



THE CONCEPT OF "HARF" IN ARABIC NAHW AND ITS UZBEK EQUIVALENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Abduvahobov Shahzodbek Ravshanbek o'g'li

Student of the Programme "Philology and Languages Teaching (Arabic)"

Tashkent University of Humanities

Abstract

This article examines the concept of the letter, one of the main categories of Arabic grammar. In Arabic grammar, the concept of the letter is of great importance, and its definition, main characteristics, and types are analyzed based on the classical grammar source—Sibawayh's "Al-Kitab"—and A. Abdujabborov's textbook "The Arabic Language." At the same time, the comparative relationship of the category of letter in the Arabic language with auxiliary verbs and conjunctions in the Uzbek language is studied.

Keywords. Letter, noun, verb, syntax, Arabic grammar, auxiliary verb, conjunction, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

The Arabic language has one of the most developed grammatical systems among the world's languages. According to A. Abdujabborov, Arabic linguists divide words into three main groups: noun (words that denote a person, thing, quality, or quantity), verb (words that express action and state), and letter (words that are not used independently and only gain meaning when combined with other words, such as conjunctions, particles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs). This tripartite classification is considered the foundation of Arabic linguistics.¹

The Uzbek language belongs to the Turkic language family, and its grammatical structure differs fundamentally from that of Arabic. However, under the

¹Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2005. - P. 21.

 WORLD BULLETIN PUBLISHING Online Publishing Hub	World Bulletin of Education and Learning (WBEL)
ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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https://worldbulletin.org/index.php/1	

influence of Arabic, the term "harf" began to be used in Uzbek linguistics—mainly to denote auxiliary particles and conjunctions. Therefore, a comparative study of the letter category between the two languages has significant scientific importance.²

The purpose of the article is to provide a comprehensive treatment of the concept of the letter in Arabic grammar based on classical sources, to analyze its types, and to conduct a comparative analysis with the corresponding categories in the Uzbek language. The study employs descriptive, comparative-typological, and historical methods.

Definition of the concept of a letter in Arabic grammar. The founder of Arabic linguistics, Sibawayh (8th century), in his famous work "Al-Kitab," divides the word into three types: noun, verb, and letter. Sibawayh defines a letter as follows: it is a part of speech that expresses a meaning not inherent to either nouns or verbs, but rather a meaning that serves other words.³

A. This definition is also clearly expressed in Abdujabborov's "Arabic Language" textbook: a letter group consists of "connective, auxiliary, prepositional, and other words that have no independent meaning and only acquire meaning when combined with other words." Thus, a letter is a unit that has no independent lexical meaning, but only expresses the relationship between two words or parts of a sentence.⁴

In Sibawayh's Al-Kitāb, the distinctive characteristics of letters are described in detail: unlike nouns and verbs, they do not change according to grammatical case (i' rāb) but always remain in the same form—this property is called bino'.⁵

The primary characteristics of letters.

Based on the sources mentioned above, we can distinguish four main characteristics of a letter:⁶

² Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2005. - pp. 22-33

³ Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Cairo: Maktabatu al-Khanaji, 1988. - Vol. 1. - P. 2.

⁴ Abdujabborov A. Arabic Language. - P. 21; Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 12.

⁵ Sibawayh. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 3.

⁶ Sibawayh. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 3-4; Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 21.

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ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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First sign – **independent meaning**. A letter has no lexical meaning outside a word. For example, "fi" (في), although it means "in," is always used together with a noun.

Second characteristic – **immutability**. That is, while nouns and verbs change according to grammatical case (i' rāb), letters do not undergo such changes.

The third characteristic is **its function in the sentence**. A letter serves to express the relationships between words within a sentence. These words "have meaning only when combined with other words."

Fourth characteristic – **use in conjunction with another word**. A letter always depends on the word that follows it or precedes it; it cannot serve as an independent part of a sentence.

Types of letters in the Arabic language

In Arabic grammar, letters are classified according to various criteria. As we can see, many of our scholars grouped letters according to their grammatical function, position of use, and semantic characteristics. In A. Abdujabborov's textbook, it is also emphasized that a **letter** group can encompass words such as conjunctions, particles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs.⁷

Prepositions - حروف الجر. Prepositions are the most frequently used and grammatically most important type of letter in the Arabic language. They place the noun that follows them in the genitive case. In "Al-Kitab," Sibawayhi provides an extensive analysis of prepositions, illustrating the position and meaning of each with examples.⁸

The main prepositions and their usage:

مِنْ (min) - "from" (point of departure, source): جاءَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ - "He came from the house."

إِلَى (ila) - "to, towards" (direction): ذَهَبَ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ - "He went to the school."

عَنْ ('an) - "about, from" (distance): تَكَلَّمَ عَنِ الْعِلْمِ - "He spoke about knowledge."

عَلَى ('ala) - "on" (location): الْكِتَابُ عَلَى الطَّائِلَةِ - "The book is on the table."

⁷Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 21; Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 10.

⁸Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 20.

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ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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في (fi) - "in, at" (place or time): هُوَ فِي الْبَيْتِ - "He is in the house."
بِ (bi) - "with, by" (instrument): كَتَبَ بِالْقَلَمِ - "He wrote with a pen."
لِ (li) - "for, of" (purpose, possession): This book is for the student.
كَ (ka) - "like, similar to" (comparison): هُوَ كَالْأَسَدِ - "He is like a lion"

Conjunctions - حروف العطف. Conjunctions serve to connect two words or two parts of a sentence. They correspond to the coordinating conjunctions in Uzbek. In "Al-Kitob," Sibawayh describes the conjunction letters as a means of uniting words and implying a shared ruling.⁹

The main conjunction letters are:

وَ (va) - "and, also" (for enumeration): جاءَ عَلِيٌّ وَ أَحْمَدُ - "Ali and Ahmad came."
فَ (fa) - "and, then" (sequence): دَخَلَ فَجَلَسَ - "He entered and sat down."
ثُمَّ (summa) - "then" (temporal sequence): أَكَلَ ثُمَّ نَامَ - "He ate, then he slept."
أَوْ (av) - "or" (choice): خُذْ هَذَا أَوْ ذَاكَ - "Take this or that."
بَلْ (bal) - "but, on the contrary" (correction): ما جاءَ زَيْدٌ بَلْ عَمْرُو - "It is not Zayd who came, but Amr."

Conditional particles - حروف الشرط. Conditional particles are used to form conditional compound sentences. Sibawayh, in Al-Kitab, emphasized that conditional particles can cause the verb that follows them to be in the اِزْمَ state.

¹⁰

إِنْ (in) - "if" (the main conditional particle): إِنْ تَدْرُسْ تَنْجَحْ - "If you study, you will succeed."
لَوْ (lav) - "if (unfulfilled condition)": لَوْ جِئْتَ لَرَأَيْتَ - "If you had come, you would have seen."

Istifhom (interrogative) particles – harofat al-istifhom. Istifhom particles convey the meaning of a question. They are used as widely as the "mi?" interrogative particle used in Uzbek to form question sentences.

⁹Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 40; Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 21.

¹⁰Sibawayhi. Al-Kitab. - Vol. 1. - P. 40; Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 22.

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ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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هَلْ (hal) - a general interrogative particle ("-mi?"): هَلْ جَاءَ أَحْمَدُ؟ - "Did Ahmad come?"

أَ (a) - for questioning - (hamza) and for emphasis: أَأَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا؟ - "Did you do this?"

Words of emphasis - حروف التوكيد. Words of emphasis are used to strengthen the meaning of a sentence. They correspond to adverbs in Uzbek such as "haqiqatan", "albatta", "-ku", and "-da".

إِنَّ (inna) - "indeed" (emphasis; makes the following noun nominative): إِنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ - "Indeed, knowledge is light."

Anna - "that which": A'lamu annaka mujtahidun - "I know that you are diligent."

The Uzbek word "harf" and its Arabic equivalent.

In Uzbek, the term "harf" was borrowed from Arabic and was initially used in the sense of "alphabet letter." As defined in A. Abdujabborov's textbook, the Arabic word group includes conjunctions, copulas, prepositions, and auxiliary words—words that only have meaning when combined with other words.¹¹

In modern Uzbek linguistics, words are divided into more than ten classes. The Uzbek equivalents of the units called harf in Arabic are primarily divided into two classes: **auxiliary words** and **conjunctions**.¹²

Prepositions in Arabic and auxiliary words in Uzbek.

Just as the prepositions in Arabic serve a function, so do the prepositions in Uzbek: they come before a noun and express relationships such as location, time, direction, source, instrument, and purpose.

Comparative view:

fī "in" → "-da" suffix / "in" preposition

مِنْ (min) "from" → "-dan" suffix / "dan" preposition

إِلَى (ila) "to, towards" → "-ga" suffix / "direction" preposition

¹¹Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 21; Hojiyev A. Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. - P. 78.

¹²Hojiyev A. Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. - p. 78; Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - p. 21.

¹³Hojiyev A. Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. - P. 90; Abdujabborov A. The Arabic Language. - P. 22.

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ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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ب (bi) "with" → "with" preposition

ل (li) "for" → "for" preposition

Important difference: Arabic prepositions are written as separate words and put the following noun in the genitive case. In Uzbek, however, these relationships are often expressed through case suffixes.

Arabic prepositions and Uzbek conjunctions.

There is a very close functional similarity between the Arabic conjunction particles and the conjunctions in Uzbek. That is, the connectors in this group of letters are words that cannot be used independently and only gain meaning when combined with other words.

وَ (va) → "and", "also"

أَوْ (av) → "or", "or else"

ثُمَّ (summa) → "then", "afterwards"

بَلْ (bal) → "but," "on the contrary"

Main typographical differences

The main differences between the Arabic and Uzbek letter categories are as follows:

First difference – morphological structure. In Arabic, letters often consist of one or two characters and are written as separate words. Uzbek auxiliary particles, however, can appear as independent words or as affixes.

Second difference – governing property. In Arabic, prefixes bring the following word into the prefix state. In Uzbek, however, auxiliary words are usually used together with case suffixes.

The third difference is the conditional particles. In Arabic, the conditional particles form a separate, large group and change the form of the verb (jazm). In Uzbek, however, the conditional meaning is mainly expressed using the "-sa" suffix.

Fourth difference - accent letters. In Arabic, accent letters affect the grammatical forms of nouns and verbs (nasb, jazm). In Uzbek, accent particles ("-ku", "-da", "-ya") do not change the form of the word.

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ISSN (E): 3072-175X	Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026
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Conclusion:

According to, this comparative analysis showed that in Arabic, a letter is a part of speech that has no independent lexical meaning, but only expresses grammatical relationships between words. In line with A. Abdujabborov's definition, Sibawayh also showed that the main groups of letters—prepositions, conjunctions, conditionals, interrogatives, and particles—each have their own grammatical function and play an important role in sentence structure.

Furthermore, it was determined that, compared to the Uzbek language, the letters of the Arabic language correspond functionally to auxiliary verbs and conjunctions. However, there are also significant differences between the two systems: Arabic letters have the ability to change the grammatical form of the word that follows them, whereas Uzbek auxiliary words do not possess this feature.

The classification of letter categories established by Sibawayh is one of the most thorough and universal aspects of Arabic linguistics, and it has not lost its significance in modern comparative linguistics. Research in this field serves to deepen our understanding of the typological relationships between two languages.

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