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LEXICAL-SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF ARABIC MAṢDARS IN ALISHER NAVOI'S MAHBUB UL-QULUB

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Abstract

This paper classifies the Arabic verbal nouns (maṣdars) of Alisher Navoi's Mahbub ul-qulub (1500) into lexical-semantic groups on the basis of the 1998 academic edition. An item was admitted only if its maṣdar status is supported by Arabic lexicography and it occurs in Navoi's Turkic prose rather than in embedded Arabic quotations. The verified inventory of 62 lemmas, which is a targeted sample rather than a complete count, falls into five groups: religious and spiritual concepts of the Sufi path (tawba, zuhd, tawakkul, riḍā); ethical qualities and their opposites (ṣabr, qanāʿa, tawāḍuʿ, wafāʾ, ḥayāʾ against ṭamaʿ, ḥirṣ, ḥasad, takabbur); intellectual and cognitive activity (ʿilm, ʿaql, fahm, idrāk, tajriba); social and political relations (ʿadl, ẓulm, siyāsa, qiṣāṣ, ḥirāsa, tarbiya); and emotional and psychological states (ʿishq, ghamm, ḥayra, ghaḍab, firāq). Items are classified by their function in context, and items such as siyāsa, intiqām, ghaḍab and tarbiya are assigned a secondary group. The distribution of the groups follows the composition of the work: social and political maṣdars cluster in Part I, spiritual and ethical maṣdars name the chapters of Part II, and ethical and cognitive maṣdars carry the sayings of Part III. In literary terms, Navoi defines maṣdars through Turkic verbal nouns in -моқ/-мак, arranges them in pairs and antitheses, and develops them through sustained metaphor. No frequency claims are made, because the electronic text has not been proofread.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi; Mahbub ul-qulub; Arabic maṣdar; lexical-semantic group; semantic field; Chagatai; Sufi terminology; ethical vocabulary

1. Introduction

Mahbub ul-qulub ("The Beloved of Hearts"), completed in 1500, is Navoi's last major prose work and a didactic survey of society and morals. In the preface Navoi describes its three-part design: the first part concerns соир ун-носнинг афъол ва аҳволи "the deeds and conditions of all people", the second ҳамида афъол ва замима хисол хосияти "the properties of praiseworthy deeds and blameworthy traits", and the third мутафаррика фавоид ва амсол сурати "miscellaneous benefits and the form of proverbs" (p. 6).[1] Each part relies heavily on Arabic abstract vocabulary, and much of it consists of verbal nouns.

Scholarship on the work has concentrated on its social and ethical content and, more recently, on its translation into other languages. Its Arabic vocabulary has been described lexicographically, notably in the explanatory dictionary of Navoi's language,[2] but less often as a grammatical class whose semantic

[1] Navoiy A. Mahbub ul-qulub / prepared for publication with notes by S. G'aniyeva // Navoiy A. Mukammal asarlar to'plami. In 20 vols. Vol. 14. Tashkent: Fan, 1998. Cited from the ziyouz.com electronic copy (PDF pages).
[2] Alisher Navoiy asarlari tilining izohli lug'ati. In 4 vols. Tashkent: Fan, 1983–1985.

structure can be traced within a single text. This paper asks three questions. Which Arabic-origin words in the Turkic prose of Mahbub ul-qulub are verbal nouns in the strict sense? Into which lexical-semantic groups do they fall in context? And what literary functions do these groups perform in the composition of the work? The morphology of borrowing and the history of meaning change are outside its scope. Where an item's contextual meaning is mentioned, it serves only to justify its assignment to a group.

2. Materials and Methods

The text was studied in the edition of Mahbub ul-qulub published in volume 14 of Navoi's Mukammal asarlar to'plami (Tashkent: Fan, 1998), prepared for publication with notes by S. G'aniyeva, consulted in the electronic copy of the ziyouz.com library. That copy does not keep the printed pagination, so references ("p.") give the PDF page (the work occupies pp. 2–135) together with the part and chapter, which allows each passage to be found in any copy. Quotations keep the Cyrillic spelling of the edition; the editors' note numbers are omitted.

Three criteria were applied to identify maṣdars. (1) The word must be of Arabic origin. (2) It must be a maṣdar of an attested Arabic verb, which was checked against Lane's lexicon.[3] This rules out several frequent Arabic-origin words of the text: the nouns of place масжид, мактаб and мадраса, the participles мударрис and муфтий, and the primary noun адаб. (3) It must occur in Navoi's Turkic sentences. Qurʾanic verses, hadith and other Arabic quotations were set aside as a separate layer, so that, for example, the hadith with адли in the opening chapter (p. 7) does not count as an attestation of ʿadl. Candidates were collected from the chapter headings and from preliminary research notes, and all their inflected forms were retrieved by concordance search.

Classification follows the theory of lexical fields, in which words are grouped by the conceptual domain they structure rather than by form.[4][5] Each lemma was assigned to a primary group according to its function in its contexts, and a secondary group was recorded where the text clearly activates a second domain. Navoi's own definitions, especially in Part II, were treated as the most direct evidence of contextual meaning. Because the electronic text has not been proofread, the study reports lemmas and their locations but no token frequencies or percentages.

3. Results

The verified inventory comprises 62 lemmas. Table 1 lists them by primary group, with a representative location for each.

[3] Lane E. W. An Arabic-English Lexicon. London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–1893. Pts. 1–8 (entries for the roots cited).
[4] Lyons J. Semantics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Vols. 1–2.
[5] Geeraerts D. Theories of Lexical Semantics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Table 1. Arabic maṣdars in Mahbub ul-qulub by primary lexical-semantic group (number of lemmas in brackets)

Group	Lemmas (Arabic transliteration, with representative PDF page)
Religious and spiritual (the Sufi path) (11)	tawba (p. 45); zuhd (p. 48); tawakkul (p. 50); riḍā (p. 62); tawajjuh (p. 60); ʿibāda (p. 26); riyāḍa (p. 48); istighfār (p. 46); dhikr (p. 59); tawfīq (p. 46); ʿināya (p. 39)
Ethical and moral (virtues and vices) (17)	ṣabr (p. 54); qanāʿa (p. 52); tawāḍuʿ (p. 57); ḥilm (p. 82); wafāʾ (p. 81); ḥayāʾ (p. 81); sakhāwa (p. 78); karam (p. 78); iḥsān (p. 76); inṣāf (p. 74); taḥammul (p. 55); ṭamaʿ (p. 53); ḥirṣ (p. 38); ḥasad (p. 119); takabbur (p. 58); riyāʾ (p. 42); ghafla (p. 46)
Intellectual and cognitive (9)	ʿilm (p. 89); ʿaql (p. 124); fahm (p. 7); idrāk (p. 15); taʿlīm (p. 25); tafhīm (p. 25); tajriba (p. 106); baḥth (p. 7); jadal (p. 7)
Social and political (16)	ʿadl (p. 87); ʿadāla (p. 16); ẓulm (p. 10); jawr (p. 82); siyāsa (p. 7); qiṣāṣ (p. 7); intiqām (p. 8); ḥirāsa (p. 7); muḥāfaẓa (p. 61); ḍabṭ (p. 7); ḥukm (p. 18); khidma (p. 77); ṣuḥba (p. 6); tijāra (p. 31); tarbiya (p. 39); riʿāya (p. 28)
Emotional and psychological (9)	ʿishq (p. 64); maḥabba (p. 57); ghamm (p. 41); ḥayra (p. 41); ghaḍab (p. 84); khawf (p. 7); firāq (p. 66); hijrān (p. 66); wiṣāl (p. 81)

3.1 Religious and spiritual concepts

The religious group is organized around the stages of the Sufi path, and its core members are the chapter titles of Part II: Тавба, Зуҳд, Таваккул, Қаноат, Сабр, Тавозуъ ва адаб, Таважжуҳ, Ризо and Ишқ. Several of these correspond to topics treated in the classical Sufi manuals, such as al-Qushayrī's Risāla, which also discusses repentance, renunciation, trust in God, contentment, patience and satisfaction.[6] In Navoi's text the religious meaning is fixed by definition. Tawba is Тавбаи ҳақиқий […] афъол қабоҳатиға мўталлеъ бўлмоқдур ва тавфиқи рафиқ бўлуб, ул афъолдин ижтиноб қилмоқдур "True repentance is to become aware of the ugliness of [one's] deeds and, with divine grace as companion, to refrain from those deeds" (p. 46, Part II, chapter on tawba). Zuhd is дунё орзуларидин кечмакдур "to pass beyond the desires of the world" (p. 48), and riḍā is ўз дилхоҳ ва ризосидин кечмакдур ва Ҳаққи субҳонаҳу ризоси жомин ло журъа ичмакдур "to give up one's own wish and will and to drink the cup of God's pleasure to the last drop" (p. 62). The same group includes ʿibāda, riyāḍa, istighfār, dhikr and two maṣdars of divine action, tawfīq "granting of success" and ʿināya "providential care", which name God's side of the relationship rather than the believer's.

3.2 Ethical and moral concepts

The ethical group is the largest, with 17 lemmas, and is internally structured by the opposition of virtue and vice. The virtues include ṣabr, qanāʿa, tawāḍuʿ, ḥilm, wafāʾ, ḥayāʾ, sakhāwa, karam, iḥsān, inṣāf and taḥammul. The vices include ṭamaʿ, ḥirṣ, ḥasad, takabbur, riyāʾ and ghafla. Navoi presents the virtues as a connected system rather than a list. In Part III he arranges four of them as a family: Карам ва мурувват ота ва онадурлар, вафо ва ҳаё икки ҳамзод фарзанд "Generosity and manliness are father and mother; fidelity and modesty are twin children" (p. 81). The kinship metaphor sets out a semantic hierarchy in which wafāʾ and ḥayāʾ depend on karam. Patience is likewise characterized

[6] Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism / transl. by A. D. Knysh. Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2007.

through paradox: Аччиғдур, аммо судманд; қаттиғдур, аммо дофеи газанд “It is bitter, but beneficial; hard, but a repeller of harm” (p. 55, chapter on ṣabr).

The vices are defined as the negative counterparts of the virtues, often in the same passage. One saying of Part III opposes qanāʿa and ṭamaʿ directly: Қаноат - истиғно сармоясидур ва шараф ва иззат пироясидур “Contentment is the capital of self-sufficiency and the ornament of honour and dignity”, followed by Тамаъ мазаллатға далил “Greed is a sign of abasement” (p. 104). Takabbur receives an equally compact definition, Такаббур шайтон иши ва бийиклик нодон иши “Arrogance is the work of Satan, and haughtiness the work of the ignorant” (p. 76), and in the chapter on tawāḍuʿ the same opposition is turned into a story: the arrogant Mudbir ends up in the city’s furnace-room такаббур натижасидин “as the result of arrogance”, while Muqbil finds rest in the king’s garden адаб ва тавозуъ фойдасидин “through the benefit of good conduct and humility” (p. 59). The ethical maṣdars thus work both as defined concepts and as the moral of narrative exempla.

Several items in this group also belong to the religious domain, since Part II treats qanāʿa and ṣabr as both moral dispositions and stations of the path. Their primary assignment to the ethical group follows Navoi’s definitions, which describe them in terms of conduct towards the self and others: qanāʿa, for instance, is defined as living on what suffices for the strength needed in worship (p. 52). Riyāʾ “ostentation” illustrates the opposite case: it is ethical in meaning but is applied in Part I to a social group, the hypocritical shaykhs (p. 42).

3.3 Intellectual and cognitive activities

The cognitive group contains ʿilm, ʿaql, fahm, idrāk, taʿlīm, tafhīm, tajriba, baḥth and jadal. These maṣdars name both mental faculties (ʿaql, fahm, idrāk) and the practices of learning and debate (taʿlīm, tafhīm, baḥth, jadal). The pair фаҳму идрок recurs as a fixed expression for understanding (pp. 7, 15), and baḥth and jadal appear together as the activities of the madrasa, мадорис баҳс ва жадал хайлидин ғулув “the colleges are crowded with the people of discussion and disputation” (p. 7). Navoi consistently subordinates ʿilm to action and faith: Илм ўрганмак дин тавқияти учундур “Acquiring knowledge is for the strengthening of religion” (p. 89), and Илм ўқуб амал қилмағон, ерни шиёр қилиб тухум солмоғонға ўхшар “One who studies knowledge without acting on it is like one who ploughs the land and sows no seed” (p. 109). Tajriba stands at the boundary between cognition and social experience. In the preface Navoi presents his own тажриба as a guide for readers in dealing with every kind of people (p. 6).

3.4 Social and political relations

The social and political group gathers the vocabulary of rule, law and patronage: ʿadl, ʿadāla, ẓulm, jawr, siyāsa, qiṣāṣ, intiqām, ḥirāsa, muḥāfaẓa, ḍabṭ, ḥukm, khidma, ṣuḥba, tijāra, tarbiya and riʿāya. It is concentrated in the opening chapters of Part I, where the just ruler is described almost entirely through maṣdars of protection and order: Ҳиросатидин қўю қўзи бўри хавфидин эмин “Through his guarding, sheep and lambs are safe from fear of the wolf” (p. 7, Part I, ch. 1). The central opposition is ʿadl against ẓulm, which Navoi makes the condition of the state: мулк обод ва хароблиғи шоҳ адл ва зулмиға рожеъ “the prosperity and ruin of the realm depend on the justice and the oppression of the king” (p. 87). In chapter 10 of Part I the same opposition explains how a ruler shapes his people: Агар шоҳға адолат

шиор, улуси шиорида ҳам адолатдин осор “If justice is the king’s emblem, traces of justice appear in the emblem of his people too” (p. 16).

Tarbiya and riʿāya show how the group extends from government to personal patronage. The heading of chapter 36 of Part I, Тарбият топиб, харомнамаклиқ қилғон навкарлар зикрида “On retainers who, having received patronage, act ungratefully” (p. 39), uses tarbiya for the relationship between a lord and his servant. In Part III the same maṣdar refers to the formation of a person: Қобилға тарбият қилмамоқ зулмдур ва ноқобилға тарбият ҳайф “Not to nurture the capable is oppression, and to nurture the incapable is waste” (p. 112). Tarbiya is therefore classified as social, with a secondary cognitive-educational membership.

3.5 Emotional and psychological states

The emotional group includes ʿishq, maḥabba, ghamm, ḥayra, ghaḍab, khawf, firāq, hijrān and wiṣāl. Its centre is ʿishq, to which Navoi devotes the last chapter of Part II. The chapter opens with a chain of metaphors: Ишқ ахтаредур дурахшанда, башарият кўзи нур ва сафоси андин “Love is a radiant star; from it come the light and purity of the human eye” (p. 64). Love is then divided into three kinds, авом ишқи “the love of the common people”, хавосс ишқи “the love of the elect” and сиддиқлар ишқи “the love of the truthful” (pp. 66–69), which ties the emotional group closely to the religious one. Firāq, hijrān and wiṣāl form a sub-field of separation and union within the discussion of love (pp. 66, 68–69, 86). Ghamm and ḥayra name states of grief and bewilderment, as in the chapter on the household, where the good wife is Кўнглунг ғамидин ул ғамнок “grieved by the grief of your heart” (p. 41).

3.6 Boundary cases

Some maṣdars cannot be confined to a single group, and their double membership is itself informative. Intiqām is primarily political but acquires an emotional component through fear: интиқоми биймидин “from fear of his vengeance” the highway robber perishes in the desert (p. 8). Ghaḍab is primarily emotional, but in Part III it appears as an instrument of rule, ғазаб ва сиёсат тиғи “the sword of wrath and severity” (p. 84), and as a royal policy towards enemies (p. 88). Ẓulm moves between moral failing and political injustice, riyāḍa between spiritual exercise and ethical self-discipline, and ʿishq between emotion and religious devotion. In each case the primary group in Table 1 reflects the predominant contexts, and the secondary domain is visible in specific passages.

4. Discussion

The five groups are not evenly spread through the work. Social and political maṣdars dominate Part I, which describes the estates and occupations of society from kings to dervishes. Religious and ethical maṣdars supply the chapter titles and definitions of Part II, and ethical and cognitive maṣdars carry many of the sayings of Part III. This correspondence between semantic group and compositional unit is the main structural finding of the study. It suggests that the maṣdars are the conceptual frame of the work, not decorative learned vocabulary, and that Navoi’s three-part plan corresponds to three domains of Arabic abstract vocabulary.

The maṣdars also perform distinct literary functions. The first is definition. In Part II a maṣdar is the subject of a sentence whose predicate is a Turkic verbal noun in -мок/-мак with the copula -дур, so

that the Arabic concept is explained through native verbs of action: кечмакдур, ичмакдур, англамоқдур. The second is pairing and antithesis, both within one group (вафо ва ҳаё, фаҳму идрок) and across the virtue–vice divide (адл ва зулм). The third is metaphorical expansion, as in the chain of images for ʿishq and in the description of qanāʿa as a spring and a treasury: Қаноат чашмаедурким, суви олмоқ била қурумас ва махзанедурким, нақди сепамоқ била ўксумас "Contentment is a spring whose water does not dry up when drawn, and a treasury whose coin does not diminish when scattered" (p. 52). The rhymed prose (sajʿ) of such passages, қурумас / ўксумас, links the semantic and the sound structure of the text.

The classification has clear limits. It rests on a targeted inventory, not on a proofread concordance of the whole text, and the groups are defined by contextual function, which involves interpretation. A complete corpus would allow the distribution of the groups across the three parts to be measured rather than described. The present results nevertheless provide a verified set of maṣdars and contexts on which such a study, and a separate study of meaning change, can build.[7]

5. Conclusion

Applying strict grammatical criteria identifies 62 Arabic maṣdars in the Turkic prose of Mahbub ul-qulub. They fall into five lexical-semantic groups: religious and spiritual, ethical and moral, intellectual and cognitive, social and political, and emotional and psychological. The ethical group is the largest and is structured by the opposition of virtue and vice. The religious group follows the stations of the Sufi path. The social and political group is built on the opposition of justice and oppression and extends to patronage. A number of maṣdars, including siyāsa, intiqām, ghaḍab, tarbiya and ʿishq, belong to more than one group.

The groups correspond to the three-part composition of the work, and Navoi uses them through definition, pairing and antithesis, and sustained metaphor. In Mahbub ul-qulub, Arabic maṣdars are therefore the principal means by which Navoi names and orders the social, moral and spiritual world he describes.

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