

L11

Equational Sentence/Making Questions

A demonstrative followed by a definite noun may be ambiguous. "هَذَا الْمُعَلِّمُ" may be translated as "this teacher/this is the teacher". However, if ambiguity is to be avoided, the personal pronoun must be inserted.

Sentence structure 2

This is the teacher .

هَذَا هُوَ الْمُعَلِّمُ
هَذِهِ هِيَ الْمُعَلِّمَةُ

If the subject is an indefinite noun, it appears at the end of the sentence.

Example:

مُعَلِّمٌ هُنَا (A teacher is here) → هُنَا مُعَلِّمٌ (Here is a teacher)

⊗ مُعَلِّمٌ فِي الْغُرْفَةِ

✓ فِي الْغُرْفَةِ مُعَلِّمٌ

✓ In the room there is a teacher (there is a teacher in the room)

In the 'yes/no' questions the word order of the declarative sentence is retained but the sentence begins with the interrogative particle هَلْ, or rarely أ.

He is here

هُوَ هُنَا.

Is he here?

هَلْ / أ هُوَ هُنَا؟

This is big

هَذَا كَبِيرٌ.

Is this big?

هَلْ / أ هَذَا كَبِيرٌ.

In case of alternative questions the alternative particle أَمْ must be used.

Example:

Is this big or small?

هَلْ هَذَا كَبِيرٌ أَمْ صَغِيرٌ؟

The interrogatives 'مَا' for 'what' and 'مَنْ' for 'who' act as subjects in wh-questions.

Example:

What is this?

مَا هَذَا/هَذِهِ؟

Who is this?

مَنْ هَذَا/هَذِهِ؟

What is here/there?

مَا هُنَا/هُنَاكَ؟

Who is here/there?

مَنْ هُنَا/هُنَاكَ؟

The interrogative pronoun must be followed by a personal pronoun if the predicate is a noun or an adjective.

Example:

Who is a/(the) teacher?

مَنْ هُوَ (ال) مُعَلِّمٌ؟

In sentences which are introduced by a verb normally the interrogative ماذا is used instead of ما.

Example:

What happened?

مَاذَا حَدَّثَ؟