

Thackston on Participles, Verbal Nouns, Cognate Subjects, and Cognate Accusatives

The active participle often functions, like the English present active participle in “-ing,” as a verbal adjective for on-going action, or the durative aspect.

هو ساجد لله *huwa sājidun li-llāhi* He is bowing down to God.

The active participle as complement to *kāna* in the perfect gives the past progressive:

كان ساجداً لله *kāna sājidan li-llāhi* He was bowing down to God.

Contrast this use of the durative participle with the finite perfect, *sajada*, which is temporal and may mean, according to context, “he bowed down, he did bow down, he had bowed down, he will bow down.”

The active participle is also substantivized and used as an agent noun, so that *kātib*- (from *kataba* “to write”) may mean not only “writing, going to write, one who is writing,” but also, as a noun, “writer, scribe.”

كان احمد كاتباً *kāna ’aḥmadu kātiban* Ahmad was writing or Ahmad was a scribe.

الله خالق كل شيء *allāhu xāliq kulli šay’in* God is the creator of everything.

However, when the participle retains verbal force, the participial object is in the accusative.

الله خالق بشراً *allāhu xāliqun bašaran* God is going to create a human being.

اني باعث من بعدك نبياً *’innī bā’iṭun min ba’dika nabīyan* I am going to send, after you, a prophet.

Note, as in the above examples, that the active participle in the predicate position very often has a future signification (“going to...”) when it is not substantivized. When a transitive active participle has its object in the accusative, it is clear that the participle is used verbally, and it almost always has a future sense; when the participle is in construct, it is generally substantivized. Otherwise, as in the first example above, *huwa sājidun*, only context can determine whether the meaning is present

23 Active Participles. The active participle, which can be formed from all verbs, transitive and intransitive, is made on the pattern FĀ’IL-, which makes its feminine, dual and plurals with regular adjectival endings. An example, from *daxala*:

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
masc.	داخل <i>dāxilun</i>	داخلان <i>dāxilāni</i>	داخلون <i>dāxilūna</i>
fem.	داخلة <i>dāxilātun</i>	داخلتان <i>dāxilatāni</i>	داخلات <i>dāxilātun</i>

progressive (“he is bowing down”) or future (“he is going to bow down”).

24 The Passive Participle. The passive participle of all transitive verbs is formed on the pattern MAF‘ŪL-. Feminines, duals and plurals are formed like regular adjectives, as from *wajada* (“to find”):

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
masc.	موجود <i>mawjūdun</i>	موجودان <i>mawjūdāni</i>	موجودون <i>mawjūdūna</i>
fem.	موجودة <i>mawjūdātun</i>	موجودتان <i>mawjūdātāni</i>	موجودات <i>mawjūdātun</i>

The passive participle is used in the following ways:

(1) purely adjectivally, like the English past passive participle:

شيء مخلوق <i>šay’un maxlūqun</i>	a created thing
الرجل ملعون <i>ar-rajulu mal‘ūnun</i>	The man is cursed.
كان الكتاب مكتوباً <i>kāna l-kitābu maktūban</i>	The book was written.

(2) that which can be, ought to be, is worth doing or liable to be:

شيء مذكور <i>šay’un maḍkūrun</i>	a thing worth mentioning / a mentionable thing
قول مسموع <i>qawlun masmū’un</i>	words that are/ought to be heard

(3) substantively:

الملعونون <i>al-mal‘ūnūna</i>	those who are cursed, accursed ones
المذكور من قبل <i>al-maḍkūru min qablu</i>	that which has been mentioned before

25 Cognate Subjects. The active participle is often used as a cognate subject (i.e., the active participle of a given verb as subject of that same verb) in the indeterminate sense of “someone, some people, somebody or other.”

قال قائل <i>qāla qā’ilun</i>	Somebody has said...
قال قائلون <i>qāla qā’ilūna</i>	Some people have said...

The definite cognate subject necessarily refers to a subject already introduced.

فقال القائل *fa-qāla l-qā’ilu*

and then the one who was speaking went on to say...

27 Active and Passive Participles (cont.).

27.1 For hollow verbs (C₂w/y), the active participial pattern is FĀ’IL-, with *hamza* taking the place of C₂ in all cases.

قام < قائم *qāma* (√QWM) > *qā’im*-
 سار < سائر *sāra* (√SYR) > *sā’ir*-

27.2 For weak-*lām* verbs (C₃w/y) the pattern is FĀ’IN, the inflection of which demands special treatment. An example is *hādin*, from √HDY:

	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
nom. & gen.	هاد <i>hādin</i>	الهادي <i>al-hādī</i>
acc.	هادياً <i>hādiyan</i>	الهادي <i>al-hādiya</i>

In both the definite and indefinite states, the nominative and genitive cases are identical. Only the accusative case actually shows its case ending. This results from an internal collapse due to weakness: **hādiyun* → *hādin* and **hādiyin* → *hādin*, where the “weak” vowels *u* and *i* cannot maintain a weak consonant between them; the “strong” vowel *a* does support a weak consonant, so *hādiyan* and *al-hādiya* do not suffer collapse.

The feminines are regularly formed, with -y- for C₃w as well as for C₃y roots: *hādiyat*- pl *hādiyāt*-.

The masculine plurals suffer the same collapse as the singular: **hādiyūna* → *hādūna* and **hādiyīna* → *hādīna*.

The inflectional patterns of *hādin* are not limited to active participles but occur with many broken plurals of C₂w/y roots and also certain anomalous plurals such as ارض *'ard-* pl اراض *'arādin*, اسم *ism-* pl اسم *'asāmin*, and يد *yad-* pl ايد *'aydin* and ايا *'ayādin*.¹

27.3 Doubled verbs undergo the same loss of weak vowel as in the verbal inflection. The pattern for the active participle is FĀLL- (< *fālil-).

دل *dalla* > *dālil- > دال *dāll-*

27.4 Passive participles of hollow, weak-*lām* and doubled verbs.

(1) The contracted pattern MAFŪL- is used for C₂w roots (*mafwūl- → mafūl-).

قال *qāla* (√QWL) > *maqwūl- → مقول *maqūl-*

لام *lāma* (√LWM) > *malwūm- → ملوم *malūm-*

The patterns MAFĪL- and MAFYŪL- (regular) are attested for most C₂y roots.

باع *bā'a* ('sell') (√BY') > مبيع *mabyū-* /mabī'-

كال *kāla* ('measure') (√KYL) > مكيل *makyūl-/makīl-*

(2a) Weak-*lām* roots: C₃w produces a regular passive participle on the pattern MAF'ŪW-.

دعا *da'ā* (√D'W) > مدعو *mad'ūw-*

(2b) C₃y roots give a passive participle on the pattern MAF'ĪY-.

هدى *hadā* (√HDY) > مهدي *mahdīy-*

(3) The formation of passive participles from doubled roots is perfectly regular.

دل *dalla* (√DLL) > مدلول *madlūl-*

28 Verbal Nouns. Every verb in Arabic has at least one verbal noun, known as a *maṣdar-*, the usage of which is roughly equivalent to the English infinitive or gerund in '-ing.' Many verbal nouns have a concrete meaning as a noun as well as the verbal sense, as *xalq-* (< *xalaqa*), which means "creation" as well as "(the act of) creating." Verbal nouns of the base form of the verb (the only one introduced so far) are not predictable and must be learned as a "principal part" for each and every verb.

28.1 Following are the verbal nouns, by pattern, for the verbs that have been seen so far (note that some verbs have more than one verbal noun in common use, often reflecting different senses of the verb).

(1) FA'L-, the most common pattern for verbal nouns, generally for transitive verbs of the *fa'ala* and *fa'ila* types.

أمر <i>'amr-</i>	رأى <i>ra'y-</i> ¹	قول <i>qawl-</i>
بعث <i>ba'θ-</i>	رمى <i>ramy-</i>	لعن <i>la'n-</i>
جعل <i>ja'l-</i>	عفو <i>'afw-</i>	منع <i>man'-</i>
خلق <i>xalq-</i>	فعل <i>fa'l-</i>	موت <i>mawt-</i>

(2) FU'ŪL-, mainly for intransitive *fa'ala* verbs.

خروج <i>xurūj-</i>	سجود <i>sujūd-</i>	وجود <i>wujūd-</i>
دخل <i>duxūl-</i>	نزل <i>nuzūl-</i>	

(3) FI'L-,

ذكر <i>ḍikr-</i>	فعل <i>fi'l-</i>
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(4) FU'L(AT)-

رؤية <i>ru'yat-</i>	كفر <i>kufr-</i>
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(5) FA'ĀL(AT)-

ذهاب <i>ḍahāb-</i>	ضلالة / ضلال <i>samā'-</i>	ضلال (at) <i>ḍalāl(at)-</i>
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¹The indefinite accusative of *'arādin*, *'asāmin*, and *'ayādin* are without nunation: *'arādiya*, *'asāmiya* and *'ayādiya* (see Appendix A §10e). The indefinite accusative of *'aydin* has nunation: *'aydiyan* (see Appendix A §1d).

¹Of the two senses of *ra'ā*, "to see" and "to consider," *ra'y-* is the verbal noun for "considering, notion, view" and *ru'yat-* is the verbal noun for "seeing, vision."

(6) FI'ĀL(AT)-

هداية *hidāyat-* كتابة *kitābat-* قيام *qiyām-*

The verbal noun is extensively used as a verbal complement, especially with verbs that take their complements through prepositions, for example:

منعه من الدخول	<i>mana'ahu mina d-duxūli</i>	He prevented him from entering
دعوناهم الى الخروج	<i>da'awnāhum 'ilā l-xurūji</i>	We called upon them to leave.
امرونا بالسمع	<i>'amarūnā bis-samā'i</i>	They ordered us to hear.

Where the Arabic verbal noun corresponds to an English infinitive or gerund, it is almost always definite (as in the above examples).

28.2 Subjective and Objective Genitives. When only the doer of the action (subject) occurs with a verbal noun, it is put into construct with the noun as a **subjective genitive**.

خلق الله	<i>xalqu llāhi</i>	God's creating (creation)
دخول الرجال	<i>duxūlu r-rijālī</i>	the men's entering
بعث الملك	<i>ba'θu l-maliki</i>	the king's sending

When only the object of a verbal noun occurs, it is in construct as an **objective genitive**.

خلق الارض	<i>xalqu l-'arḍi</i>	creating the earth
دخول البيت	<i>duxūlu l-bayti</i>	entering the house
بعث رسول	<i>ba'θu rasūlin</i>	sending a messenger

When both the subject and the object occur with a verbal noun, the subject is in construct in the **genitive** and the object follows in the **accusative**.

خلق الله الارض	<i>xalqu llāhi l-'arḍa</i>	God's creating the earth
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دخول الرجال البيت	<i>duxūlu r-rijālī l-bayti</i>	the men's entering the house
بعث الملك رسولا	<i>ba'θu l-maliki rasūlan</i>	the king's sending a messenger

29 The Cognate Accusative. One of the most common uses of the verbal noun is as a cognate accusative. This typically Semitic construction gives added emphasis to the verb.

ذكروا الله ذكراً	<i>ḍakarū llāha ḍikran</i>	They recollected God. ¹
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When the cognate accusative is modified, it usually translates adverbially.

ذكروا الله ذكراً كثيراً	<i>ḍakarū llāha ḍikran kaḥīran</i>	They recollected God much/ often.
خرج خروج عبد	<i>xaraja xurūja 'abdin</i>	He went out servilely. ²

¹Lit., "they recollected God a recollecting."

²Lit., "he went out the going out of a slave, as a slave would."