

IV. Grammar Explanation

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1.	V い-adj な-adj N	plain form plain form ～だ→～な	～んです
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～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 いたんですか。
…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。
…バスが 来なかつたんです。
⑥ どう したんですか。
…ちょっと 気分が 悪いんです。
Why were you late?
…Because the bus didn't come.
What's the matter?
…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。時間がないんです。

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、～

～なんですが 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 ～なんですが are often omitted when they are self-evident to the speaker and the listener.

- ⑧ 日本語で 手紙を 書いたんですけど、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 見学したいんですけど、どう したら いいですか。

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

- ⑩ お湯が 出ないんですけど……。

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 ら 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 ないんですけど、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 好きですか / 嫌いですか 上手ですか / 下手ですか あります, etc.

like/dislike

be good at/be poor at

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.