

Nahw - حروف مشبهه بالفعل - Particles resembling Verbs

In this post I will, Insha Allah, try to explain how some حروف (particles) in the Arabic Language, namely إِنَّ and its sisters, resemble verbs and form a category of their own, in the same way as حروف جر (prepositions) do. There are 6 such particles and they are called حروف مُشَبَّهَةٌ بالفعل. They enter upon a جُمْلَةٌ اسْمِيَّةٌ causing the مُبْتَدَأٌ to become مَنْصُوبٌ i.e. go into the state of نَصْبٌ. The name of the مُبْتَدَأٌ changes to اسْمٌ إِنَّ and the خَبَرٌ becomes خَبَرٌ إِنَّ which goes in state of رَفْعٌ e.g. إِنَّ الْكِتَابَ جَدِيدٌ (Indeed the book is new). There are three reasons why these particles resemble verbs:

1. Resemblance in rhyming
2. Resemblance in meaning
3. Resemblance in the way these particles affect the subject and predicate of a sentence

The table below lists all 6 members of this group:

حرف	Meaning
إِنَّ	Indeed
أَنَّ	The fact that or that
كَأَنَّ	As if
لَكِنَّ	But or however
لَعَلَّ	Perhaps

لَيْتَ	Would that
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and the following table give the corresponding rhyming verbs for these حُرُوفٍ

حرف	Rhyming Verb
إِنَّ	فَرَّ
أَنَّ	فَرَّ
كَأَنَّ	قَطَعَنَّ
لَكِنَّ	قَاتَلْنَا
لَعَلَّ	قَطَعَنَّ
لَيْتَ	لَيْسَ

Now we will see how these particles also carry verb-like meanings. As an example take إِنَّ , which means *indeed* . In a sentence *indeed* can be substituted by the phrase *I verify* for which the word is حَقَّقْتُ , showing us that the meaning of *verifying* is hidden inside إِنَّ . The same also goes for أَنَّ .

Now, كَأَنَّ means *as if* which means you are *likening or comparing one thing to another* for which the word is شَبَّهْتُ . Similarly, لَكِنَّ contains the meaning of *I rectify* which can be seen by the fact that a statement which has to be rectified/corrected must include *but* e.g. *Zaid came but Amr never came* .

The word for rectification is اسْتَدْرَكَتُ . Moving forward, we see that لَعَلَّ means *I hope* or *I anticipate* for which the word is تَرَجَّعْتُ . Finally, لَيْتَ carries the meaning of *wishing and longing* for which the word is تَمَنَّيْتُ (*I wish*).

Finally, the way these particles affect parts of a sentence shows us that they can act as governing agents

just like verbs do. To see this in more detail note that most verbs are followed by two اِسْم : one of them would be in the state of رَفْع on the basis of فاعِل and the other will be in the state of نَصَب on the basis of مفعول به . Now, these 6 particles are also followed by two اِسْم , one of which is in the state of نَصَب based on being the subject of the particle and the other one is in the state of رَفْع based on the predicate. Thus, this is another way these particles act in a similar manner to that of verbs.