



CASE MARKINGS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This article provides an in-depth discussion of the i'rāb (al-i'rāb) system, one of the fundamental categories of Arabic grammar. In Arabic, a word's grammatical function within a sentence is expressed through special diacritical marks—fatha, kasra, damma, and sukūn. This system is comparatively analyzed with the case category in Uzbek. The morphological structure, case forms, and their syntactic functions of the two languages are compared, and the similarities and differences are scientifically revealed.

Keywords: E'rob, harakat, fatha, kasra, damma, raf', nasb, jarr, jazm, case, Uzbek language, Arabic language, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

The comparative study of the world's languages is one of the most pressing areas of modern linguistics. Arabic and Uzbek belong to different typological families – the former to the Semitic languages, the latter to the Turkic group. At the same time, both languages have a special system that expresses a word's grammatical function within a sentence: in Arabic, this is called i'rāb (الاعراب), and in Uzbek, it is called the case category.¹

According to the Arabist Abdulfattah Abdulghani, there are three cases in Arabic: the nominative case (حَالَةُ الرَّفْعِ), the genitive case (حَالَةُ الْجَرِّ), and the accusative case (حَالَةُ النَّصْبِ). In Uzbek, six cases are distinguished: nominative, accusative,

¹Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language: A Textbook for University Students - Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2005. - P. 76.



dative, locative, instrumental, and genitive. This quantitative difference indicates a typological asymmetry between the two languages².

The main purpose of the article is to provide a detailed discussion of the cases and inflectional forms that constitute the system of 'i'rab in the Arabic language, based on Abdujabborov's textbook, "The Arabic Language," and to determine the typological relationship between the two languages through a comparative analysis of them with the case system of Uzbek.

The system of e'rab and verbs in Arabic.

One of the distinctive features of the Arabic language is that a word's grammatical function within a sentence is expressed through special marks—called harakat—placed on its final syllable. According to Abdujabborov, there are no letters in the Arabic alphabet that represent short vowels; in the Holy Qur'an, dictionaries, textbooks, and other necessary cases, short vowels are represented by special marks called "diacritics"³.

Four basic vowels are used in Arabic:

1. **Fatha** (فَتْح - َ) - represents the short vowel "a". This diacritic is placed over the preceding letter. Grammatically, it indicates the genitive case (nasb) and, in some cases, the emphatic form (jazm). For example: الطالِب - talabani (in the genitive case).
2. **Kasra** (كسرة - ِ) - represents a short vowel "i". It is placed under the preceding consonant. Grammatically, it indicates the genitive case (jarr) form. For example: الطالب - of the student (in the genitive case).
3. **Damma** (ضمة - ُ) - represents the short vowel "u". It is placed over the preceding letter. Grammatically, it indicates the nominative case (raf'). For example: الطالب - talaba (in the nominative case, as the subject).⁴
4. **Sukun** (سكون - ْ) - indicates the absence of a vowel after a consonant. In verb forms, it is used to express the state of rest (jazm).

Tanwins - a sign of indefiniteness

² Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 76.

³ Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 14.

⁴ Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 14.



Another important phenomenon directly related to the system is tanwins. According to Abdujabborov's definition, most words in the noun class in Arabic end with the suffixes "-un," "-in," and "-an." These suffixes have their own names and signs:⁵

Tanwin damma (◌ُ) - is read as "-un" and indicates the nominative case + indefiniteness: طَالِبٌ - a student (as a subject).

Tanwin kasra (◌ِ) - is read as "-in" and indicates the genitive case + indefiniteness: طَالِبٍ - of a student (in the genitive case).

Tanwin fatha (◌َ) is read as "-an" and indicates the genitive case + indefiniteness: طَالِبًا - one student (in the genitive case).

Thus, in Arabic, a single movement serves two functions at once: one, to indicate a short vowel in the word, and two, to express the word's grammatical case within the sentence. This is a characteristic morphological economy of the Arabic language.

The case system in Arabic

1. Nominative case - حالة الرفع

According to Abdujabborov, the nominative case (حالة الرفع) is used only to express the subject and predicate nouns. This case is marked with a damma (◌ُ) or a tanwin damma (◌ُ)!⁶

In the definite form: الطالبُ مجتهدٌ – The student is diligent (al-talib – in the nominative case, subject). In the indefinite form: طالبٌ مجتهدٌ – A student is diligent.

In the dual form, the nominative case (لَانِ / لَيْنِ) and in the correct plural the nominative case (لُونِ / لَاتِ) take special forms: طالبان – two students (nominative); مسلمون – Muslims (nominative).

2. The genitive case - case of Jar (حالة الجر)

The genitive case (حالة الجر) is used after prepositions and to express an unbound adjective. This case is marked with a kasra (◌ِ) or a tanvin kasra (◌ِ)!

⁵Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 22.

⁶Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 76.



With the helper verb: في المدرسة - in the school; من البيت - from the house. In the isofat construction: كتاب الطالب - the student's book (الطالب in the genitive case).

In dual number and regular plural, the nominative and accusative case forms coincide: طالبَيْن - the two students; مسلمَيْن - the Muslims.⁷ !

3. The genitive case - case of nassab (hālatun-nassab)

The accusative case (حالة النَّصْب) is used to express complements and circumstances, as well as in all cases where the nominative and genitive cases are not used. This case is marked with a fatha (◌َ) or tanwin fatha (◌ً).

In the role of a complement: قرأ الطالبُ كتابًا - The student read a book (كتابًا - in the genitive case, a direct complement). After emphatic particles: 'Inna talibā mujtahidun' - Indeed, the student is diligent (الطالب becomes the dative case).

Category of definiteness and indefiniteness.

In Arabic, another important category that is organically linked to the i'rāb system is the category of specificity and non-specificity. According to Abdujabborov's scholarly sources, words belonging to the noun group appear in either an indefinite or a definite form.

Nouns in the indefinite case do not refer to a specific thing, but rather to any object of that type. Such nouns can be translated into Uzbek by adding the word "bir" or "qandaydir": كِتَابٌ — kitob, bir kitob; طَالِبٌ — talaba, bir talaba⁸.

Nouns in the definite case, however, denote a specific object or concept. In Uzbek, demonstrative pronouns such as "bu," "shu," and "o'sha" can be added to nouns in the definite case. To convert an indefinite noun into the definite form, you must add the article "al" (ال) – the prefix meaning "this" or "that" – to the word: بِنْتُ – a girl → الْبِنْتُ – (this or that) girl.

⁷ Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 76.

⁸ Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 14.



Case systems in Arabic and Uzbek

A functional similarity between the nominative case (rafʿ) in Arabic and the nominative case in Uzbek is clearly evident: in both instances, the word expresses the subject of the sentence and occupies a central grammatical position.

The Arabic genitive case (jarr) and the Uzbek genitive case are also similar: both cases express a relationship of possession. In Arabic: كِتَابُ الطَّالِبِ - the student's book; in Uzbek: talabaniy kitobi - the student's book.

The genitive case in Arabic (nasb) and the genitive case in Uzbek are similar in function – both cases express a direct complement. Arabic: قَرَأْتُ كِتَابًا - I read a book; Uzbek: Men kitob (ni) o'qidim.

Main typological differences

The first and most important difference is **the method of expression**. In Arabic, the case meaning is expressed through diacritical marks on the word (fatha, kasra, damma) – that is, no prefix is added to the word, but rather the vowel sign changes. In Uzbek, however, the case meaning is expressed by adding a separate suffix to the word: noun + -(n)ing, -(n)i, -(g)a, -da, -dan.

The second difference is **the number of cases**. In Arabic there are three cases: nominative, accusative, and genitive. In Uzbek, however, there are six cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, locative, and prepositional case. In Arabic, the locative, temporal-locative, and prepositional () cases are not distinguished as separate cases—these meanings are expressed using auxiliary particles (prepositions).

The third difference is **the category of definiteness**. In Arabic, the case system is organically linked to the category of definiteness-indefiniteness: each case form, in turn, appears in different shapes in definite and indefinite states. In Uzbek, this category is not grammatically linked to case—it is expressed through demonstrative pronouns or context.

Fourth difference - **the state of duality**. In Arabic, some nouns (compound nouns, some plural forms) take only two case forms – rafʿ and fatha (nasb and jarr are merged into a single form). In Uzbek, there is no such phenomenon – all nouns have a full case paradigm.



Conclusion

This comparative analysis shows that the Arabic i'rāb system is a distinctive morphological system that expresses a word's grammatical function within a sentence through diacritical marks (fatha, kasra, damma, sukūn). Although this system is functionally equivalent to the case category in Uzbek, it differs fundamentally in its means of expression and structure.

In Arabic, three cases are distinguished, each determined by its own movement and manifest in an integral connection with the definite/indefinite category. In Uzbek, however, case meaning is expressed through separate suffixes and is divided into six cases. The expression of relations corresponding to the dative, locative, and genitive cases in Arabic by means of prepositions is a clear example of the typological difference between the two languages.

Such a comparative analysis not only clarifies the structural differences between Arabic and Uzbek, but also provides an important methodological foundation for those learning Arabic through Uzbek.

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