THE ARABIC ALPHABET

ج	ث	ت	ب	ا
JĪM	THĀ'	TĀ'	BĀ'	'ALIF
ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
RĀ'	DHĀL	DĀL	KHĀ'	HĀ'
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
DHĀD	SĀD	SHĪN	SĪN	ZĀ'
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
FĀ'	GHAIN	'AIN	ZHĀ'	THĀ'
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
NŪN	MĪM	LĀM	KĀF	QĀF
	ء	ى	و	ه
	HAMZAH	YĀ'	WĀW	HĀ'

THE ARABIC SHORT VOWELS

ِ	َ	ُ
KASRAH	FATHAH	DAMMAH

FIGURE 2.1

THE ARABIC ALPHABET AND ITS SHORT VOWELS

Lesson One: Mapping the Arabic Language

Figure **1.1** presents a map of the Arabic language. This chart provides an overview of the task at hand and establishes a framework for future learning.

PRINCIPLE ONE

The term *articulation* (لَفْظ)[1] refers to all words that are produced by the tongue. *Articulation*s (لَفْظ) are divided into (1) words that are *meaningful* (مَوْضُوْع) and (2) words that are *meaningless* (مُهْمَل). *Meaningful* (مَوْضُوْع) articulations have established, understood meanings. For example, the Arabic word *kitab* (كِتَاب) means, "a book." On the other hand, *meaningless* (مُهْمَل) articulations lack established meanings. Consider, for example, the word "Pepsi." If articulated five hundred years ago, before the advent of this now famous beverage, this word would have had no meaning.

PRINCIPLE TWO

Meaningful (مَوْضُوْع) articulations can be further divided into (1) *single* (مُفْرَد) and (2) *compound* (مُرَكَّب). If an articulation is composed of one word, it is called *single* (مُفْرَد); whereas, if it is composed of more than one word, it is called *compound* (مُرَكَّب). For example, the word *kitab* (كِتَاب) is *single* (مُفْرَد), while the phrase *rasul-Allah* (رَسُوْلُ الله),[2] made up of two words, is *compound* (مُرَكَّب).

---

[1] *Lafad* (لَفْظ) is derived from the verbal noun "to throw." Arabic grammarians use this term to refer to articulations because speech involves "throwing" sounds from the tongue.

[2] رَسُوْلُ الله means, "Messenger of Allah."

PRINCIPLE THREE

All *single* (مُفْرَد) words are classified into one of three types:

1) *noun* (اسْم)

2) *verb* (فِعْل)

3) *particle* (حَرْف)

Stated otherwise, every word in the Arabic dictionary fits into one of these three categories.

PRINCIPLE FOUR

Compound (مُرَكَّب) articulations are made up of two or more words. Such combinations are either *beneficial* (مُفِيْد) or *non-beneficial* (غَيْر مُفِيْد). *Beneficial* (مُفِيْد) groups of words express a complete idea and join together to form a complete sentence. *Non-beneficial* (غَيْر مُفِيْد) groups of words express an incomplete idea and join together to form a phrase,[3] or an incomplete sentence.

This volume deals with *single* (مُفْرَد) words and emphasizes conjugating verbs and nouns.

---

[3] A *phrase* is defined as two or more words that form a syntactic unit that is less than a complete sentence.

لَفْظ
Articulation

مُهْمَل
Meaningless

مَوْضُوْع
Meaningful

مُرَكَّب
Compound

مُفْرَد
Single

مُفِيْد
Beneficial

غَيْر مُفِيْد
Non-beneficial

اِسْم
Noun
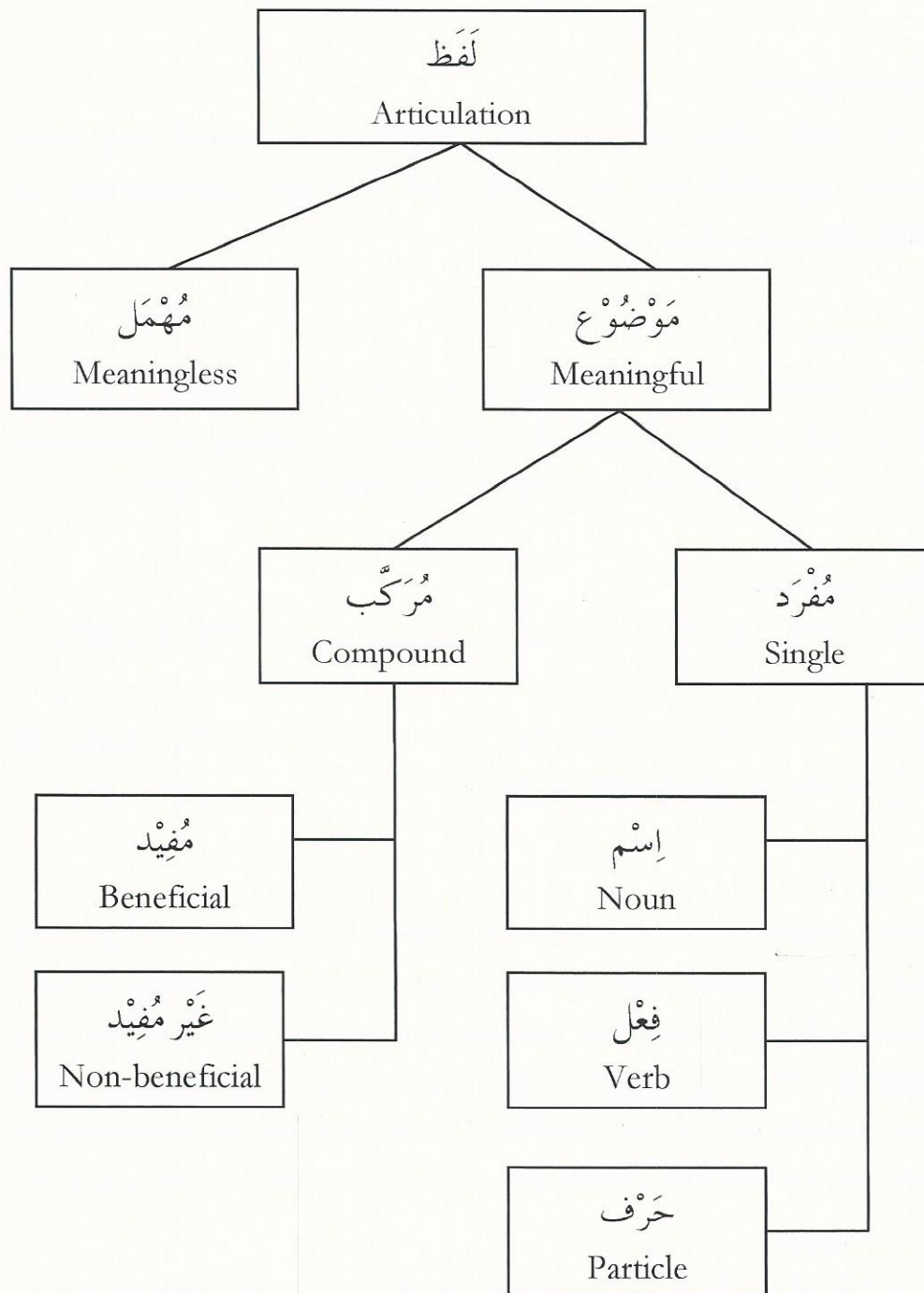
فِعْل
Verb

حَرْف
Particle

FIGURE 1.1

A MAP OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

Lesson Two: Introducing Arabic Words

PRINCIPLE ONE

The Arabic alphabet consists of twenty-nine letters and three short vowels (*figure* 2.1). This text assumes that the reader is familiar with the alphabet and its short vowels.

PRINCIPLE TWO

Most Arabic words are formed from three base letters. These three letters join together to establish a meaning. For example, the base letters ك–ت–ب (*read from right to left*) express the meaning of "to write."

PRINCIPLE THREE

The letters ف-ع-ل are used as model base letters.[4] The first letter is called the "*fā'* (ف) position." The second is called the "'*ain* (ع) position." The third is called the "*lām* (ل) position." The base letters ف-ع-ل express the meaning of "to do."

PRINCIPLE FOUR

Most Arabic nouns and verbs are derived by placing the three base letters on designated patterns. These patterns involve voweling[5] the base letters and often require the addition of non-base letters. Each of these patterns reflects the meaning of the base letters in a unique way. For example, the pattern فاعِل describes a person who enacts the meaning of the base letters.[6] This pattern involves voweling the *fa'* (ف) position

---

[4] The letters ف–ع–ل are used throughout the text to illustrate verb and noun patterns.

[5] *Voweling* refers to the addition of the short vowels: *dammah*, *fathah*, and *kasrah*.

[6] The English language also makes use of patterns. Consider, for example, the word "teacher." Adding the suffix "er" to the verb *teach* produces the word "teacher." This pattern describes a person who enacts the meaning of the verb (i.e., one who teaches). Similarly, consider additional English words that follow this pattern, such as "builder" (one who builds) and "thinker" (one who thinks).

with a *fathah*, adding an *'alif*, and voweling the *'ain* (ع) position with a *kasrah*. If the base letters ك–ت–ب (*to write*) replace the *fā'* (ف), *'ain* (ع), and *lām* (ل) positions in this pattern, the word كَاتِب (*one who writes*) is formed (*figure* 2.2). Similarly, replacing the *fā'* (ف), *'ain* (ع), and *lām* (ل) positions with the base letters ع–ب–د (*to worship*) forms the word عَابِد (*one who worships*).

11-18-13

TYPES OF WORDS/TYPES OF TIMES

TYPES OF WORDS

There are only three parts or types of words - *aqsaamul-kalimah* (أقسام الكلمة) in the Arabic language. They are:

1. *Alism* (الاسم) (pl. *Al-Asmaa'* - الأسماء) - It is a word that only gives a meaning. It can be something physical (alive or not alive) and it can be something mental. Some examples are:

    a. *Shamsun* (شمسٌ - a sun)

    b. *Khaalid* (خالد – A man's name)

    c. *`Ilm* (علم – Knowledge)

2. *Al-Fi`l* (الفعل) (pl. *Al-Af`aal* - الأفعال) - It is a word that gives a meaning and a specific or particular time where that meaning took place[1]. Some examples are:

    a. *Dharaba* (ضرب – He hit). It gives two things: the meaning of hitting and the particular time which is the past tense.

    b. *Akala* (أكل– He ate). It gives the meaning of eating and that it took place in the past tense.

3. *Al-Harf* (الحرف) (pl. *Al-Huroof* - الحروف) - It is a word that points out a meaning by way of another word - it does not show its meaning by itself, but its meaning only appears in another word.

    a. *Min* (من– from). The meaning is not clear when by itself, but when adding the word: *al-bayt* (البيت-the house) we have *minal-bayti* (من البيت - from the house) which pin points the meaning (من) serves.

    b. *Fee* (في– in). The meaning is not clear when taken by itself but add the word: *al-madeenah* (المدينة – the city) and we have *fil-madeenah* (في المدينة - in the city) which pin points the meaning.

---

[1] It is important that we define it as taking place in a specific or particular time because there are some *asmaa'* that give a meaning of time such as *al-ghuroob* (الغروب –sunset) which occurs every day, and *al-aan* (الآن - now) which is relevant only to the specific time that it takes place.

- فَاءُ الكَلِمَة: 'The Faa of the word' and you can call it: 'the Faa'- عَينُ الكَلِمَة : 'The 'Ayn of the word' and you can call it: 'the 'Ayn'- لاَمُ الكَلِمَة : 'The Laam of the word' and you can call it: 'the Laam'- And they are called like that because they get the name of the letter it is placed upon.

The scale is meant to **identify the form** of the word weighed and it includes the **Numbers of the letters, the order, the harakaat and sakanaat, the extra and the original letters** .

Principle: Give the same Harakaat of the word weighed to the scale

The word ضَرَبَ the first root letter has a fathah ضَ the 'faa' will get a fathah فَ , and it will be called فَاء الكلمـــة

The second root letter has a fathah رَ the 'ayn' will get a fathah عَ , and it will be called عيـن الكلمـــة

The third root letter has a fathah بَ the 'laam' will get a fathah لَ , and it will be called لام الكلمة

So when you weigh a word you say: ضَرَبَ is on the scale of فَعَلَ and in Arabic we say: ضَرَبَ عَلَى وَزنِ فَعَلَ

Some other examples:

- The word عَلِمَ :

The first root letter has a fathah عَ the 'faa' will get a fathah فَ , and it will be called فَاء الكلمـــة

The second root letter has a kasrah لِ the 'ayn' will get a kasrah عِ , and it will be called عيـن الكلمـــة

The third root letter has a fathah مَ the 'laam' will get a fathah لَ , and it will be called لام الكلمة

عَلِمَ is on the scale of فَعِلَ – In Arabic: عَلِمَ عَلَى وَزنِ فَعِلَ

- The word عَظُمَ :

The first root letter has a fathah عَ the 'faa' will get a fathah فَ , and it will be called فَاء الكلمـــة

The second root letter has a dhammah ظُ the 'ayn' will get a dhammah عُ, and it will be called عيـن الكلمة

The third root letter has a fathah مَ the 'laam' will get a fathah لَ , and it will be called لام الكلمة

عَظُمَ is on the scale of فَعُلَ – In Arabic: عَظُمَ عَلَى وَزنِ فَعُلَ

- وَزن means: scale

The Second Category of Verbs

With regard to the root letters (الحروف الأصلية) of a verb, they are of two types:

Term	Meaning	Example
ثلاثي	3 root letters or triliteral	نَصَرَ
رباعي	4 root letters or quadriliteral	بَعْثَرَ

Each of these two types is further divided into two categories:

1) (مجرد) – the (الماضي) consists of root letters only, without any extra letters.

2) (مزيد فيه) - the (الماضي) has root letters plus extra letters.

This results in the following four categories:

Term	Meaning	Example
ثلاثي مجرد	3 root letters only	نَصَرَ
ثلاثي مزيد فيه	3 root letters plus extra letters	اجْتَنَبَ
رباعي مجرد	4 root letters only	بَعْثَرَ
رباعي مزيد فيه	4 root letters plus extra letters	تَسَرْبَلَ