

IV. Grammar Explanation

1.

V	plain form	んです
い-adj		
な-adj	plain form	
N		

～んです is an expression used to explain causes, reasons, grounds, etc., strongly. ～んです is used in spoken language, while ～のです is used in written language. ～んです is used in the following ways.

1) ～んですか

This expression is used in the following cases.

- (1) When the speaker guesses the reason or the cause as to what he has seen or heard and then confirms whether he is correct.

① 渡辺さんは時々大阪弁を使いますね。

大阪に住んでいましたか。

…ええ、15歳まで大阪に住んでいました。

Ms. Watanabe, you sometimes speak Osaka dialect.

Have you lived in Osaka?

…Yes, I lived in Osaka until I was fifteen.

- (2) When the speaker asks for information about what he has seen or heard.

② おもしろいデザインの靴ですね。どこで買ったんですか。

…エドヤストアで買いました。

The design of your shoes is interesting. Where did you buy them?

…I bought this pair at Edoya Store.

- (3) When the speaker asks the listener to explain the reason or the cause of what he has seen or heard.

③ どうして遅れたんですか。

Why were you late?

- (4) When asking for an explanation of a situation.

④ どうしたんですか。

What's the matter?

[Note] “～んですか” sometimes contains the speaker's surprise, suspicion, strong curiosity, etc. Inappropriate use, therefore, may offend the listener, so it is necessary to be careful with this expression.

2) ～んです

This expression is used in the following cases.

- (1) When stating the reason or cause as an answer to such questions as in (3) and (4) in 1) above.

⑤ どうして遅れたんですか。

Why were you late?

…バスが来なかったんです。

…Because the bus didn't come.

⑥ どうしたんですか。

What's the matter?

…ちょっと気分が悪いんです。

…I don't feel well.

- (2) When the speaker adds the reason or the cause to what he's stated.

⑦ 毎朝新聞を読みますか。

Do you read a newspaper every morning?

…いいえ。時間がありません。

…No. I don't have the time.

[Note] ～んです is not used to merely describe the facts as shown in the following example.

わたしはマイク・ミラーです。

I am Mike Miller.

× わたしはマイク・ミラーなんです。

3) ～んですが、～

～んですが is used to introduce a topic. It is followed by a request, an invitation or an expression seeking permission. が in this case is used to connect sentences lightly and indicates hesitation and reservation on the speaker's side. As in ⑩, clauses following ～んですが are often omitted when they are self-evident to the speaker and the listener.

⑧ 日本語で手紙を書いたんですが、ちょっと見ていただけませんか。

I've written a letter in Japanese. Could you please check it for me?

⑨ NHKを見学したいんですが、どうしたらいいですか。

I want to tour NHK. How can I do that?

⑩ お湯が出ないんですが……。

There's no hot water.

2. Vて-form いただけませんか

Would you please do me the favor of ～ing?

This is a request expression that is politer than ～てください。

⑪ いい先生を紹介していただけませんか。

Would you please introduce a good teacher to me?

3. Interrogative Vた-form いいですか

What/When/Where
Which/How/Who } shall I ~?

⑫ どこでカメラを買ったらいいですか。 Where should I buy a camera?

⑬ 細かいお金がないんですが、どうしたらいいですか。

I don't have any small change. What shall I do?

～たらいいですか is used when the speaker asks the listener for some advice or instructions about what to do. In ⑫, the speaker wants to buy a camera but does not know where to buy one, so he asks the listener to recommend a good shop.

4.

N (object)は	好きです/嫌いです	like/dislike	
	上手です/下手です		be good at/be poor at
	あります, etc.		have, etc.

⑭ 運動会に参加しますか。

…いいえ。スポーツはあまり好きじゃないんです。

Are you going to participate in the athletic meeting?

…No. I don't like sports very much.

You learned in Book I (Lessons 10 and 17) that subjects and also objects indicated by を can become topics and be highlighted by は. Objects indicated by が can also be highlighted by は.