاحِل <sup>2</sup>	“a seashore”
صَمِنَ “to guarantee (هـ s.th.)”	مَصْمُومٌ	مَصَامِين <sup>2</sup>	“a content (of a letter, etc.)”
دَخَلَ “to enter”	دَاخِل	none	“inside”
خَرَجَ “to exit”	خَارِج	none	“outside”

The last two دَاخِلٌ “inside” and خَارِجٌ “outside” are notable. Here, for example, is how they can be used:



غَسَلَ الْكُؤَبَ مِنْ دَاخِلٍ.

*ghasala -lkūba min dākhilīn.*

“He washed the tumbler from inside.”

### 19.7.1 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<sup>u</sup> jāmieah.*

“The building is a university.”

We cannot masculinize جَامِعَةٌ *jāmieah* “a university” to جَامِع *jāmie* in order to make it match the gender of بِنَاء *binā<sup>u</sup>* (masc.) “a building”. Were we to do so, then جَامِع *jāmie* 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 *jāmie*, 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<sup>u</sup> jāmieun.*

“The building is a mosque (in which the Friday prayers are performed).”

3. Or, with the adjectival noun meaning of جَامِع *jāmie*, if one happens to exist. There is such a meaning in this case: “comprehensive”. So then we would get:

الْبِنَاءُ جَامِعٌ.

*albinā<sup>u</sup> jāmieun.*

“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 *ʿālim* is re-used as the common-noun for “a (male) scholar” with the plural عُلَمَاء <sup>2</sup>*ʿulamāʾ*. And  
عَالِمَة *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 جَرًى *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 ???. In any case, its feminine doer verbal-noun is جَارِيَة *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”.

## Appendix A

# Rules for writing *hamzaḥ*

*hamzaḥ* is written in four different ways:

1. Seated on an *ʿalif*: ا
2. Seated on an *wāw*: و
3. Seated on an *yāʾ*: ي
4. Unseated: ء

Here are some of notes about writing *hamzaḥ* in the above four methods:

- When unseated *hamzaḥ* is followed by an *ʿalif*: اء, the combination of *hamzaḥ* and *ʿalif* is conventionally written as ا as long as the *ʿalif* is not a suffix or part of a suffix. When the *ʿalif* is a suffix or part of a suffix then we will write اء, not ا.
- When unseated *hamzaḥ* comes between two letters that are joined, then it is written above the line that joins them, for example: خَطِيءَةٌ *khaṭiʿatun*. In this word, the *yāʾ* ي joins to the looped *tāʾ* ط. So the unseated *hamzaḥ* is written above the joining line like so ء.
- When *hamzaḥ* is seated on *ʿalif*, if it has an *i*-mark, it is written below the *ʿalif*: اِ. Otherwise, it is written above the *ʿalif*: اَ, اِ, اِ.
- When *hamzaḥ* is seated on *yāʾ* ي the dots of the *yāʾ* are no longer written. Here's how it will appear in different positions:

Isolated	End	Middle	Beginning
ء	ئ	أ	أ

So how do we know when to write *hamzaḥ* 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 *hamzaḥ*. These rules are quite complicated (although they have a basic underlying strategy in them). We will give the complete set of rules here. But for now, you may limit yourself to understanding the rules for *hamzaḥ* in the beginning of a word. The remaining rules are here for you to refer back to as you come across words with *hamzaḥ*.

1. If *hamzaḥ* occurs in the beginning of a word:
  - a. If the *hamzaḥ* carries a long-*ā* vowel, it is written unseated followed by an *ʿalif* and written as *ā*, for example آمَنَ *ʿāmana*.
  - b. If the *hamzaḥ* carries any other vowel, it is written seated on an *ʿalif*, and is marked with the appropriated vowel mark, for example اسْلَمَ *ʿaslama*, اُرِيْدُ *ʿurīdu*, اِسْلَمُ *ʿislāmu*, اِيْمَانُ *ʿīmānu*, اَوْخَذَ *ʿukhiza*.
2. If *hamzaḥ* occurs in the middle of a word:
  - a. If there is a long vowel or semi-vowel before the *hamzaḥ*:
    - i. If the *hamzaḥ* is after a long-*ī* vowel or *ay* semi-vowel, then the hamza will be written unseated. Examples:  
 هَيَّأَ *hayʿatu*, خَطَّيَّأَ *khaṭīʿatu*  
 مُسَيِّوْنَ *musīʿūna*, مُسَيِّانَ *musīʿāni*, مُسَيِّينَ *musīʿīna*,  
 مُسَيِّينَ *musīʿayni*  
 شَيَّأَ *shayʿuhu*, شَيَّأَ *shayʿahu*, شَيَّأَ *shayʿihi*, شَيَّانَ *shayʿāni*,  
 شَيَّينَ *shayʿayni*  
 مَجَّيَّأَ *majīʿuhu*, مَجَّيَّأَ *majīʿahu*, مَجَّيَّأَ *majīʿihi*
    - ii. If the *hamzaḥ* is after a long-*ū* vowel or *aw* semi-vowel, then: If the *hamzaḥ* has an *i*-mark it is written seated on *yā*. Examples: سُوِّيَ *sūʿihi*, دَوِّيَ *dawʿihi*  
 Otherwise, the *hamzaḥ* is written unseated. Examples: سُوَّأَ *sūʿahu*, سُوَّانَ *sūʿāni*, تَوَّأَ *tawʿamu*, دَوَّأَ *dawʿahu*, دَوَّانَ *dawʿāni*, سُوَّأَ *sūʿuhu*, يَسُوَّوْنَ *yasūʿūna*
  - iii. If the *hamzaḥ* is after a long *ā*-vowel, then: If the *hamzaḥ*

has an *i*-mark it is written seated on  $yā^?$ . Example: سَائِلٌ  $sā^?ilu$ .

If the *hamzaḥ* has an *u*-mark it is written seated on  $wāw$ . Example: تَسَاوُلٌ  $tasā^?ulu$ .

Otherwise, when the *hamzaḥ* has an *a*-mark, it is written unseated. Example: سَاءَلٌ  $sā^?ala$ , قِرَاءَاتٌ  $qirā^?ātu$ .

b. If the letter before the *hamzaḥ* has a  $\emptyset$ -mark and is not  $wāw$  or  $yā^?$ , then:

i. If the *hamzaḥ* was originally at the end of the word, but a suffix has been attached to the word, then the *hamzaḥ* will be written unseated. Examples: عَبَّانٌ  $ʿib^?āni$ , عَبَّيْنِ  $ʿib^?ayni$ , بُطَّهٌ  $buṭ^?ahu$ , بُطَّهٌ  $buṭ^?uhu$ , بُطَّهٍ  $buṭ^?ihi$ . (ان, ين, ه, and ه are suffixes).

ii. Otherwise, if the *hamzaḥ* is originally at the middle of the word, then it is written seated on  $wāw$  if it has an *u*-mark and  $yā^?$  if it has an *i*-mark. Examples: مَسْؤُولٌ  $mas^?ulu$ , تَرْئِيسٌ  $tar^?isu$ .

If the *hamzaḥ* has an *a* mark then:

If it is followed by a long- $\bar{a}$  vowel represented by an  $ʾalif$ , the *hamzaḥ* is unseated followed by the  $ʾalif$  and the combination is written as  $\bar{I}$ . Example: مِرَّآةٌ  $mir^?ātu$ , ظَمَّانٌ  $zam^?ānu$ .

Otherwise, if there is no  $ʾalif$  after the *hamzaḥ*, the *hamzaḥ* is written seated on  $ʾalif$ . Examples: مَسْأَلَةٌ  $mas^?alatu$ , مَرَّأَةٌ  $mar^?ātu$ .

c. If the *hamzaḥ* has a  $\emptyset$ -mark, then it is written seated on  $ʾalif$  if it has an *a*-mark,  $wāw$  if it has an *u*-mark, and  $yā^?$  if it has an *i*-mark. Examples: كَأْسٌ  $ka^?su$ , بَيْتٌ  $bi^?sa$ , سُؤْلٌ  $su^?laka$ .

d. Otherwise, only if the above conditions are not satisfied, then compare the vowel marks of the *hamzaḥ* and the letter before it:

i. If either vowel mark is an *i*-mark then the *hamzaḥ* will be written on a  $yā^?$ . Examples: سُئِلَ  $su^?ila$ , يَأْيَسُ  $ya^?isa$ , مُتَّكِئِينَ  $muttaki^?īna$ .

ii. If neither vowel mark is an *i*-mark, and at least one of the vowel marks is a *u*-mark, then the *hamzaḥ* will be written on a  $wāw$ . Examples: سُئِلَ  $su^?alu$ , رُؤُوسٌ  $ru^?ūsu$ , لُؤْيٌ  $lu^?ayyu$ .

iii. Otherwise, if both of the vowel marks are *a*-marks, then:

If the *hamzaḥ* is followed by a long- $\bar{a}$  vowel represented by an  $ʾalif$ , the *hamzaḥ* is written unseated. Examples: شَتَّانٌ  $shana^?ānu$ .

Otherwise the *hamzaḥ* will be written on an *ʿalif*. Examples:

سَأَلَ *saʿala*, رَأَى *raʿā*.

These set of rules apply even if the *hamzaḥ* or the previous letter

is doubled. Examples رَأَسَ *raʿasa* يُرَاسُ *yuraʿisu* رُئِسَ *ruʿisa*

تَفَاعُلٌ *tafaʿulu* يُبَارَرُونَ *yubarrirūna* يُبَارَرُونَ *yubarraʿūna*.

3. If *hamzaḥ* is at the end of a word, disregard the vowel mark on it and consider only the letter before the *hamzaḥ*.

- If there is a long vowel (*ā*, *ī*, *ū*) or a semi-vowel (*aw*, *ay*) before it then the *hamzaḥ* will be written unseated. Examples: دُعَاءٌ *dueʿāu*, سُوءٌ *sūu*, جِيءَ *jīʿa*, ضُوءٌ *ḍawʿa*, شِيءٌ *shayʿa*.
- Otherwise, if the previous letter has a  $\emptyset$ -mark, the *hamzaḥ* will again be unseated. Examples: بُطٌ *butu*, عَبٌ *ʿibʿu*, شَطٌ *shaṭu*
- Otherwise, if the previous letter is a doubled *wāw* with an *u*-mark, the *hamzaḥ* will again be unseated. Example تَبَوُّؤٌ *tabawwuʿu*.
- Otherwise, if the previous letter has an:
  - a*-mark, the *hamzaḥ* is written seated on *ʿalif*. Example يَهْدَأُ *yahdaʿu*, مُبْتَدَأٌ *mubtadaʿi*.
  - i*-mark, the *hamzaḥ* is written seated on *yāʿ*. Example يُهْدِي *yuhaddiʿu*, سَيِّئٌ *sayyiʿu*.
  - u*-mark, the *hamzaḥ* is written seated on *wāw*. Example بَطُو *baṭuʿa*.

Some further notes:

- If *hamzaḥ* is in the beginning of a word, adding a prefix to the word will not alter the writing of the *hamzaḥ*. Examples: لَأَسْتَادُ = أَسْتَادُ + لَ.
- If *hamzaḥ* is at the end of a word, adding a suffix to the word can, in general, alter the writing of the *hamzaḥ*, except in cases that have already been mentioned above. Examples:

مُبْتَدَأٌ + ان = مُبْتَدِئَانِ

دُعَاءٌ + هُ = دُعَاؤُهُ

ضُوءٌ + هُ = ضُوءُهُ

بُطٌ + هُ = بُطُّهُ

- As we mentioned earlier, when unseated *hamzaḥ* is followed by an *ʿalif* which is not a suffix: لَء, the combination of *hamzaḥ* and *ʿalif* is conventionally written as *lā*. However, if the unseated hamza is doubled and then followed by an *alif*: لَء then it won't be written as *lā*. Example: سَأَّلَ *saʿālu*.