

THE OBJECT IN ARABIC GRAMMAR (NAḤW) AND THE OBJECT IN UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Sh.R.Abduvahobov¹

Mas'ul muallif: Abduvahobov Shahzodbek Ravshanbek o'g'li, Tashkent University of Humanities Student of the Programme "Philology and Language Teaching (Arabic)".

Accepted: 08 August 2026
Published: 08 August 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author(s). Licensee Buxoro xalqaro universiteti ilmiy axborotnomasi.

Iqtibos uchun: Abduvahobov, S. R. THE OBJECT IN ARABIC GRAMMAR (NAḤW) AND THE OBJECT IN UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS / S. R. Abduvahobov // Buxoro xalqaro universiteti ilmiy axborotnomasi. — 2026. — T. 7, № 1. — B. 230–233.

1. Tashkent University of Humanities Student of the Programme "Philology and Language Teaching (Arabic)"

Abstract. This article presents a comparative analysis of the category of object — *maf'ul* (literally, "that which is acted upon") — as developed within the Arabic grammatical tradition (*al-naḥw*, "grammar/syntax") — and the corresponding category of object in the syntax of the Uzbek language. The study juxtaposes the Arabic "five objects" (*al-mafā'il al-khamsa*) — *maf'ul bihi* ("direct object"), *maf'ul mutlaq* ("absolute / cognate object"), *maf'ul lahu* ("object of cause"), *maf'ul fihi* ("object of time and place"), and *maf'ul ma'ahu* ("object of accompaniment") — with the Uzbek direct (*vositasiz*) and indirect (*vositali*) objects from functional, morphological, and syntactic perspectives. The comparative-typological analysis demonstrates that, although the category of the object is functionally analogous in the two languages, the means of its expression, the case marking, and the word order differ substantially.

Keywords: Arabic language, Uzbek language, *naḥw*, object, *maf'ul bihi*, *maf'ul mutlaq*, direct object, indirect object, comparative analysis, typology, syntax.

ДОПОЛНЕНИЕ В АРАБСКОЙ ГРАММАТИКЕ (НАХВЕ) И ДОПОЛНЕНИЕ В УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ

Аннотация. В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ категории дополнения — аль-маф'уль («то, на что направлено действие») в арабской грамматической традиции (ан-нахв) и соответствующей категории дополнения в синтаксисе узбекского языка. В исследовании сопоставляются арабские «пять маф'улей» (аль-мафа'иль аль-хамса) — маф'уль биhi (прямое дополнение), маф'уль мутлак (абсолютное дополнение), маф'уль ляху (дополнение причины), маф'уль фиhi (дополнение времени и места) и маф'уль ма'аху (дополнение сопровождения) — с прямыми (воситасиз) и косвенными (воситали) дополнениями узбекского языка с функциональной, морфологической и синтаксической точек зрения. Сравнительно-типологический анализ показывает, что, несмотря на функциональное сходство категории дополнения в обоих языках, способы её выражения, система падежного оформления и порядок слов существенно различаются.

Ключевые слова: арабский язык, узбекский язык, нахв, дополнение, маф'уль биhi, маф'уль мутлак, прямое дополнение, косвенное дополнение, сравнительный анализ, типология, синтаксис.

Introduction

Arabic, a member of the Semitic family of languages, is distinguished by its rich scholarly and grammatical tradition. This tradition is associated with the names of the great classical thinkers — Sibawayh, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, Ibn Hishām, and al-Zamakhsharī — in whose works the science of *naḥw* ("grammar/syntax"), that is, the body of morphological and syntactic laws, was shaped as a complete theoretical system. Within the system of Arabic *naḥw*, the object — *al-maf'ul* — constitutes a distinct category, expressed in five different forms, each of which complements the verbal action from a particular aspect.

In Uzbek syntax, the object is studied as one of the secondary parts of the sentence and is mainly divided into two types: the direct (*vositasiz*) and the indirect (*vositali*) object. A comparative analysis of the object categories of the two languages — that is, an analysis carried out against the background of the structural-typological features of Semitic (inflectional) and Turkic (agglutinative) languages — is not only of theoretical importance but also a practical necessity in the process of teaching Arabic to an Uzbek-speaking audience.

The aim of this article is to describe the concept of *maf'ul* in the tradition of Arabic *naḥw* through its five types, to outline the theoretical foundations of the object category in Uzbek, and to identify, by means of the comparative-typological method, the similarities and differences of the object in the material of the two languages; and, moreover, to highlight the practical significance of these conclusions for educational and methodological practice.

Literature Review and Methodology

The Arabic naḥw tradition, beginning in the 8th century — that is, with Sībawayh's work *Al-Kitāb* — analyses the category of maf'ūl within the framework of verbal government (al-ʿamal al-fi'lī, "verbal operation"). Classical Arab grammarians divided the maf'ūl into five types and established specific morphological-syntactic criteria for each. In the 20th century, Soviet Arabists such as B. M. Grande, N. V. Yushmanov, A. A. Kovalyov, and G. Sh. Sharbatov enriched the classical naḥw tradition with the methodologies of European linguistics and systematized the maf'ūl system in an academic form.

In the field of Uzbek syntax, the fundamental works of G'. Abduraxmonov, A. Hojiev, Sh. Rahmatullaev, M. Asqarova, N. Mahmudov, and A. Nurmonov have elucidated the theoretical and practical aspects of the object category in detail. In Uzbekistan, the comparative study of Arabic and Uzbek has been grounded methodologically through the textbooks of B. Khalidov, A. Abdujabborov, and many other scholars.

The leading method employed in the present study is the comparative-typological method. In addition, structural-functional analysis, illustrative description of language material, and contrastive analysis have been used. The examples in the article are drawn from the textbooks mentioned above and from authentic Arabic texts.

The Object in Arabic Naḥw and Its Five Types

According to the Arabic naḥw tradition, the object — al-maf'ūl — is the constituent that complements, from various aspects, the action of a verb or a maṣḍar (verbal noun) within the sentence, and that appears chiefly in the naṣb case — that is, the accusative (ḥālat al-naṣb). In the classical naḥw tradition, the maf'ūl is represented by five types:

1) al-maf'ūl bihi "the object upon which [the action is done]" — the direct object: it denotes the entity onto which the action passes directly;

2) al-maf'ūl al-muṭlaq, "the absolute object" — the cognate object: a maṣḍar derived from the same root as the verb of the sentence and used to emphasize the action or to indicate its number or kind;

3) al-maf'ūl lahu / li-ajlihi, "the object for the sake of which" — the object of cause: a maṣḍar indicating the reason for which the action is performed;

4) al-maf'ūl fihi, "the object within which" — the adverbial object: it indicates the time or place of the action (ẓarf al-zamān wa-l-makān, "adverbial of time and place");

5) al-maf'ūl ma'ahu, "the object together with which" — the object of accompaniment: a constituent introduced by the particle (wāw al-ma'iyya, "the wāw of accompaniment"), indicating with whom or with what the action takes place.

Maf'ūl bihi — the direct object

The maf'ūl bihi (literally, "that to which the action is directed") is expressed by nouns or personal pronouns and denotes the direct object of a transitive verbal action. It always appears in the naṣb (accusative) case, and morphologically it is marked with fatha or tanwīn fatha. Examples:

(Qara'a Maḥmūdun kitāban) — "Maḥmūd read a book";

(Ḍaraba Zaydun Maḥmūdān) — "Zayd struck Maḥmūd";

(Katabtu risālatan) — "I wrote a letter".

In these examples, the words kitāban, Maḥmūdān, and risālatan are all direct objects marked with tanwīn fatha (-an). The maf'ūl bihi may also be expressed by a personal pronoun, in which case the pronoun is attached to the verb as a suffix: (ḍarabahu) — "he struck him"; (qatalahā) — "he killed her".

Maf'ūl muṭlaq — the absolute (cognate) object

The maf'ūl muṭlaq is a maṣḍar derived from the same root as the verb of the sentence, normally in an indefinite form and in the naṣb case. It performs three functions: emphasis of the action (ta'kid), indication of the kind of action (bayānu naw'), or indication of the number/amount of the action (bayānu 'adad). Examples:

(Ḍarabtuhu ḍarban) — "I struck him with a [hard] blow" (emphasis);

(Sāra sayran ḥathīthan) — "He proceeded at a brisk pace" (kind of action);

(Daqqa al-bāba daqqatayni) — "He knocked on the door twice" (number).

This type of object has no direct morphological equivalent in Uzbek. In Uzbek, this function is fulfilled by adverbs, compound verbs, or participial forms.

Maf'ūl lahu, maf'ūl fihi, and maf'ūl ma'ahu

The maf'ūl lahu (or maf'ūl li-ajlihi) is a maṣḍar indicating the cause of the action and appears in an indefinite form in the naṣb case. For example: (Qumtu ijlālan li-l-ustādhī) — "I rose out of respect for the teacher". Here the word expresses the reason for rising.

The maf'ūl fihi (also called ẓarf, "circumstantial") is the constituent indicating the time or place of the action and always appears in the naṣb case. Examples: (Sāfartu yawma-l-jum'ati) — "I travelled on Friday" (adverbial of time); (Jalastu amāma-l-mudarrisi) — "I sat in front of the teacher" (adverbial of place).

The maf'ūl ma'ahu is the constituent expressing the entity with which the action takes place; it follows the particle (wāw al-ma'iyya, the comitative "wāw" of accompaniment). For example: (Sirtu wa-n-nahra) — "I went along with the river" (that is, together with the river, in the direction of its flow).

The Object in Uzbek

In the grammar of Uzbek, the object is studied as one of the secondary parts of the sentence. The object is the constituent which denotes the object of the action, state, or quality expressed by the predicate (or by a word functioning as

the predicate), or its directional target. In Uzbek syntax, the object is divided into two types: the direct object (vositasiz to'ldiruvchi) and the indirect object (vositali to'ldiruvchi).

The direct object (vositasiz to'ldiruvchi)

The direct object denotes the entity directly affected by the action of a transitive verb. It is expressed chiefly by nouns, pronouns, numerals, adjectives, or action nouns in the accusative case (with the suffix *-ni*). For example:

- Talaba kitobni o'qidi ("The student read the book");
- Onam meva-chevani xarid qildi ("My mother bought fruit and the like");
- Karim ukasini chaqirdi ("Karim called his younger brother").

In Uzbek, the direct object is not always marked with the *-ni* suffix. According to the criterion of definiteness/indefiniteness, an indefinite, generic object may appear in the nominative case: U kitob o'qidi ("He read a book" — which book is unspecified) versus U kitobni o'qidi ("He read the book" — a specific book). Functionally, this phenomenon resembles the category of definiteness expressed in Arabic by the article, but the means of morphological expression differ fundamentally.

The indirect object (vositali to'ldiruvchi)

The indirect object denotes an entity not directly affected by the action of the predicate but related to it in one way or another. The indirect object is expressed by words in the dative (*-ga*), locative (*-da*), or ablative (*-dan*) cases, or by postpositions (bilan "with", uchun "for", haqida "about", tomon "towards", sari "towards", etc.). For example:

- Men do'stinga xat yozdim ("I wrote a letter to my friend" — dative);
- Hamma kitobdan foydalanadi ("Everyone uses the book" — ablative);
- Salim qalam bilan yozdi ("Salim wrote with a pen" — postpositional instrumental);
- Ona bolasi haqida o'yladi ("The mother thought about her child" — postpositional topic).

Thus, the morphological means of expressing the object in Uzbek are predominantly synthetic (case suffixes) and analytic (postpositions).

Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences

Comparing the object category in the two languages, the following similarities and differences may be established.

Functional similarities

First, in both languages the object — as a secondary part of the sentence — expresses the object of the action of a verb or *maşdar* (in Uzbek, the action noun). Second, in both languages there is a distinction between direct and indirect objects: the Arabic *maʼūl bihi* corresponds functionally and completely to the Uzbek direct object (vositasiz to'ldiruvchi). Third, in both languages the object may be expressed by personal pronouns.

Morphological differences

The first and most salient difference lies in the case system. Arabic is a synthetic (inflectional) language with a three-member case system: nominative (*al-raʼf*), genitive (*al-jarr*), and accusative (*al-naşb*). All five types of object (*maʼūl bihi*, *muṭlaq*, *lahu*, *fihi*, *ma'ahu*) always appear in the *naşb* case. Uzbek, by contrast, is an agglutinative language with a six-member case system: nominative, genitive, accusative, dative, locative, and ablative. The direct object appears in the accusative case (*-ni*), whereas the indirect object is expressed by the dative, locative, or ablative cases, or by postpositions.

Second, in Arabic the object is marked morphologically by the system of short vowel signs (*ḥaraka*) — namely *faṭḥa* or *tanwīn faṭḥa* — whereas in Uzbek there are specific agglutinative suffixes such as *-ni*, *-ga*, *-da*, and *-dan*.

Third, the *maʼūl muṭlaq* category (the cognate accusative) has no direct morphological equivalent in Uzbek. Such a function is fulfilled in Uzbek by adverbs, compound verbs, or reduplicative constructions. For example, the expression ("I struck him a violent blow") has to be rendered in Uzbek by constructions such as *men uni qattiq urdim* ("I struck him hard") or *urganda urdim* ("when I struck, I really struck").

Syntactic and typological differences

In terms of word order, the typical structure of an Arabic verbal sentence (*al-jumla al-fi'liyya*, "the verbal sentence") is Verb + Subject + Object (VSO), for example: Uzbek, by contrast, is an SOV-type language, with the typical order Subject + Object + Predicate: *Mahmud kitobni o'qidi*. In both languages, however, the word order can be altered for stylistic purposes.

There are also differences with regard to the category of definiteness/indefiniteness. In Arabic, the definiteness of the object is marked by the article *al-* "I read the book" — whereas indefiniteness is expressed by the *tanwīn*: "I read a book". In Uzbek, the definiteness/indefiniteness of the direct object is expressed by the presence or absence of the *-ni* suffix: *kitobni o'qidim* (definite) versus *kitob o'qidim* (indefinite, generic). The two cases display functional convergence, but the morphological means differ fundamentally.

Another distinctive feature of the Arabic *maʼūl bihi* is its attachment to the verb in the form of a pronominal suffix: ("he killed her"), ("I struck you"). In Uzbek there is no such morphological merging — the pronominal object appears as a separate word in the accusative case: *uni o'ldirdi* ("he killed her"), *seni urdim* ("I struck you").

Pedagogical and Methodological Conclusions

The differences set out above give rise to a number of specific difficulties in teaching Arabic to an Uzbek-speaking audience. The following points, in particular, require attention.

First, the fact that the *maf'ul bihi* appears in the *naṣb* case and is marked with *tanwīn fathā* constitutes a new morphological category for students, and it can be effectively explained by analogy with the Uzbek suffix *-ni*. At the same time, the teacher must explicitly emphasize the distinction that the *maf'ul bihi* always appears in the *naṣb* case (irrespective of definiteness or indefiniteness), whereas the *-ni* suffix is used mainly with a definite object.

Second, the *maf'ul muṭlaq* category is a completely new concept for an Uzbek-speaking audience; its meaning and function can appropriately be explained by comparison with Uzbek adverbs and reduplicative constructions.

Third, in working with *maf'ul fihi* (adverbials of time and place), functional comparison with the Uzbek dative and locative cases and with temporal-spatial postpositions is necessary; however, specific exercises are required in order to distinguish the morphological forms.

Fourth, owing to the difference in word order, learners may become confused when translating an Arabic verbal sentence. To prevent this, intensive practice with simple verbal sentences in the early stages of instruction is useful.

Conclusion

The results of the comparative analysis undertaken here show that the category of *maf'ul* in Arabic *naḥw* and the category of object in Uzbek are functionally similar syntactic units, both performing the function of expressing the object of the action of the predicate. However, in connection with the structural-typological features of the two languages, these categories show significant differences in their quantity, distribution, morphological marking, and syntactic behaviour.

Arabic, as a synthetic, inflectional language, expresses the object through five categorial types and unites them all in the *naṣb* case. Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, divides the object into two main types (direct and indirect) and expresses them by means of a rich case system (accusative, dative, locative, ablative) together with postpositions. The most striking difference is the absence in Uzbek of any direct morphological equivalent of the *maf'ul muṭlaq* category.

The results of the present comparative analysis may serve as a theoretical and practical basis for improving the methodology of teaching Arabic to an Uzbek-speaking audience, for the development of comparative-typological courses, and for the creation of practical guides for teachers of Arabic. Further research should deepen the study of the relationship between the *maf'ul* and such categories as *al-ḥāl* ("circumstantial accusative") and *al-tamyīz* ("specification"), as well as their comparison with predicative means in Uzbek.

References

- [1] Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language: Textbook for University Students. — Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University Publishing-Printing Association, 2005. — 312 p.
- [2] Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language: Textbook for University Students (revised edition). — Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University Publishing-Printing Association, 2015. — 308 p.
- [3] Abduraxmonov G'. Modern Uzbek Literary Language. Syntax. — Tashkent: Fan, 1996. — 256 p.
- [4] Grande B. M. A Course in Arabic Grammar in Comparative-Historical Perspective. — 2nd ed. — Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura RAN, 2001. — 592 p.
- [5] Mahmudov N., Nurmonov A. Theoretical Grammar of the Uzbek Language: Syntax. — Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1995. — 232 p.
- [6] Rahmatullaev Sh. Modern Literary Uzbek Language. — Tashkent: Universitet, 2010. — 416 p.
- [7] Khalidov B. Z. Arabic Language Textbook. — Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1981. — 360 p.
- [8] Hojiev A. Modern Uzbek Literary Language: Syntax. — Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1991. — 184 p.
- [9] Yushmanov N. V. Grammar of Literary Arabic. — Moscow: Nauka, 1985. — 175 p.