Arabic Syntax

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علمُ النَّحو

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The Science of نحو

Definition, Purpose and Subject Matter

نحو is the science of classical Arabic which deals with how to identify the grammatical positioning of the three parts of speech; إسم, فعل and حرف by recognizing the changes which occur at their end. In addition to this, it discusses how to connect the parts of speech with one another and make meaningful sentences.

The purpose of **نحو** is to guard one from making errors when articulating and understanding the language of the Arabs. From the various sciences associated with the Arabic language, **نحو** is by far the most important.

All discussions in **نحو** are centered upon words, phrases, and sentences.

Mapping the Arabic Language

The most basic utterance which comes out of the human beings mouth is termed 'لفذ'. If it has no established meaning, it is known as 'مُهمَل' (meaningless), whereas if it does convey established meaning, it is called 'مَوضوع' (meaningful). مَوضوع could be either one word, termed **مُفرَد** (single) also known as 'كلمة' (word) or a group of words; مُرَكَّب (compound). The group of words can be linked together so as to result in a complete sentence; مركَّب مفيد/جملة/كلام (beneficial combination/sentence), or it may constitute a phrase; مركَّب غير مفيد (non-beneficial combination).

كلمة:

The Arabic 'word' (كلمة) is divided into three types; إسم, فعل and حرف. Stated otherwise, every word in the Arabic dictionary falls into one of these three categories. Unlike English which has eight parts of speech, in Arabic there are only three. This inconsistency will become clear only after precise definitions are given to the three types:

1. إسم: is the 'كلمة' that gives a full independent meaning in itself and is not linked to time, e.g. رجل (man), بيت (house). The category is broader than 'noun' in that it also includes three others from the eight English parts of speech, namely pronouns, adjectives and adverbs.

2. فعل: is the 'كلمة' that gives a full independent meaning in itself and is also linked to time, e.g. كَتَبَ (wrote), يَنصُرُ (helps). This is exactly the same as the 'verb' in English.

3. حرف: is the 'كلمة' which has no independent meaning of its own i.e. can only be understood after coupling either a noun or a verb to it, e.g. في (in), على (on), و (and). This category includes prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.

The Sentence (جملة/مركّب مفيد)

A sentence is a group of words that conveys to the point of satisfaction either information or desire e.g. الرَّجُلُ طَويلٌ (The man is tall), خُذْ الكِتابَ (Take the book), رَبّي إرزُقْني (My lord! Give me sustenance). It is primarily of two types:

1. جُملةٌ خَبَريّةٌ: is the جُمله wherein the possibility of truth and falsehood exists: e.g. البِنتُ عاقِلةٌ (The girl is intelligent), المُعَلِّمُ حاضِرٌ (The teacher is present).

2. جُملةٌ إنشائيّةٌ: is the جُمله whose meaning does not support the possibility of truth and falsehood e.g. هل عِندَكَ قَلَمٌ (Do you have a pen?), إشرَب الماء (Drink the water!).

A sentence, essentially, is the conveyance in words of a specific linkage made between two 'ideas'; one primary, the other descriptive within the mind of the speaker. Now if the two ideas also exist in the outside world and what the speaker is saying corresponds to the outer reality, it is termed true. If it does not correspond it is called false. For instance the sentence (زَيدٌ نائمٌ) زَيدٌ is sleeping) in which the idea of sleeping has been linked affirmatively to زَيدٌ can be verified by judging it with the reality. When looking towards what exists in the world, if we see زَيدٌ is actually sleeping, it would mean the affirmation is correct, and hence the statement is true. Otherwise, it would be false. In a جُملةٌ إنشائيّةٌ no such external reality exists. It is the words of the speaker which for the first time are bringing the two ideas together. إنشاء literally means to originate. Now we see clearly why sentences such as questions and commands do not support truth and falsehood; confirmation and non-confirmation to external reality can not occur due to there being no such reality.

Keeping in mind the above explanation, EVERY possible sentence can be easily classified into either إنشائيّة or خَبَريّة, including sentences about which we know with absolute certitude that they are true, such as 'Allah created the heavens', or likewise with certitude we know their falsehood, such as 'The sky is below us'. Both these and similar statements are without doubt خَبَريّة sentences, for they have external realities to which they either confirm or not confirm. It is the existence of this reality (or non-existence) which determines whether the sentence will be classified خَبَريّةٌ or إنشائيّة.

إسمِيّه/فعلِيّه:

We said every sentence is essentially made up of two parts; a primary one and a descriptive one. First they link together in the mind of the speaker. Then they are conveyed through the medium of words. This linkage which results in a sentence is termed 'إِسْناد'. The primary part or subject of the sentence is called 'مُسْنَد إِليهِ' and the descriptive part or predicate is known as 'مُسْنَد'. To illustrate, consider a boy (وَلَدٌ) and the idea of laziness (كَسلٌ). There are several ways these two ideas can be linked together. Some will result in sentences while others will form only phrases:

1. الوَلَدُ الكَسلانُ, the lazy boy: a descriptive phrase

2. كَسَلُ الوَلَدِ, the boy's laziness: a possessive phrase

3. الوَلَدُ كَسلانُ, The boy is lazy: a full sentence (إِسناد – جملة إِسميّة).

4. كَسِلَ الوَلَدُ, The boy became lazy: also a full sentence (إِسناد – جملة فعليّة).

In the third example "الوَلَدُ كَسلانُ" the إِسم 'الوَلَدُ' which appears first is the مُسْنَد إِليهِ i.e. the primary part of the sentence. The إِسم (in this case adjective) كَسلانُ is the predicate and it appears second.

In the fourth example "كَسِلَ الوَلَدُ" again it's the إِسم : الوَلَدُ which is being talked 'about', so it is the مُسْنَد إِليه. Only here it does not appear first, but second. The فعل (verb) كَسِلَ, appearing first, is the descriptive part and therefore the مُسْنَد.

We see there is no consistent order in which they must appear. Subject and predicate do not mean first and second. They mean primary and descriptive. When the sentence comprises of just two words, as in both the above examples, identifying the two is still relatively easy. However, like in all languages, sentences in Arabic are not restricted to just two words. They can be very long. Having sentences which are between ten and say twenty words long is quite normal in Arabic. It is in such complex sentences that the process of identifying the subject, (made up of multiple phrases) from the predicate (also compound) becomes somewhat difficult. A great portion of نحو is devoted to parsing and analyzing sentences in order to determine the subject from the predicate, for even the basic translation of a sentence depends entirely on it. It is for this reason great scholars like Ibn Khaldun say "أَهَمُّها النَّحوُ إِذ لَولاه أَصلُ التَفاهُم". (The most important of the sciences associated with the Arabic language is نحو, for without it no communication can exist). لُغَه which is knowledge of vocabulary, according to him is the least important aspect of Arabic.

To make recognition of the مُسْنَد إِليه and مُسْنَد somewhat easier the scholars of نحو further classify the sentence into two categories based on the first word in the sentence:

1. جمله أسميّه: the sentence which begins with an إسم e.g. الوَلَدُ قائمٌ (The boy is standing). The two parts are known as مُبتَدا and خَبَر (subject and predicate).

2. جمله فعليّه: the sentence which begins with a فعل e.g. ذَهَبَ حامِدٌ (Hamid went). The two parts are known as فعل and فاعل (verb and subject).

The Two Parts of the إسميّه Sentence:

The مُسنَد إليهِ, when it appears in an إسميَّه structure, is called مُبتَدا. With rare exception, it will be first in the sentence. The مُسنَد in this type of sentence is called خَبَر.

The Two Parts of the فعليّه Sentence:

The مُسنَد إليه, when it appears in the فعليَّه sentence, it is called فاعل or subject of the verb preceding it. Unlike in English, the verb ALWAYS precedes the subject in Arabic. Therefore, in this type of sentence the مُسنَد إليه i.e. the فاعل will always come after the descriptive part or predicate. The predicate (مُسنَد) is known simply as فعل. These ideas are summarized below in Table 1-A.

	جُملَة إسِميِة	جُملَة فِعلِية
مُسنَد إليه	مبتدا	فعل
مُسنَد	خبر	فاعل

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.**-A** - إسـناد

Grammatical States

Introduction

Human beings experience emotional states based on interaction with one another. People make us happy, angry, and sad etc. These states are then reflected on our faces by our facial expressions i.e. smiles, frowns etc. Arabic words behave in a similar fashion. They enter grammatical states because of interaction with surrounding words. These 'grammatical states' are then reflected on the last letter of the word. Unlike human emotions, grammatical states in Arabic are just four:

رفع - the nominative case.

نصب - the accusative case.

جر - the genitive case.

جزم - the jussive case.

We see this in the English language to a very restricted degree in pronouns. Take for example the three variations of the third person masculine pronoun; he, him and his or for the feminine; she, her and her, for the second person masculine; you, you and your and for the first person; I, me and my.

The reason why the same meaning is being conveyed using three different words is to reflect grammatical state. When the pronoun is intended to be subject of the verb, 'he' or 'she' is used. Likewise for object, one must use 'him' or 'her'. In the English language this discussion is restricted to pronouns. For nouns, regardless of how the noun is used, there will be no difference in the way the noun is pronounced. In Arabic this process is extended to ALL nouns.

Reflection of Grammatical States - إعراب

The name given to this process is إعراب. Therefore, إعراب is the process by which grammatical states are reflected on the last letter of words by change in vowelling or lettering, either explicitly or assumed.

The need for this occurs because in Arabic, we have no other way of determining whether a given noun is being made the subject of the verb or the object, or whether it is in the possessive case. There is no rule in Arabic which states the subject HAS to come before the object. A verb followed by two nouns can have any of the following three possibilities:

The first is subject and second is object.

Vice versa.

The two nouns together form a possessive phrase

For instance, if the verb ضَرَبَ (hit) is followed by the two nouns وَلَد (boy) and زَيْد (a person's name), the sentence can have three possible meanings:

A boy hit Zaid.

Zaid hit a boy.

Zaid's boy hit… (Someone else)!

It is apparent from the above that some sort of system of reflection is needed to determine the intended structure while excluding the other two. In Arabic this is done by giving the last letter a distinct vowelling or lettering.[1]

Before moving further it is important to know which of the three parts of speech experience these states and reflection process, and which do not. This is important because every word will have some sort of ending including state-less words. There is a sub-set of words that do not enter grammatical states and hence there endings have no grammatical significance. One may liken them to a 'stoic' person who remains emotionless. When confronted with this state-less type of word, one should be fully aware of its state-less nature and not assume grammatical meaning from the ending.

Statelessness - مبني vs. معرب

Now, returning back to our discussion, we said it is important to understand from the outset which of the parts of speech experience 'إعراب' (i.e. are معرب) and which don't (i.e. are مبني), so that false grammatical assumptions may be effectively avoided. (Refer to the previous section.)

Recall that the purpose of إعراب was to determine between various grammatical usages, such as subject, object, and possessive case, by way of last letter reflection. A simple pondering on the three definitions given

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[1] See Appendix A for a discussion of how meanings are conveyed in the Arabic language, with reference to Ibn Khaldun and the Prophet (pbuh).

above will reveal that only إسمs have the capacity of ever becoming subject, object, or being used in the possessive case. To illustrate further, let's try making a فعل (i.e. verb) the subject of another verb and see how it sounds, while contrasting it to when a noun is made subject. Went was quick! Going was quick; meaning the act of going was quick. Primarily, the reason why 'went' did not make sense and 'going' did is because 'went' has a tense in it, preventing it from becoming subject, whereas going is an act with no tense. In any case, from the above explanation and example it becomes clear that verbs can not be made subject, object etc., and the same goes for particles. *So when these two categories will never become subjects, objects etc., they have no need for reflection. They should be state-less (مبني) in their entirety.* Therefore, the logical division should have been as follows:

أسماء: all معرب.

أفعال: all مبني.

حروف: all مبني.

Had the division been like this, things would have been easy and the discussion would have ended. Unfortunately, the existing reality is a bit different from this. The reality is as follows:

حروف: All مبني. (the way they're supposed to be)

أفعال: 80% مبني (the way they're supposed to be), 20% معرب. This 20% needs to be accounted for.

أسماء: 80% معرب (the way they're supposed to be), 20% مبني. This 20% also needs to be explained.

It is this very explanation which will be the focus of the rest of this discussion, إن شاء الله .

The scholars of صرف (Arabic Morphology) have classified the فعل into 4 types, namely:

ماضي, the past tense verb e.g. كَتَبَ (wrote). This category is مبني in its entirety i.e. No governing agent will ever enter upon a past-tense conjugation and alter its ending.

مضارع, the present and future tense verb e.g. يَنصُرُ (helps, or will help)…or one may refer to the first as 'perfect' i.e. occurred and the second as 'imperfect', meaning ongoing, either presently in the process of occurring or will begin at a future time.

أمر, imperative or command verb e.g. إشرِبْ (Drink!)

نهي, negative command or prohibition e.g. لا تَشرِبْ (Don't drink)

To more easily explain the 20% of verbs that do enter grammatical states and therefore are معرب, we need to modify this classification slightly. This will be done by examining the last two verbs in a somewhat detailed manner in the next chapter.

Process of Reflection - إعراب أسماء و أفعال

Recall from the discussion of the 4 types of فعل in the previous section, that the ماضي (the past tense verb) is مبني in its entirety i.e. no governing agent will ever enter upon it and alter its ending. Skipping مضارع and leaving it for last, let's take a look at the remaining two verbs: أمر and نهي.

The 20% of Verbs that are معرب

Recall that أمر, which is the command verb, like all verbs, will have an active as well as a passive. Each table will have 14 conjugations. (Refer to the صرف book) However, when contemplating the reality of Amr, we see something unique not found in the other types of verbs, namely, the fact that literally speaking commands have to be directed to someone being addressed. By literal definition, أمر must be second person and in the active voice, such as Sit! Drink! Read! Etc... Does that mean you can't use an أمر verb in the passive voice or in other than the second person? Well you can, but it won't be a literal أمر, it would be a figurative way of speaking. Take for instance second person passive with the verb 'to help' i.e. You must get helped, or third person active, He must help, or third person passive, He must get helped. Now contrast these three with just Help! You will see a sharp difference in literal and figurative application of the term 'command' upon the various conjugations of the أمر tables. For this reason, the scholars of Sarf tend to break down the table of 14 into two smaller tables, the first being just the middle six conjugations of the second person, and the other being the remaining 8, a combination of the third person 6 plus numbers 13 and 14. When they did this, to keep things level, they also broke down the passive table into two similar tables, although the above reasoning does not apply to the passive table. Now, instead of two big tables of 14 and 14, we have four small tables:

أمر حاضر معروف (second person active command) e.g.إضرِب, Hit!

أمر حاضر مجهول (second person passive command) e.g. لِتُضرَب, You must get hit.

أمر غائب و متكلّم (third & first person active command) e.g. لِيَضرِب, He must hit

أمر غائب و متكلّم مجهول (third & first person passive command) e.g. لِ⊙يُضرَب, He must get hit.

Keeping in mind the whole above discussion, now look at the four small gardaans of the نهي verb which is the negative command:

لا تَضرِب, (second person active prohibition) e.g. نهي حاضر معروف, Don't hit!

لا تُضرَب, (second person passive prohibition) e.g. نهي حاضر مجهول, You must not get hit.

لا يَضرِب , (third & first person active prohibition) e.g. نهي غائب و متكلّم He must not hit.

لا (third & first person passive prohibition) e.g. نهي غائب و متكلّم مجهول يُضرَب, He must not get hit.

Note the structure of the eight examples:

إضرِب was the first, then we had three that began with 'لِ', followed by four that began with 'لا'.

Significant? From a pure صرف perspective, not really, because verb conjugation, more than anything else, has to do with the designated letters at the end of the verbs which make the conjugations slightly different in how they look and sound, and that's why we memorize them, with particular attention given to those slight differences.

However, from a نحو point of view, the difference between إضرِب and the rest is very profound. (If you understand this, you've understood a lot, insha Allah.)

What the scholars of نحو did, is they looked at the above 8 examples, noting that all end with a ْ 'سكون'. Then they saw, seven of them have particles i.e. governing agents in front of them, either 'لِ'or 'لا'. From this, they deduced that the sukoon at the end of all except إضرِب is a reflection of grammatical state. Therefore, these gardaans are not separate verbs, but rather THE SAME مضارع (present-tense verb) in the state of 'جزم'. In other words لِتُضرِب, لِيَضرِب, لِيُضرَب and the four نهي tables are nothing more than تَضرَبُ, يُضرَبُ ,يَضرِبُ and تُضرَبُ with either 'لِ'or 'لا' in front of them, both of which are 'جزم' giving particles.

As for 'إضرِب' i.e. the second person, active command, they said this is different for two reasons:

It does not begin with a recognized prefix of the present-tense verb, ي, ت, ء, or ن. Therefore, it cannot be incorporated into the مضارع category, as we did to the others.

Furthermore, it does not have a governing agent before it which could explain away the sukoon at the end of it, meaning no grammatical reflection can be attributed to this last letter sukoon.

For these two reasons, the scholars of نحو have classified the فعل somewhat different than the scholars of صرف. This happens by taking seven of the above eight tables and incorporating them into مضارع and keeping أمر حاضر معروف as the third distinct type of فعل. The breakdown is as follows:

ماضي, the past-tense verb. مبني in its entirety, as mentioned previously.

مضارع, the present and future-tense verb. Predominantly معرب, as will be seen shortly.

أمر حاضر معروف, the second person, active-command verb, also مبني in its entirety.

The present-tense verb (مضارع), like all verbs, also has 14 conjugations. From the 14, two conjugations, namely the two feminine plurals (number 6 and 12) are مبني i.e. will never change despite the governing agent entering upon them. The final 'ن' at the end of these two conjugations is actually the pronoun, and from it we get the plural feminine meaning.

As for the other 12 conjugations of the present-tense verb, they are all معرب PROVIDED THAT THEY ARE FREE OF THE 'ن' OF EMPHASIS. These 12 conjugations can be split into two groups:

Those that end in a ◌ُ in the state of رفع. This would include 5 conjugations; numbers 1, 4, 7 and the last two, 13 and 14.

Those that end with a ◌ُ in the state of رفع, the remaining seven conjugations i.e. the four duals, plus numbers 3, 9 and 10.

Types of ن

Before we proceed, it is important to note that in total there are three different types of 'ن'!

The first is the 'ن' of feminine plurality. This is actually a pronoun (and not a reflection of رفع). It comes at the end of conjugation numbers 6 and 12 and will never drop.

The second is what they call, the 'ن إعرابي'. The function of this 'ن' is to reflect that the مضارع verb is in its default state of رفع. The presence of this 'ن' at the end of the seven conjugations mentioned above will indicate رفع. The pronoun is the letter before the 'ن' i.e. an 'ا' for the four duals, a 'و' for the two masculine plurals, and 'ي' for number ten, the second person singular feminine. In نصب and جزم, this 'ن' will drop.

The third and final 'ن' is what we referred to as the 'ن' of emphasis. This is a special 'ن' which is a particle and is attached to the end of the مضارع. It comes in both a ساكن form as well as a مشدد form. Its meaning function is twofold. Firstly it eliminates the present tense and makes the verb specific to the future. Secondly it adds emphasis to the future tense meaning (verily or surely). All conjugations of the present-tense verb become مبني as a result of it.

Now we can clearly see the 20% of verbs which are معرب and distinguish them from the 80% that are مبني:

ماضي - مبني in its entirety.

أمر حاضر معروف - مبني also.

مبني -مضارع with the 'ن' of feminine plurality (6 and 12)

مبني- مضارع with the 'ن' of emphasis (all 14 conjugations)

مضارع - 'ن' empty of the above mentioned both معرب

Note that from a total five only one is معرب and four are مبني. Four from five is 80% and one from five is 20%.

Essential Note on بناء

Thus far we have covered five types of مبني words.

All حروف.

ماضي.

أمر حاضر معروف.

مضارع with the 'nun' of feminine plurality.

مضارع with the 'nun' of emphasis.

Depending on the reason of 'بناء' (statelessness), مبني words are of two types:

مبني الأصل - words that are truly مبني i.e. They never enter grammatical states and therefore have no need for the process of reflection called أعراب. The first three from the above five are مبني الأصل.

مبني مشابه - words that are مبني due to a secondary reason such as resemblance to the first category, meaning they do enter grammatical states and hence need the reflection that أعراب provides. However, owing to some external reason, their last letters remain constant despite the many governing agents that enter upon them. مضارع with the 'ن' of feminine plurality is مبني because the final 'ن' at the end of these two conjugations RESEMBLES the 'ن' of فَعَلنَ i.e. conjugation number 6 of the past-tense table, whereas the emphatic tables are مبني in their entirety due to the 'ن' of emphasis being a particle and particles do not give way to last letter change.

The 20% of أسماء that are مبني

From the perspective of أعراب and بناء, the 'إسم' is classified into two categories:

أسماء that do not resemble مبني الأصل and are therefore معرب. :أسم مُتَمَكِّن This category comprises of the vast majority of أسماء (about 80%), divided into 16 types to be discussed at a later time. Grammatical state in them will be reflected on the last letter as mentioned previously. This reflection can be via 'حركات' i.e. short vowels; ضمّة, فتحة and كسرة, and also by means of letters such as long vowels (ا, و and ى). It may be explicit or assumed. For the most part, there will be a full separate reflection for each grammatical state. Occasionally, there will be just two reflections for all three of the states أسماء enter. From this we see that رفع does not necessarily mean ضمّة, nor does نصب or جر mean فتحة and كسرة. رفع, نصب and جر are the states and ضمّة, فتحة and كسرة are just one method of their reflection. There may

be others. In human beings happiness is usually reflected by smiles, but it doesn't have to be like that. Sometimes it's through tears. In animals happiness is reflected by tail-wagging for instance …. In total for معرب أسماء (the 16 types of أسم مُتَمَكِّن), there are nine methods of reflection. These will be covered in detail once we are done explaining the مبني nouns, insha Allah.

مبني. and are therefore مبني الأصل that do resemble أسماء: أسم غير مُتَمَكِّن مبني nouns are 8 types. Under each are just a few أسماء. Together they account for less then 20% of أسماء.

The eight categories are listed below.

مضمرات or ضمائر : Personal Pronouns.

الأسماء الموصولة : Relative Pronouns.

الأسماء الإشارة : Demonstrative Pronouns.

أسماء الأفعال : Nouns in the meaning of verbs!

أسماء الضُروف : أسماء which indicate on time or place (type of Adverb).

أسماء الأصوات : Words which are used to refer to sounds or noises.

مركَّب بناء : A small group of words which were originally phrases, namely the numbers from eleven to nineteen.

كِنايات : Words that refer to vagueness in speech or number etc. (Like 'so many' in English.)

Personal Pronouns - ضمائر

Pronouns in Arabic are much more than what we have in English. To fully understand all the groupings of Arabic Pronouns, contrasting them with their English counter-parts will be helpful. In English, primarily we have three groups of pronouns: nominative, accusative and genitive. They are listed below:

Nominative: he, she, they, you, I and we
Accusative: him, her, them, you, me and us
Genitive: his, her, their, your, my and our

Note that in the plural third person (they), gender is irrelevant, meaning the same pronoun is used for feminine and masculine, while in the second person both gender AND plurality are not considered. Likewise, the singular feminine third person (her) is used twice in accusative as well as genitive. So basically the total number of pronouns in English is only 18 and after dropping the ones which are used twice 16.

In Arabic, the total number is very high at 84: six groupings, each of which has a full 14 pronouns. To understand the significance of the number 14 here, recall what we mentioned when explaining the conjugation tables. Six groupings is because in addition to the three groupings mentioned above Arabic also has governing agents. If a pronoun is said to be in رفع due to being subject for instance, there must be something to cause the رفع preceding the pronoun, which in this case would be the verb. Thus the verb in نحو is called the 'عامل' (governing agent). This will happen in all three of the states أسماء enter into; رفع, نصب and جر. Now the pronoun may be attached (مُتَّصِل) to the agent and both written as ONE WORD, or the agent could be a separate word and the pronoun written by itself (مُنفَصِل). In each case the pronoun will look different. For جر there is no مُنفَصِل, because the agents of جر are just two, namely prepositions and مضاف, which puts the مضاف إليه in the state of جر. Both agents REQUIRE that the pronoun after them be attached. This leaves us with a total of five groups. Then because the مجرور one can have only two agents, it is mentioned twice, thus making the number of groupings six (with 14 under each):

مرفوع متّصل : Nominative pronoun attached to its agent e.g. the تُ in ضَرَبتُ (I hit).

مرفوع منفصل : Nominative pronoun separate from its agent. هُوَ which means 'he'.

منصوب متّصل : Accusative pronoun attached to its agent e.g. the هُ in رَأَيتُهُ (I saw 'him')

منصوب منفصل : Accusative pronoun separate from its agent e.g. إيّاكَ (you alone).

حرف جر with مجرور متّصل : Genitive pronoun attached to preposition e.g. the هُ in لَهُ (for him).

مضاف with مجرور متّصل : Genitive pronoun attached to مضاف e.g. the هُ in دارُهُ (his house).

All of these 84 pronouns are مبني due to their dependency upon nouns. In order to be used in speech, third person pronouns need to be preceded by

nouns and so forth. Dependency is a characteristic of particles: one of the three مبني الأصل.

The following is a full table of all the ضَمائر discussed in this section:

مجرور متّصِل		منصوب		مرفوع			صيغة
بِمضاف	بحرف جر	منفصل	متّصِل	مُنفَصِل	متّصِل		
					مضارع	ماضي	
دارُهُ	لَهُ	إيّاهُ	هُ	هُوَ	يَضرِبُ (هو)	ضَرَبَ (هو)	واحد مذكر غائب
دارُهُما	لَهُما	إيّاهُما	هُما	هُما	يَضرِبانِ	ضَرَبا	تثنية مذكر غائب
دارُهُم	لَهُم	إيّاهُم	هُم	هُم	يَضرِبُونَ	ضَرَبُوا	جمع مذكر غائب
دارُها	لَها	إيّاها	ها	هِيَ	تَضرِبُ (هي)	ضَرَبَتْ (هي)	واحد مؤنث غائب
دارُهُما	لَهُما	إيّاهُما	هُما	هُما	تَضرِبانِ	ضَرَبَتا	تثنية مؤنث غائب
دارُهُنَّ	لَهُنَّ	إيّاهُنَّ	هُنَّ	هُنَّ	يَضرِبنَ	ضَرَبنَ	جمع مؤنث غائب
دارُكَ	لَكَ	إيّاكَ	كَ	أنتَ	تَضرِبُ (هو)	ضَرَبْتَ	واحد مذكر حاضر
دارُكُما	لَكُما	إيّاكُما	كُما	أنتُما	تَضرِبانِ	ضَرَبْتُما	تثنية مذكر حاضر
دارُكُم	لَكُم	إيّاكُم	كُم	أنتُم	تَضرِبُونَ	ضَرَبْتُم	جمع مذكر حاضر
دارُكِ	لَكِ	إيّاكِ	كِ	أنتِ	تَضرِبينَ	ضَرَبْتِ	واحد مؤنث حاضر
دارُكُما	لَكُما	إيّاكُما	كُما	أنتُما	تَضرِبانِ	ضَرَبْتُما	تثنية مؤنث

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							حاضر
دَارُكُنَّ	لَكُنَّ	إيّاكُنَّ	كُنَّ	أنْتُنَّ	تَضرِبنَ	ضَرَبْتُنَّ	جمع مؤنث حاضر
دَارِيَ	لِي	إيّايَ	ي	أنا	أضرِبُ (أنا)	ضَرَبْتُ	واحد متكلم
دَارُنا	لَنا	إيّانا	نا	نَحنُ	نَضرِبُ (نَحن)	ضَرَبْنَا	جمع متكلم

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.**-B - Personal Pronouns**

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الأسماء الموصولة - **Relative Pronouns**

</div>

In order to fully understand what relative pronouns are, one needs to be informed about the موصوف – صفة phrase which in Arabic grammar is the noun-adjective phrase, an expression of usually two أسماء in which the second إسم describes the first.

e.g. رَجُلٌ كَرِيمٌ (a noble man), or

الرَّجُلُ الكَرِيمُ (the noble man)

From the aspects in which the موصوف and صفة have to correspond, is being معرفه or نكره (definite or indefinite). In most cases both words are أسماء and correspondence is fairly simple. Adding 'ال' to both words will make it 'the noble man' whereas keeping both words empty will leave it 'a noble man'. However, occasionally the need arises to describe a noun using a whole sentence. Take for instance the phrase 'a man who I met yesterday'. 'I met yesterday' is a full sentence. It was used in the above example to describe the indefinite noun 'a man'.

The scholars of نحو have attached a value to the informative sentence (جملة خبرية) and have told us it's 'نكره'. Therefore, if the above example were to be rendered into Arabic it would read as follows: رَجُلٌ لَقِيتُهُ أمسٍ. No extra word is needed between the noun being described i.e. the موصوف 'رَجُلٌ' and the sentence لَقِيتُهُ أمسٍ, for they are both نكره and correspondence is complete. On the other hand, were the موصوف to be معرفه, we would have had a problem of matching the two. To convey the meaning 'the man who I met yesterday', merely adding an 'ال' to the موصوف would not suffice. We would be left with a نكره صفة (the جملة خبرية) and a موصوف معرف (الرَّجُلُ). The only way this meaning could be validly conveyed is if somehow that value attached to the جملة خبرية could be transformed into a معرفه value. This is where the مَوصول comes into play….

الأسماء الموصولة or Relative Pronouns are like which, what, that, or who in English, not the question which, what etc. but the pronouns 'which' come between nouns and the sentences 'that' describe them. Read that again! "pronouns 'which' come between nouns" and "the sentences 'that' describe them". In English these pronouns MUST be brought in every such

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structure. In Arabic they are brought ONLY when the موصوف is معرفه. If it is نكره, there will be no need for a مَوصول, in which case the grammatical structure itself will join the sentence to the noun being described.

This is the primary purpose why we have these words in the language. If the noun being described is of a very general meaning such as man, woman, thing etc, often the noun is not mentioned. The مَوصول itself will convey the entire meaning, such as in the following sentence:

جاء الّذي علَّمَكَ في المسجدِ (The person who taught you in the masjid came).

In this sentence the مَوصول، 'الّذي' not only means 'who' but actually 'the person who'.

The sentence which follows the مَوصول i.e. the describing جملة خبرية is called صِله. Together with the مَوصول, both parts become صفة for the preceding noun, or if the noun is of a general nature and implicit as mentioned above, the مَوصول and صِله together will directly become part of the greater sentence. Within the صِله there MUST be a third person pronoun referring back to the مَوصول. This pronoun will always correspond to the مَوصول in gender and plurality. In the above example the implicit pronoun هو hidden in the verb علَّمَ is referring to الّذي the مَوصول.

Besides الّذي and its dual, plural, and feminine variations, the following relative pronouns are in use:

مَنْ - the person who…

ما - the thing that…. Both مَنْ and ما have no duals our plurals. The same word is essentially used for all gender and plurality. 'مَنْ' is for human beings while 'ما' is for non-humans.

أيٌّ, أيَّةٌ -which…. Both موصولان will always be مضاف to the أسماء after them. The second word of the possessive phrase may be singular or plural e.g. أيُّ كِتابٍ (which book) and, أيُّ الكُتُبِ (which of the books). Both meanings are almost identical. Just two ways of saying the same thing. أيٌّ and أيَّةٌ are both معرب and there grammatical state will be subject to the governing agent before them similar to normal إسمs.

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The 'ال' which is attached to the active and passive participles (إسم فاعل and إسم مفعول) is also considered to be مَوصول and in the meaning of الّذي. Hence, الضارِبُ would mean الّذي ضَرَبَ (one who hits). Likewise, المَضروبُ is akin to الّذي ضُرِبَ (one who is hit). In other words the 'ال' at the beginning of both literally means 'one who'.

ذُو - also in the meaning of الّذي in the dialect of the clan of بَن طَي according to this particular tribe of Arabs e.g. جائني ذُو ضَرَبَكَ (the man who hit you came to me).

أيٌّ due مبني are مَوصول all الّتي and الّذي and the duals of أيَّةٌ, أيٌّ, Except for to there dependency upon the صله. You will never encounter a مَوصول except with its صله. As mentioned repeatedly, dependency is a characteristic of حرف: one from the مبني الأصل.

Demonstrative Pronouns - الأسماء الإشارة

Descriptive Pronouns (this/that) are devices used to refer or point towards nouns. While the pronoun in Arabic is called إسم إشاره, the noun is known as مُشارٌ إليه. In the phrase ذٰلِكَ الكِتابُ (that book), ذٰلِكَ is the إسم إشاره and الكِتابُ is the مُشارٌ إليه. The pronoun coupled with the noun will always be a phrase. However, there are instances when the noun being referred to is of a very general nature such as thing, man, or woman, in which case the pronoun itself will convey both meanings i.e. هٰذا can mean 'this thing' or 'this person' as apposed to just 'this'. When this happens the following word will be the remaining part of the sentence (the predicate). In order to determine whether the following word is connected to هٰذا and forming the second part of the descriptive phrase or whether هٰذا is independent of a separate 'مُشارٌ إليه' and conveying the entire meaning itself as mentioned above, one will need to look at the next word. If it begins with an 'ال', the two words will become a descriptive phrase (this book), otherwise a full sentence. When the مُشارٌ إليه can not take 'ال' do to being مضاف and a descriptive phrase is intended, such as 'this book of his', in order to avoid confusion with the إسميّه sentence, the إسم إشاره will be

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brought after the possessive phrase. Consider the following three ways of using this device:

1. هٰذا الكِتابُ: this book

2. هٰذا كِتابٌ: This is a book.

3. كِتابُهُ هٰذا : this book of his

أسماء الأفعال - Verbal Nouns

These are a group of words in the language which are very few in number. They have the meanings of verbs, meaning that their meanings are linked to time. They have tenses. However, besides the tense, they have no other characteristic of verbs such as conjugation tables and suffixes. They do not fall under any recognized pattern of verb. They come in two types; a group that has a past tense meaning e.g. هَيهاتَ (became distant), and a group consisting of words that have command-verb meanings e.g. رُوَيدَ (give respite), the first being identical to بَعُدَ (a past-tense verb), and the second to 'أمهِل' (a second person active command verb).

Although these words do have the meanings of أفعال due to the absence of all other characteristics of recognized verbs, they were not categorized as such. The other two parts of speech also do not apply, but because there number is so less in the Arabic language, the scholars of grammar did not see it appropriate to give them a separate category and call them the fourth part of speech. Instead they said these are أسماء مبني which contain the meaning of verbs, treating this tense as a 'resemblance' to verb, hence their مبني nature. Recall both ماضي and أمر حاضر are مبني الأصل.

أسماء الضروف - Adverbs of Time or Place

أسماء الأصوات - Words Denoting Sounds or Noises

These are essentially sounds rendered into words e.g. أُح أُح, a coughing sound. They are all مبني due to sounds not having true grammatical positioning, in terms of being subject, object etc.

مرّكب بناء - Numbers 11-19

كنايات - Words denoting vagueness

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Appendix A - Expressiveness of the Arabic Language

Ibn Khalidun, may Allah elevate his rank, wrote in his magnificent مُقَدِّمَه regarding the Arabic language and its superiority over all other languages. He said, رَحِمُهُ الله, it is because in Arabic even "non-words" i.e. vowel sounds and patterns carry meaning. In other languages, to convey these 'non-word' meanings whole words need to be used. He said that is why we see massive difference in length when some Arabic passage is translated into a non-Arabic language. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said,

"Speech has been made comprehensive for me".

Basically we have three distinct sources for meanings, only one of which is because of the words themselves:

A meaning originating from the base letters of a word i.e. wherever and in whichever pattern those letters are found, the base letter meaning will be present e.g. the base letters 'kaf, taa, and baa' express the meaning of writing. Wherever these letters are found, the 'base letter meaning' of writing will be there. In Arabic almost all combinations of three consonants have meaning. It is the job of the dictionary to give us this base letter meaning.

A meaning coming from the pattern. The letters themselves are all consonants. Consonants alone can not be pronounced. For instance, try pronouncing the letter 'b' without adding a vowel to it! The moment a sound comes out, one realizes it's either 'ba', 'be' or the like which has been pronounced, not just the letter 'b' by itself. The reality is all consonants need to be coupled with vowels in order to become syllables and thus pronounceable. This is the nature of human utterance. By definition, a syllable is the sound produced by coupling a consonant with a vowel. This is nothing more than a manifestation of human limitations. In other languages, this 'vowelling' which arose out of pure necessity is mostly random and carries little significance. However, in Arabic it is this very vowelling which Ibn Khaldun is calling our second meaning, namely the 'pattern meaning'. 'ك', 'ت', and 'ب' we said expresses the meaning of 'to write'. In Arabic there are literally dozens, if not hundreds of ways to vowel those three letters, some of which include the addition of 'non-base' letters. All of these patterns carry distinct meaning. Now, depending on the particular pattern, the base-letter meaning of writing will be expressed in a unique way. For instance, كَتَبَ (he wrote), كُتِبَ (it was written), يَكْتُبُ (he writes, is writing or will write), كاتِب (writer), مَكْتَب (desk i.e. place of writing), أُكْتُب (write!) and many, many others. Also recall that we said the subjects of all of these verbs i.e. the pronouns are not separate words but letters. The recognition of these patterns and designated letters which come

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at the end of the verbs to reflect the pronouns is the subject matter of صرف

(Arabic Morphology).

As for the third and final meaning, which is also a 'non-word' meaning, we refer back to the first section of this discussion i.e. introducing grammatical states. Recall that grammatical structure in Arabic is reflected by change in the last letter. It is from the ending of a given word that we determine whether that word is being used in the sentence as a subject of the

verb, an object, or whether the word is in the possessive case. It is نحو

which deals with all the technicalities of grammatical meaning.

In summary, we may say the most basic meaning originates from the given three base letters of a word. These three letters then need to be arranged with vowels in order to be pronounced. In most languages this vowelling carries little if any meaning. In Arabic whole distinct meanings such as tenses and the gender, plurality and person of pronouns is conveyed via these vowels and letters. When the individual words are constructed, they need to be used in sentences, because people do not speak in words. They speak in sentences. Sentence structure is reflected again, not by separate words (like in other languages), but by vowels or letters! This is our third meaning.