

عِلْمُ النَّحْوِ

The Phrase

معهد السبويه
THE SIBAWAY INSTITUTE

By Nabeel Al Khalidy

The Phrase

شِبْهُ الْجُمْلَةِ / مُرَكَّبٌ غَيْرٌ مُفِيدٌ

Any group of words that are linked together but do not form a complete sentence, as discussed in the previous lesson, is termed a phrase.

Phrases in the Arabic language, as in every other language, are many. Here we will attempt to introduce two such phrases.

1. **The adjective and described noun** (the (صفة) & (موصوف) phrase).

and

2. **The possessed and Possessor** (the (مضاف إليه) & (مضاف) phrase).

The adjective and described noun

This is essentially a phrase made up of two Isms in which the second describes the first. The first Ism is the noun being described and the second is the adjective. When this meaning is conveyed in English the adjective always precedes the noun e.g. **tall** boy, **intelligent** girl.

Unlike English, here the noun will be the first word and the adjective will follow it e.g. الولد الطويل (the tall boy) and البنت الرشيدة (intelligent girl).

Apart from understanding the change in sequence mentioned above (noun first, adjective second), the only rulings pertaining to this phrase are the correspondence between both words in the following four aspects:

1. Gender: الولد الطويل (both words masculine) and البنت الرشيدة (both words feminine).
2. Plurality: الولدان الطويلان (the two tall boys) الرجال المسلمون (The Muslim men)
3. Definiteness/indefiniteness: ولدٌ طويلٌ (a tall boy). Note the absence of “ال” from *both* words.
4. Grammatical state: في البيت الكبير (in the big house). Note the preposition “في” affecting the endings of *both* words.

The possessed and Possessor

This is a phrase also made up of two Isms. Here the two Isms are linked together in a possessive structure e.g. **كِتَابُ الْوَلَدِ** (The boy's book). Here too, the sequence in which the two words appear is opposite of what we see in English. The first word (**كِتَابُ**), the grammatically possessed noun is called the (مضاف), while the second (**الْوَلَدِ**) the possessor, the word with the apostrophe in English is termed (مضاف إليه)

Some rules

The “مضاف” must be empty of both the definite article as well as the **tanween**: so it ends either in one “كسرة”, “فتحة”, or “ضمّة” .

The grammatical state of the “مضاف إليه” is fixed on **جَرّ**

The grammatical state of the “مضاف” is subject to the governing agent and could be either in a state of **جَرّ** or **نَصْب** , **رَفْع**