

Hona Part 2

The very important word “to be,” or the Urdu equivalent ہونا (*hona*).

I am	میں ہوں۔	<i>Main hun.</i>
You are (intimate)	تو ہے۔	<i>Tu hai.</i>
He/She/It is	وہ ہے۔	<i>Wo hai.</i>

We are	ہم ہیں۔	<i>Ham hain.</i>
You are (informal)	تم ہو۔	<i>Tum ho.</i>
You are (formal)	آپ ہیں۔	<i>Ap hain.</i>
They are	وہ ہیں۔	<i>Wo hain.</i>

So, basically you just need to memorize the above table and you are ready to go. Well, almost. There are a few common mistakes foreigners learning Urdu make.

1) Use the wrong pronoun or level or respect.

For more information, please read through the previous blog on “Pronouns”.

2) Mispronunciation of the words “hai” ہے and “hain” ہیں

This is really important, because in the worst case you will offend somebody by using the wrong form. Generally speaking ہیں (“*hain*”) does not only show you that something is plural, but it expresses respect and formality. Let me give you some examples to make this clearer.

Those are my books.	<i>Wo meri kitaben hain.</i>	وہ میری کتابیں ہیں۔
That is my father.	<i>Wo abu hain.</i>	وہ ابو ہیں

The first sentence “Those are my books” is pretty self-explanatory. It is plural, so we need the form “*hain*”. The second sentence “That is my father” is not plural, though. And still you have to use the form “*hain*”. The reason is that the word “abu” is a respected form and for talking about your elders and parents in particular, we have to use the respected form.

Another reason this is so hard for foreigners is because of the pronunciation of the last sound ں which is often written as “n” in Roman Urdu. This sound is actually a nasalization and not the English sound “n”.

What is nasalization and how can I practice it?

Languages like English do not really have nasalization or to be more precise nasalization does not cause a word to change its meaning. The only time something sounds nasalized in English is when

you have a cold and have a stuffy nose. However, when you talk with a stuffy nose the words still all mean the same in English. Not so in Urdu.

To practice, start first by saying the word “hai”. Then say it again, but this time pinch your nose. Can you hear the difference?

Now, say the English word “hang”. Say it several times and see if you can hear how the sound “a” is nasalized. Now try to say it without pronouncing the “g” at the end, i.e. “han(g silent)”. Very Basically, just pretend that you want to say the full word “hang”, except that you stop half-way and don’t say the “g”.

Just a reminder that we offer live and in-person classes to people all around the world! [Contact us today.](#)