

NOUN NUMBERS IN ARABIC: CLASSIFICATION AND FORMATION OF MUFRAD, MUNFASIL, AND JAM'

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Abstract

This article examines the category of number, one of the grammatical categories of the Arabic language. The article analyzes the three number categories in Arabic—singular (مفرد – mufrad), dual (مثنى – musanna), and plural (جمع – jam')—based on their definitions, formation rules, and examples. In particular, the types of plural—broken plural (jam' taksir) and sound plural (jam' salim)—and the division of the sound plural into masculine and feminine forms are highlighted separately. The original Arabic definitions and their Uzbek explanations presented in the article help to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. This article can serve as a practical guide for students of Arabic and specialists in the field of linguistics.

Keywords: Arabic language, number category, singular (mufrad), dual (musanna), plural (jam'), broken plural (jam' taksir), sound plural (jam' salim), masculine, feminine.

Introduction

Arabic, a member of the Semitic language family, has a uniquely rich grammatical system. One of the key features that sets this language apart from others is its three-tiered number system. While in many languages, including Uzbek, the number category consists only of singular and plural, in Arabic, in addition to these two forms, a third category—the dual (مثنى - musanna)—also exists.

In Arabic, the number category is reflected not only in nouns but also in adjectives, verbs, and pronouns. This makes the category one of the central phenomena of Arabic grammar. The singular form serves as the basis for the

formation of the dual and plural: the dual is formed by adding specific suffixes to the singular, while the plural is formed in two ways—sound plural (jam' salim) and broken plural (jam' taksir).

The main purpose of this article is to systematically analyze the numeral category in the Arabic language based on the : the singular, dual, and plural—their definitions, formation rules, and examples. The article uses original Arabic sources, including those by N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov. Quotations are provided from the textbook "Arabic Grammar" and from the work "Ad-Durus an-Nahwiyya" in the translation by A. Hikmatov, and are enriched with Uzbek explanations.¹

1. Formation of the Singular, Dual, and Plural

In Arabic, nouns are divided into three categories according to whether they denote one or more. As shown in N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov's textbook "Arabic Grammar" (Vol. 2, p. 33), these three categories are as follows:

مفرد (Mufrad - singular)

مثنى (Musanna - dual)

جمع (Jam' - plural)

Mufrad (singular) - a noun that refers to a single thing. Such as رَجُلٌ, كِتَابٌ, تَوْرٌ.

Musanna (dual) is a noun that refers to two things. It is formed by adding alif and nun (ان) or ya and nun (ين) to the end of the singular form.

Jam' (plural) is a noun that refers to more than two things. It is of three types:

Jam' mufred salim;

Jam' mu'annas salim;

Jam' taksir.

Jam' muzakkar salim is formed by adding Waw and Nun (ون) or Ya and Nun (ين) to the end of the singular.

مُعَلِّمُونَ = مُعَلِّمِينَ عَالِمُونَ = عَالِمِينَ

The feminine plural is formed by adding alif and ta (at) to the end of the singular form. Examples: mu'allimāt, ḥublīyāt, samāwāt.

¹ Ibrohimov N., Yusupov M. Grammar of the Arabic Language. Volume 2. – Tashkent: G'ofur G'ulom Publishing House, 2004. – 648 pp.

Plural taksir is formed by changing the form of the singular. Examples include rijāl, kutub, and aqlām.

The forms of jama‘ taksir are very numerous and do not fall under a single rule; rather, they are learned only through extensive reading and listening.²

2. Definition of singular, dual, and plural

The singular, the dual, and the plural

Singular, Dual, and Plural

1 - Mufrad; and it is that which indicates a male or a female; for example: Fāḍil, and Fāḍila; Mujtahid, and Mujtahida.

1. Singular (mufrad) - as stated in Hikmatov A.'s translation, it is a noun that refers to one thing; for example: Fozil (male), Fozila (female) or Tirishqoq (male), Tirishqoq (female).

2 - And the dual (wa-muthanna); and it is: That which indicates two or two females with the addition of an alef and nun, or a ya and nun in its singular form; for example: Fāḍilān, Fāḍilatān, or Fāḍilatayn, Mujtahidān, or Mujtahidayn.

2. Dual (musanna) - this definition is taken from Hikmatov A.'s translation, and in our opinion, it is also the most accurate definition: it is a name that indicates duality by adding Alif and Nun (ن) or Yo and Nun (ين) to the singular; for example: two virtuous men, two virtuous women, or two diligent men, two diligent women.

3 - and jama‘; and it is: that which indicates more than two or two by a change in its singular form; e.g., faḍilūn or faḍilīn, or fuḍalā’ or fuḍlayāt.

3. The plural (jam‘) - in our opinion, this is the most comprehensive definition of the plural: it is a noun that, by changing its singular form, refers to more than two things; for example: righteous men, righteous women, or diligent men, diligent women.

3. Types of Plurality

The plural is divided into two parts:

²Hasanov M., Abzalova M. Grammar of the Arabic Language. Textbook. – Tashkent, 2019.

Plurality is divided into two parts:³

1 - Taksir plural (jamʿ taksīr); e.g., fuḍalāʾ, kutub, aqlām.

1. Broken plural (jamʿ taksir); for example: scholars, books, pens.

Plural of tashdīd; and it is that which changes in the structure of its singular form; for example: fuḍalāʾ is the plural of faḍīl, and kutub is the plural of kitāb, and aqlām is the plural of qalam.

- Broken plural - according to the author's definition, it is a type of plural that changes the form of the singular; for example: fozillar - the plural of fozil, kitoblar - the plural of kitob, qalamlar - the plural of qalam. N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov, in their textbook (Vol. 2, p. 35), provide numerous examples of broken plurals, including: Words such as mudarrisun → talabbun (teacher → teachers) hold a special place.⁴

2 - And the correct plural; for example: faḍīlūn, or faḍīlāt. If it is for the masculine, it is called "intact masculine plural," and if it is for the feminine, it is called "Salim feminine plural"

2. Sound plural (jamʿ salim); for example: fozil men or fozila women. If it applies to the masculine, it is called "Masculine Sound Plural." If it applies to the feminine, it is called "Feminine Sound Plural."

- And the correct plural (jamʿ tashīḥ); it is that in which the form of the singular is preserved. It is of two types.

- Sound plural - it preserves the form of the singular; it is two-part:

1 - Salim plural of the masculine gender; for example: *faḍīlūn*, *faḍīlīn*, *mujtahidūn*, or *mujtahidīn*; from every noun that has a wāw and nūn added to its singular form, or a yā and nūn.

1. Masculine (male) sound plural; for example: fozil erkaklar, fozil erkaklarni or fozil erkaklarning; tirishqoq erkaklar, tirishqoq erkaklarni or tirishqoq erkaklarning. A Vov and Nun (ون) or a Yo and Nun (ين) is added to the singular form of each noun.⁵

³ Bekpo'lat S. Mabda'us-sarf, mabda'un-nahv. – Tashkent, 2022.

Sulaymonova N. Arabic Language. Part I: Methodological Guide. – Tashkent: TSUULL, 2024.

⁴ N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov in their textbook (Vol. 2, p. 35)

⁵ Hikmatov A. (translator). Ad-Durus an-Nahviyya (Lessons of Nahw). – Tashkent: Movarounnahr, 2020. – 256 p.

2 - And the feminine plural of a sound stem; for example: *fāḍilāt* and *mujtahidāt*; from each name, an alif and a wāw are added to the singular form.

2. Feminine (female) sound plural; for example: virtuous women or diligent women. An Alif and Ta (ات) are added to the singular form of each noun.

4. The forms of broken plural and their practical application

According to N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov, broken plural is considered one of the most complex morphological phenomena in the Arabic language. As shown in their textbook "Arabic Grammar" (Vol. 2, pp. 30–35), broken plural forms are widespread in Arabic and occur in the following patterns:

فُعَلَاءَ (fū‘alā’ūn) stem - the plural of فَاضِلٌ (fāḍil) is فُضَلَاءٌ (fuḍalā’ūn) (scholars).

فُعُلٌ (fū‘ul) stem - the plural of كِتَابٌ (kitāb) is كُتُبٌ (kutub) (books).

أَفْعَالٌ meter - the plural of قَلَمٌ (qalam) is أَقْلَامٌ (qalams).

In our view, practical exercises play an important role in memorizing the irregular plural forms. As the author also emphasizes, these forms do not follow a single rule and can only be mastered through extensive reading and listening.

Below are some examples of broken plurals taken from the textbook by N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov: muddarrisun, talibun, suhuf

That is: teacher → teachers; student → students; page → pages. As you can see, in these words the singular form changes, creating a new internal structure.

Conclusion

In Arabic, the number category—singular (mufrad), dual (musanna), and plural (jam‘)—plays an important role in the language's grammatical structure. This three-tiered system forms the basis of Arabic word formation and speech culture. The singular form serves as the basis for forming the dual and plural. The dual is always formed by adding the suffix (ان) or (ين) to the singular, and this rule is consistently applied to all nouns. Plurality is divided into two main types: broken plural (jam' taksir) and sound plural (jam' salim). In broken plural, the root of the word changes to form a new shape, and this is based on the requirements of the form. According to N. Ibrohimov and M. Yusupov, the inflectional suffixes for broken plural are very diverse, and they can only be mastered through practice. In regular plural, however, the base of the word remains unchanged, and only suffixes are added: in the masculine plural (ون/ين) and in the feminine plural (ات). The division of the masculine and feminine forms of the sound plural shows the intrinsic connection between the gender category and the number category in

Arabic. This makes it necessary for learners of Arabic to study these categories together.

Moreover, mastering the number category correctly significantly facilitates word formation, sentence structure, and text comprehension in Arabic. Therefore, due to this, a thorough theoretical and practical study of this topic is considered an essential foundation for every student of Arabic.

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