

Tamyiz (Accusative of Specification)

The Arabic word تَمَيِّز (pronounced **tamyiz**) is the verbal noun of the Form II verb مَيَّزَ " to single out, distinguish, " and this is exactly what this use of the accusative case is designed to do.

To make a **tamyiz** construction, you take an *indefinite* substantive (generally a noun) and put it into the *accusative* case. When put in a sentence, this substantive is usually placed after a verb or adjective (sometimes even a noun). It thus singles out, or *specifies more precisely* the application, function, or degree of the quality represented by the verb, adjective or noun. The placement of the **tamyiz** word is variable, and depends on stylistic considerations. It is usually, however, placed somewhere *after* the word it qualifies.

The best default meaning to give to this use of the accusative case when you have to translate it into English is probably *as* or *as to*.

Examples:

...وَيَزِدَادُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا...

"...and that those who believe may increase *as to* belief..."

(Quran 74:31)

يَخْتَلِفُ الرَّجُلَانِ عُلوًّا.

The two men differ *as to* height.

هَذَا الْكِتَابُ أَجْمَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابِ أُسْلُوبًا وَمَعْنَى.

This book is more beautiful than that book *as to* style and meaning.

In general this process of specification can be expressed in a number of ways in Arabic (some alternate ways you may have already seen, for example, would be with prepositional phrases using *في* or *مِنْ* or with an adjective *idafa*). In other words, it is optional.

In two situations, however, using the accusative case for specification is required:

- 1) When you want to make a comparative/superlative construction using an adjective that is an active or passive participle of a derived form (II-X) verb.

for the exam than I was, " you would want to use the adjective مُسْتَعَدٌّ *pre-
pared* (which is derived from the Form X verb اسْتَعَدَّ , *to be prepared*). You
cannot apply the elative pattern directly to a Form X verb (or any substan-
tive derived from it), so you get around the problem by using the accusative
of specification. In other words, you will literally say: " He was more *as to*
preparation than me..."

كَانَ أَكْثَرَ اسْتِعْدَاداً مِنِّي لِلَامْتِحَانِ.
He was more prepared than me for the exam.

2) In order to express the comparative/superlative with color adjectives
(and other adjectives based on the أَفْعَلُ pattern, which is identical with
the elative). For example, the adjective *white* in Arabic is أَيْضُ (based on the
root ب-ي-ض, *being white*). So, in Arabic

الْبَيْتُ أَيْضُ

means simply: " The house is white. " To say, on the other hand, the equivalent
of "This house is *whiter* than that house, " you have to use the accusative of specifi-
cation (tamyiz), with either the elative adjective أَكْثَرُ (*more*) or, even better, the
elative adjective أَشَدُّ (*more intense, stronger*). This is because أَيْضُ, because it is
already based on the pattern أَفْعَلُ, cannot be converted into a separate elative form.
Thus you will literally say in Arabic:

ذَلِكَ الْبَيْتُ أَشَدُّ بَيَاضاً مِنْ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ.
That house is more intense *as to* whiteness than this house.

Tamyiz and Measurement

Tamyiz constructions are frequently used with numbers and other " measure-
ment" words to specify more precisely what the measurement applies to. This is why
the noun that follows a number (the counted noun) for the numbers 11-99 is in the
accusative case (the use of genitive case for the other numbers is regarded as an
exception to the regular rules of tamyiz).

Just as with many other instances of tamyiz, you could express these kinds of
constructions in other ways. For example, you can say " I bought a kilogram of
meat " by saying:

اِشْتَرَيْتُ كِيلُو مِنَ اللَّحْمِ.

or you can say:

اشْتَرَيْتُ كَيْلُو لَحْمًا

Both mean " I bought a kilo of meat. " The first example uses a prepositional phrase with مِنْ to express " of meat, " the second uses the accusative of specification (tamyiz). The only difference is stylistic (the version with tamyiz might be considered "less wordy" and more elegant).

Some additional examples of tamyiz.

- ١ . هو أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا .
- ٢ . قَضَى عِشْرِينَ يَوْمًا فِي الْقَاهِرَةِ قَبْلَ رُجُوعِهِ أَمْسٍ .
- ٣ . كَمْ سَاعَةً دَرَسْتَ فِي هَذَا الْأَسْبُوعِ ؟
- ٤ . مَالِي غَيْرُكَ صَدِيقًا .
- ٥ . هو الْوَحِيدُ الَّذِي مَارَسَ الصَّحَافَةَ أَدِيبًا وَقَتَانًا وَتَاجِرًا .
- ٦ . وَلَعَلَّ قِصَّةَ خَلْقِ آدَمَ أَكْثَرُ هَذِهِ الْقِصَصِ انْتِشَارًا فِي الْأَدْيَانِ الْمُخْتَلِفَةِ .
- ٧ . هَذَا هُوَ أَقْلُ أَطْرَافِهِ أَهْمِيَّةً وَأَكْثَرُهَا ظُهُورًا .
- ٨ . لِنَذْكُرْ دَائِمًا أَنَّنَا أَمَامَ مُشْكَلَةٍ مِنْ أَشَدِّ مُشْكَلَاتِنَا تَعْقِيدًا .
- ٩ . وَقَدْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَزِيدَ الْمَوْقِفَ تَأْثِيرًا .
- ١٠ . إِنَّ الشُّعْرَ الْمَهْجَرِيَّ أَدَى رِسَالَتَهُ لِلشَّرْقِ كَامِلَةٌ .