Persian Word Order

ABOUT LANGUAGE NOTES

Analyzing Language

In Unit 1, you are learning phrases and words as memorized “chunks” of language or predetermined “formulae.” Therefore, you don’t need to focus on the analytical language notes included here. Rather, the language explanations are provided to help those of you who like to analyze what you are saying, hearing, reading, writing, and learning.

Although Persian is somewhat related to English in the scheme of world languages, there are some basic differences (other than the alphabet!) that you will have to get used to.

One difference is that the normal word order is different from English. In regards to word order, Persian is more similar to German than to English. Linguists say that English is a SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) language, while Persian is a SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language. That means that in English we would say the subject of the sentence, then the verb, then the object, if any, as in:

The boy (subject) hit (verb) the dog (object).

In Persian, the same sentence would be something like:

Boy (subject) the dog (object) hit (verb).

Persian word order is also more flexible than English word order, so the order may not always be exactly the same. However, in general, you may want to notice that the verbs appear at the end of the sentences.

You will also see that adjectives of description come after the nouns they modify. For example, in English:

big boy

In Persian, becomes:

boy big /pesare bozorg/.

Note the word order of the greetings in this unit:

What is your name?

Name your what is? /esm/ + /e/ /shomaa chee ast/?

My name is Ali.

Name my Ali is. /esm/ + /e/ /man alee ast/.

Note that there is also an /e/ added between the noun and the adjective.

You don’t need to worry too much about word order in this unit because you are learning all ritual greetings and questions as memorized “chunks.” This analysis is just a preview.
Form for Imperatives

Note that most **imperatives** (words used to give orders and commands) begin with a verb starting with /be/-, for example, /beshinid/ *sit down*; and /beneeeseed/ *write*.

In many cases, when the imperative includes the form /bekoneed/ *make* or *do*, the /be/ is dropped. For example:

/por koneed/  
*fill in*, literally, *make full*

/dorost koneed/  
*fix* or *correct*, literally, *make right*

For now, all you need to do is take note that /be/ is dropped. Later, you will see how to make these imperatives from the verbs.

/baaz bekoneed/  
*open*, literally *make open*
Third Person *To Be* /Hastaen/

You saw that when you wanted to say *This is Mina*, you said /in meenaaast/, or literally, *This Mina is*.

You may have noticed that the third person form of *to be*, or *is*, has different forms - /hast/ and /ast/ and even /e/ in speaking.

In question forms, you also saw /hast/ combined with the question word /chee/ to make /cheest/.