

Learning Arabic Grammar from the basics

Lesson 4:

Recap of Last Lesson:

(1) We learnt that there are two types of sentences in Arabic - nominal sentence **الْجُمْلَةُ الْإِسْمِيَّةُ** (*al-jumlatul ismiyyah*) and verbal sentence **الْجُمْلَةُ الْفِعْلِيَّةُ** (*al-jumlatul fi'liyya*)

(2) We learnt about the 2 parts of a Nominal sentence - **الْمُبْتَدَأُ** (*Al-mubtada*), translated as “Nominative Subject” and **الْخَبَرُ** (*Al-khabar*), translated as “Nominative Predicate” and also their properties of which should be kept in mind.

(3) We learnt about Demonstrative pronouns: **إِسْمُ الْإِشَارَةِ** (*Ismu l-ishaara*) - **هَذَا** (*haadha*) & **ذَلِكَ** (*dhaalika*)

(4) We learnt about the Noun and Particle of Questioning i.e. **أَيْنَ** (*ayna*), **أ** (*'aa*) and **هَلْ** (*hal*)

Vocabulary

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• طَالِبَةٌ (<i>taalibah-tun</i> *) - "A (female) student"• طَالِبَاتٌ (<i>taalibaat-un</i>) - "(female) students"• مُدْرِسَةٌ (<i>mudarrisah-tun</i> *) - "A (female) teacher"• مُدْرِسَاتٌ (<i>mudarrisaat-un</i>) – "(female) teachers"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• إِمْرَأَةٌ (<i>'imra'ah-tun</i> *) – "A woman"• نِسَاءٌ (<i>nisaa'-un</i>) - "women"• أَرْضٌ (<i>ard-un</i>) - "Earth/ground" (f)• مَدْرَسَةٌ (<i>madrasah-tun</i> *) – "School" (f)
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Note: Go through the Vocabulary as many times as possible and try and learn these words with meanings in a week's time Insha'Allah. Remember, that without Vocabulary, learning any Language would be of no use.

* The difference between a tied **تاء** and an open one **ت** is that a tied **تاء** is pronounced -ah or -a when you stop on it rather than -at. It will be pronounced -at only if you kept speaking after saying it. If you halt your talk right after pronouncing the tied **تاء**, you must turn it into -ah or -a in regular Arabic.

Preposition: مِنْ - (min)

Generally **مِنْ** is translated as “from” but among its other meanings are: of, some, some of, belonging to, pertaining to, away from, out of, from the direction of.

When **مِنْ** comes before a noun then, like any other preposition, it turns the noun into genitive case.

Also, note that **مِنْ** has a ‘sukoon’ on the ‘noon’ and hence if **مِنْ** comes before a noun that has a sukoon on its first letter, like the definite article **الْ**, then in order to avoid combining two letters with sukoon on them

[something that is avoided in the Arabic language], a FAT-HA is added to the ‘noon’ of **مِنْ**
So, “Min + al-fusooli” will be read and written as “Minal fusooli” and NOT “Min al-fusooli”.

ONLY in the case of **مِنْ** is a fat-ha () used as a linking vowel. **IN MOST OTHER CASES A KASRAH IS USED.** [Note: We used a kasrah in case of the interrogative particle, **هَلْ** (hal). Refer to Lesson 3]

Examples:

مِنْ أَيْنَ أَنْتَ؟ (Min ayna anta?) – Where are you from? (**Literally:** From where are you?)

أَنَا مِنَ الْفَصْلِ (Ana mina l-fasli) – I am from the class. [Note: the sukoon on Min changed to a fathah]

مِنْ أَيْنَ الْكُتُبُ؟ (Min ayna l-kutubu) – Where are the books from?

الْكِتَابُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ (Al-kutubu minan-nisai) – The books are from the women? [Note: nisaa-un changes to genitive i.e. nisaa-i because of the preposition min and the tanween is not there because of (Al)]

Genders

In Arabic, all nouns fall into one of two genders: masculine (*mudhakkar*): **مُذَكَّر** or feminine (*mu'annath*): **مُنْثَّث**. There is no neuter. There are, however, a few nouns which may be considered either masculine or feminine.

A. Masculine Form:

All nouns are considered masculine unless they have a feminine endings (ة) [taa' marboota or round/tied taa] or (ى) [alif maqsoora] or (اء) [alif hamza]. There are very few exceptions to this.

B. Feminine Form:

(1) The most common feminine form is the one ending in (ة) **التَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ**, (at-taa' al-marboota or round/tied

taa) which is the usual feminine ending e.g. **سَيَّارَةٌ** (sayyarah-tun) meaning "a car", **طَالِبَةٌ** (taalibah-tun) - "A (female) student "

The (ة) **التَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ** [at-taa' al-marboota or round/tied taa] is added to masculine nouns and adjectives to make them feminine. [Note: The last letter before the (ة) takes a fathah.]

Words	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular
A Teacher	مُدَّرِّسٌ (mudarris-un)	مُدَّرِّسَةٌ (mudarrisah)
A Student	طَالِبٌ (taalib-un)	طَالِبَةٌ (taalibah)
A Muslim	مُسْلِمٌ (Muslim-un)	مُسْلِمَةٌ (Muslimah)

Note: If there are Nouns ending in (ة) **التَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ** (at-taa' al-marboota) but clearly indicates a male, then it is masculine and not feminine.

Example: **حَمَزَةٌ** (Hamzah), **أَسَامَةٌ** (Usaamah), **مُعَاوِيَةٌ** (Mu'aawiyah), **طَلْحَةٌ** (Talhah)

The less common feminine forms are:

(2) أَلِفٌ مَّقْصُورَةٌ (ى) (alif maqsoorah) - All nouns with an *alif maqsoorah* are also feminine e.g. مُسْتَشْفَى (Mustashfa) meaning hospital. Note that there aren't two dots under the "Yaa". It is a classical beginner error to pronounce this word as "Mustashfi" rather than "Mustashfa" so watch for the two dots!

(3) أَلِفٌ هَمْزَةٌ (اء) (alif hamzah) – This is also known as أَلِفٌ مَمْدُودَةٌ (Alif Mamdooda). All nouns with an *Alif Mamdooda* are also feminine e.g. نِسَاءٌ (nisaa-un) - "women" or أَذْكَيَاءٌ (Adhkiya'u) meaning those men who are intelligent.

However, in determining the gender of a word of such forms, it is advisable to consult the dictionary because of the frequency of exceptions. [Note: As of now, we are not dealing into these in much detail]

There are certain words which are considered feminine by convention. Such words, generally, fall in the following categories:

a. Geographical names, i.e. towns, villages, countries, etc. [Examples: مَكَّةُ (Makkah), جِدَّةُ (Jeddah)]

b. Parts of the human body that occur in **pairs** [Examples: يَدٌ (yad-un) "hand" and عَيْنٌ (a'yn) "eye".]

[Note: All body parts which are singular (nose, head, face) are Masculine in Arabic]

c. Certain nouns which are feminine by convention

[Examples: شَمْسٌ (shams-un) "sun", نَفْسٌ (nafs-un) "soul", أَرْضٌ (ard-un) "earth", نَارٌ (naar-un) "fire"]

In this category, there are a few words which may be either feminine or masculine such as طَرِيقٌ (Tareeq)

"road", سِكِّينٌ (sikkeen) "knife", or سَوْقٌ (sooq-un) "market".

d. Letters of the Arabic alphabet [Examples: أ (alif-un), ب (baa-un)]

Proper Names in Arabic

Proper names in Arabic are definite even though they generally DO NOT have ال added to the beginning.

Many male proper names which are derived from nouns or adjectives have (ُ) (tanween) as their final vowel even though they are DEFINITE.

Example: حَامِدٌ is just "Hamid", and not "a Hamid"

Feminine nouns DO NOT carry a "tanween" as their final vowel as some of the masculine names do.

Example: زَيْنَبُ (Zainab-u) , فَاطِمَةٌ (Faatimah-tu) , عَائِشَةٌ (Aaishah-tu)

So, Faatimah-tun is **Incorrect** Zainab-un is **Incorrect** because of the tanween.

Note: Male names have tanween and hence have (-un) sound in the end.

Female names don't take tanween and hence only have the (-u) sound in the end.

Mamnoo' Min As-Sarf مَمْنُوعٌ مِنَ الصَّرْفِ

(Mamnoo' Min As-Sarf) is a term that is used for a particular group of nouns which do not accept tanween and when they are in a state of مَجْرُورٌ (majroor) i.e. genitive, they take Fathah and **NOT** kasra.

Remember: The Mamnoo' Min As-Sarf DO NOT like two things, and they are nunation/tanween and the kasra.

As of now just remember that Male names ending in (ة) التَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ [at-taa' al-marboota] and all female proper names, are Mamnoo' Min As-Sarf.

Example: If you wanted to say “This book is from Muhammad,” you would say: هَذَا الْكِتَابُ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ (haadha l-kitaabu min Muhammad-in). Min is a preposition, hence Muhammadun becomes Muhammadin (genitive case)

But, if you wanted to say “This book is from Talhah,” you'd say: هَذَا الْكِتَابُ مِنْ طَلْحَةَ (haadha l-kitaabu min Talha-ta).

Min is a preposition; Talha-ta is in the genitive case; but since it is mamnoo' min as-sarf, genitive case is shown with fatha instead of kasra.

It is NOT “Talhat-i” or “Talhat-in” because Males name ending in taa' marboota, are mamnoo' min as-sarf and hence cannot take a kasra nor a tanween.

Similarly, if you wanted to say “this book is from Zaynab,” you would say: هَذَا الْكِتَابُ مِنْ زَيْنَبَ (notice it's Zaynaba, not Zaynabi). Again, since Zaynab is a feminine word, hence it is mamnoo min as-sarf.

Example: هَلْ فَاطِمَةٌ مِنْ مَكَّةَ؟ (hal Faatimah-tu min makkata?) – Is Faatimah from Makkah ?

This section is just an introduction to this topic of Mamnoo' Min As-Sarf. Insha'Allah in the near future, we'll discuss what classes or categories of words are mamnoo' min as-sarf.

Few Examples:

مِنْ أَيْنَ عَائِشَةُ؟ (Min ayna Aaishatu?) – Where is Aaishah from?

عَائِشَةُ طَالِبَةٌ مِنْ مَدْرَسَةٍ فِي مَكَّةَ (Aaishatu taalibaatun min madrasah-tin fee Makkah-ta) – Aaisha is a student from a school in Makkah.

أَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ فَاطِمَةَ؟ ('aa haadha kitaabu-n min Faatimah-ta?) – Is this book from Faatimah?

لَا , هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ زَيْنَبَ (Laa, Haadha Kitaabu-n min Zaynaba) – No, This book is from Zaynab

الْكَتُبُ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ مِنْ زَيْنَبَ وَ عَائِشَةُ مُدْرِسَةٌ فِي مَدْرَسَةٍ (al-kutubu min Muhammad-in wa min zaynab-a wa Aaishah-tu mudarrisah-tun fi madrasah-tin) – The books are from Muhammad and from Zainab and Aaishah is a teacher in a school.