



## ZAHIRIDDIN MUHAMMAD BABUR'S SKILL IN WORD USAGE: THE ARABIC LEXICAL LAYER IN HIS WORKS

<https://doi.org/10.57033/mijournals-2026-4-0231>

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Received: 15-05-2026

Accepted: 28-05-2026

Published: 09-06-2026



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**Abstract.** *This article examines the Arabic lexical layer (Arabisms) in the works of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur and the poet's skill in employing it. Drawing on examples from the Baburnama, it analyzes how Arabic loanwords entered Old Uzbek through religious, ethical, Sufi, and scholarly registers, and how the morphological differences between Arabic (an inflectional language) and Uzbek (an agglutinative language) shaped their adaptation. The Arabic root-and-pattern (wazn) system, orthographic adaptation, the categories of rational and irrational nouns, sound and broken plurals, and verbal nouns (masdars) are illustrated with material from Babur's lexicon.*

**Keywords:** *Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Baburnama, Arabisms, loanwords, Old Uzbek literary language, Arabic morphology, wazn (pattern), masdar, broken plural, lexical-semantic analysis.*

### INTRODUCTION

The lexical layer that entered from Arabic occupies an important place in the historical formation of the Uzbek literary language. The words of this layer – Arabisms – belong mainly to the religious, ethical, Sufi, and scholarly registers of speech, and in Uzbek classical poetry they served not only as carriers of semantic meaning but also as a means of stylistic expressiveness. Morphologically, Arabisms entered Uzbek as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and set expressions: words such as *adl* (justice), *rahmat*, *hikmat*, *ilm*, *sabr*, *duo*, and *ma'rifat* occur in many classical works (Versteegh, 1997).

As a king, Babur founded the Mughal dynasty that ruled India for 332 years; as a translator, he rendered Khoja Ahror's *Volidiya*. Yet Babur was also a captivating poet whose ghazals and rubais reflect the truths of life with rare mastery of word choice, figurative devices, rhyme, and refrain. Not merely a great statesman but a poet of refined

taste, he displayed high skill in harmonizing the Arabic, Persian, and Turkic linguistic layers. In his poetry, Arabic units often express moral and spiritual concepts – haqiqat (truth), sabr (patience), taqvo (piety), ishq (love), ma'rifat, and hikmat – deepening the meaning while sustaining the poetic resonance. The purpose of this article is to analyze, through Babur's lexicon, the place of Arabisms and the poet's skill in using them.

## MAIN PART

To see the place of Arabisms in Babur's lexicon, consider a passage from the *Baburnama*: "The air of this province is pleasant, its waters pure and flowing, and its people deal with much justice and fairness" (Bobur, n.d.:67). In this single sentence Babur uses a series of words that entered from Arabic:

| Word    | Arabic | Meaning            |
|---------|--------|--------------------|
| adl     | عدل    | justice            |
| insaf   | إنصاف  | honesty, fairness  |
| ahli    | أهل    | people, population |
| muomala | معاملة | dealing, conduct   |

It should be noted that Arabic and Uzbek differ sharply in morphology. Arabic belongs to the inflectional (flective) languages and Uzbek to the agglutinative languages. The Arabic root consists of consonants, and new words and word-forms are derived by changing the vowels within and at the end of the root. For example, all words connected with the meaning of writing share the root k-t-b: kataba means "he wrote," kutiba "it was written," and katib "writer." Prefixes and suffixes may also be added: katabtu means "I wrote," and maktub "written." Because the Arabic root is consonantal and the vowels perform the function of word- and form-derivation, the most suitable way to represent the structure of a word is by its pattern (wazn); Western scholars, too, use the patterns devised by Arab philologists when describing Arabic morphology (Versteegh, 1997). Arab linguists use the root letters of the verb فَعَلَ [fa'ala] – "to do, to perform" – to express patterns: the first consonant is represented by ف [fa], the second by ع ['ayn], and the third by ل [lam]; if the root has four consonants, the fourth is also represented by lam. Most Arabic words have three-consonant roots, and only a few have four or five. Thus the pattern of كاتب [katib] is فاعل [fa'il], and the pattern of كتاب [kitab] is فعال [fi'al] (al-Ghalayini, 1994).

Although Persian and Turkic lack a grammatical gender category, Arabic words were borrowed while preserving their masculine (muzakkar) and feminine (muannas) written forms, even though gender did not function as a live grammatical category. In writing, the dots of the ta-marbuta (ة) of feminine nouns ending in -atun are dropped and replaced by ه or ت; and the final hamza after alif is often omitted. Such words were first adapted in Persian according to Persian orthography and entered Turkic in that form. The principal correspondences are:

| Original (Arabic) | Adapted form |
|-------------------|--------------|
| اء                | ا            |
| ة                 | ه            |
| ة                 | ت            |
| هواء              | هوا          |
| جلوة              | جلوه         |
| صفة               | صفت          |
| حياء              | حيا          |
| توبة              | توبه         |
| عظمة              | عظمت         |
| ضياء              | ضيا          |
| دولة              | دولت         |
| وفاء              | وفا          |
| قوة               | قوت          |

In Arabic both nouns and adjectives belong to a single category, ism (الاسم). Arabic nouns are divided, according to what they denote, into rational ('aqil) and irrational (ghayr 'aqil): rational nouns denote human beings, irrational nouns everything else. The Baburnama contains many rational nouns:

| Word | Arabic | Meaning     |
|------|--------|-------------|
| olim | عالم   | scholar     |
| odam | آدم    | human being |

|         |       |                        |
|---------|-------|------------------------|
| rasul   | رسول  | messenger, prophet     |
| bashar  | بشر   | humankind              |
| sohib   | صاحب  | owner, master          |
| avlod   | اولاد | descendants            |
| murshid | مرشد  | guide, mentor          |
| shayx   | شيخ   | elder, shaykh, teacher |
| nabi    | نبيء  | prophet                |
| xalifa  | خليفة | caliph, deputy         |
| tolib   | طالب  | seeker                 |

The work also contains plural nouns. Forming the plural in Arabic is fairly complex; the plural is used for three or more persons, things, or phenomena. Arabic has two means of plural formation: the sound plural and the broken plural. The sound plural is formed by adding -una (ن و) to rational masculine nouns and -at (ت ا) to feminine nouns. Examples from the text include:

| Word       | Arabic   | Meaning             |
|------------|----------|---------------------|
| muslimuna  | مسلمون   | Muslim men          |
| salotiyna  | سلاطين   | sultans             |
| holot      | حالات    | states, situations  |
| maqolot    | مقالات   | articles            |
| mubohot    | مباحات   | permitted matters   |
| musannafot | مصنفات   | compositions, works |
| kulliyot   | كليات    | wholes; faculties   |
| istilohot  | اصطلاحات | terms               |
| kamolot    | كمالات   | perfection          |
| tahiyyot   | تحیات    | greetings           |
| g'azaliyot | غزلیات   | ghazals             |

The broken plural is formed not by adding a suffix but by altering the internal structure of the word – by “breaking” it, that is, by inserting new consonants and vowels into the root. Examples with their patterns:

| Word     | Arabic | Pattern     |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| ulamo    | علماء  | [fu' alā']  |
| ashob    | أصحاب  | [af' āl]    |
| akobir   | أكابر  | [afā' il]   |
| mashoyix | مشايخ  | [mafā' il]  |
| fuzalo   | فضلاء  | [fu' alā']  |
| vuzaro   | وزراء  | [fu' alā']  |
| xaloyiq  | خلائق  | [fa' ā' il] |
| umaro    | أمراء  | [fu' alā']  |
| abror    | أبرار  | [af' āl]    |
| arbob    | أرباب  | [af' āl]    |
| ahbob    | أحباب  | [af' āl]    |

### Verbal Nouns (Masdars)

The masdar is a noun derived from a verb that names the abstract notion of an action; it corresponds to the Uzbek action-noun (harakat nomi). Every verb has its own masdar. The masdar of the first verb form has more than forty patterns; Shaykh Mustafa al-Ghalayini lists these masdar patterns in his book on Arabic (al-Ghalayini, 1994). Masdars formed and borrowed in these patterns occur abundantly in the classical language. Among the masdars of the fa'1 (فَعْلٌ) pattern found in the work are:

| Word  | Arabic | Meaning               |
|-------|--------|-----------------------|
| hamd  | حمد    | praise, glorification |
| harf  | حرف    | letter, word          |
| sharh | شرح    | commentary            |
| nav'  | نوع    | type, kind            |
| mayl  | ميل    | inclination           |
| sabt  | ثبت    | firm, stable          |
| fazl  | فضل    | virtue, merit         |
| satr  | سطر    | line                  |

|      |     |                             |
|------|-----|-----------------------------|
| javr | جور | oppression                  |
| ahd  | عهد | covenant, promise           |
| bay' | بيع | sale                        |
| vasf | وصف | description                 |
| arz  | عرض | presentation, brief account |
| naql | نقل | transfer, transmission      |
| zavq | ذوق | taste, refinement           |

### Conclusion

The analysis shows the rich diversity of Babur's creative work. The Arabic words he used served to unfold the meaning of his works and to intensify their sense, and on the basis of his learning he rendered them with refined taste and high skill. Arabisms entered Babur's lexicon as nouns, adjectives, and verbal nouns, adapting to Uzbek phonetics and orthography while largely preserving their root-and-pattern structure. It is precisely this masterly harmonization of the Turkic, Persian, and Arabic layers that has allowed his works to withstand the test of time and retain their beauty across the centuries.

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