

## Intro to Grammar: Pattern Recognition

During our second session, we spoke on the importance of **pattern recognition** as it relates to learning any language especially Arabic. Here is a color-coded example to high some important patterns in our reading of Ibn Abī Zayd's *Risālah*:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰی سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
قَالَ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ بْنُ أَبِي زَيْدٍ الْقَيَّرَوَانِي رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ وَأَرْضَاهُ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي إِبْتَدَأَ الْإِنْسَانَ بِنِعْمَتِهِ وَصَوَّرَهُ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ بِحِكْمَتِهِ وَأَبْرَزَهُ إِلَى  
رَفْقِهِ وَمَا يَسَّرَهُ لَهُ مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَعَلَّمَهُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ يَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ عَظِيمًا  
وَنَبَّهَهُ بِآثَارِ صَنْعَتِهِ وَأَعَذَرَ إِلَيْهِ عَلَى الْأَسِنَّةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ الْخَيْرَةَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ فَهَدَىٰ مِنْ  
وَفَّقَهُ بِفَضْلِهِ وَأَضَلَّ مِنْ خَذَلَهُ بَعْدَهُ وَيَسَّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ وَشَرَحَ صُدُورَهُمْ  
لِلذِّكْرِ فَآمَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ نَاطِقِينَ وَبِقُلُوبِهِمْ مُخْلِصِينَ وَبِمَا أُنْتَهَمَ بِهِ رِسْلَهُ  
وَكَتَبَهُ عَامِلِينَ وَتَعَلَّمُوا مَا عَلَّمَهُمْ وَوَقَفُوا عِنْدَ مَا حَدَّ لَهُمْ وَاسْتَعْنَوْا بِمَا أَحَلَّ لَهُمْ  
عَمَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Subject (explicit) #1; Subject (implicit) #1

Direct object (explicit) #1; Direct object (implicit) #1

Direct object #2 (explicit); Direct object (implicit) #2

Subject (explicit) #2; Subject (implicit) #2

Special case (direct object/indirect subject); Indirect object (explicit)

#2

## Intro to Grammar: Deep Dive

So what's happening in our example above? What have we have are a series of repeating **patterns**, of **explicit subjects** with **explicit direct objects** and **implicit subjects** acting on **implicit direct** (or indirect, but that's later) **objects**.

الحمد لله الذي ابتدأ الإنسان

In this passage, **Allah** is the **explicit subject** (meaning, **the subject is mentioned/referred to directly by name**) and the recipient (**direct object**) of the action is also explicitly mentioned: **mankind**. This differs from,

وصَوَّرَهُ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ بِحِكْمَتِهِ

where the **subject/doer** of the action *is still the same* (**Allah**) but is now **implicit**, meaning the **subject** (**Allah**) is not mentioned specifically with the verb, or verbs in this case, “to shape”. Similarly, the **direct object**/recipient of the action is **no longer explicitly stated** but rather is referred to through a **pronoun suffix attached to the end of the verb**. Note how **there is no intervening particle between the verb** “to shape” and the pronoun suffix referring to “mankind”. This maintains the grammatical effect of the object still being directly acted upon (mankind is still “shaped” by Allah) but Allah is not (and **need not be** explicitly) mentioned **nor does he need to be**; one can refer back to the original declarative

statement (الحمد لله الذي ابتدأ الإنسان) and then each subsequent و acting as much like a comma as the word “and”.

The same rule applies to “mankind” but instead of **subjects** we’re now speaking of **direct objects**. This is a common style repeated throughout the Qur’an where **the subject is stated explicitly** then referred to **implicitly** and vice versa with **direct objects**. Let’s look at the beginning of Surah al-Shams:

وَالشَّمْسُ  
وَضُحَاهَا وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا  
وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغشَاهَا

Then, in the following passage, we see the subject stay the same but with a new **direct object**:

فَهْدَىٰ مَنْ وَفَّقَهُ بِفَضْلِهِ

In “He guides whomever He chooses success for from His grace”, **the subject remains the same** (Allah) but the recipient/**direct object** (the one receiving Allah’s guidance) **has changed**. Not only has it changed but it’s also **unknown**, whereas in the initial statement the **direct object was known** in that it was all of mankind. Think of it like this: we know that whoever Allah guides will be successful but *we just don’t know who that is in its totality*. It could be anyone (though, **implicitly**, not everyone!) The reason this may seem confusing is because the word مَنْ (“who”) doesn’t change its vowelings

no matter how it's acted upon whereas إنسان ("mankind") can take a *faṭḥah*, *ḍammah*, or *kasrah* as its vowel on the final letter.

### Special Case

This one is a bit more confusing (as if you are confused enough as it is!). When Ibn Abi Zayd writes,

ويُسِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِلْيُسْرَى

and then later on adds to it,

فَأَمَّنُوا بِاللَّهِ بِأَسْنَتِهِمْ نَاطِقِينَ

what we have here is the word المؤمنين being both the **direct object** of the **implicit subject** (Allah, for Allah is the one "making it easy") but then being the **explicit subject** which the verb فأمَّنُوا **implicitly refers to** (it's the believers doing "the believing"). From this point forward (فأمَّنُوا) **the subject of the rest of the paragraph is "the believers"** and we can see the various things they act on.