

# Investigating the Language and Music in the Discourse of Nizami Ganjavi

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## Abstract

Nezami is one of the renowned poets in Persian literature who lived in the sixth century AH. His works has always been imitated by many poets and his lyrical and fiction poems have been mentioned in many literary works. This article is a descriptive-analytic research on poetic characteristics of Nezami's discourse including vocabulary, syntax, and composition. Next, the types of music in his poems including internal, external and the spiritual music are addressed. The combination of Nezami's music and language is analyzed so that the pinnacle and beauty of his works are demonstrated.

**Key words:** Language, Compositions, Syntax, Music

## INTRODUCTION

Nezami's poems such as *Leili and Majnoon* and *Khosro and Shirin* are classified under lyric literature and Nezami was able to create a good illustration in such stories. The poetry of such stories by Nezami brought about a dramatic change in Persian poetry and literature at the end of the sixth century and encouraged other poets to compose such poems. In the seventh and eighth centuries, we are faced with romantic poems by other authors who followed Nezami. However, none of them have been able to create a work that can compete those of Nezami Ganjavi.

"Based on the definitions provided by the Western scholars, lyric poetry includes short non-narrative poem. In cases where they are long, they are called dramatic lyric poetry, because usually a story is presented in such long poems. Since dramatic arts were not common in Iran; long lyrical poems of Persian literature are called narrative lyric poetry" (Shamisa, 2008: 134).

One of the reasons for classification of this kind of rhymes and narrative poems under lyric literature is that the poet states his moods, emotions, and even dreams in the story.

In any case, as the valuable literary and artistic works represent the author's moods and emotions, they can involve the social conditions of the artist's time as well.

"A true work of art is a perfect world made in a smaller scale."

(Lizarov et al, 1973: 224).

## External Beauty of Nezami's Poems

### Language

Language is one of the important elements of poetry, because the poetic imagination and external beauty of poetry are conveyed to the audience through language. A poet who has sufficient mastery in artistic applications of language, can affect the readers well. Those works that can attract the public can reach a worldwide reputation.

*Khamseh* of Nezami is a work that has maintained its attraction and influence and even shows an increasing trend in its effectiveness. The main reason is that Nezami's language has a dynamism and vitality preventing his works from becoming frozen and weak.

"Language is not fixed and frozen, but is dynamic and evolving. (Shafiee Kadkani, 2001: 91). The influence of a work on readers will increase if they can feel a harmony between language and emotional aspects of poetry. "The harmony a reader can feel -consciously or unconsciously- between language and emotional content of poems, makes the reader feel good and become more susceptible to the poem's influence" (Pournamdarian, 2002: 402).

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Regarding the language element in Nezami's poems, it should be noted that applications of language in his works is extraordinary in that "there is a pre-constructed internal connection and harmony between form and meaning in his words that cannot be found in other works with ease" (Zarrinkoob, 1993: 223).

### **Vocabulary**

An investigation of the works of great poets shows that they have an extensive vocabulary because of their rich literary and cultural background. However, lower level poets have a limited range of vocabulary knowledge.

Nezami is a great poet with a huge vocabulary ranging from Farsi, Arabic, Turkish; colloquial and market language, and so on creating a great depth of language.

"Nezami is highly sensitive in choice of words, and tries to make a balance so that his works, despite showing fluctuations between simplicity and figurativeness, remain poetic, warm and live" (Zarrinkoob, 1993: 224).

In addition to simple language, Nezami paid special attention to its beauty and impact on readers. For example, in the following couplet, he uses different figures of such as metaphorical *Ezafe* (genitive case) (e.g. the flag of love (Rayate Eshgh); and the moon of Leili (Mahe Leili meaning Leili's face, which resembles moon)" and parallelism (moon and sky), etc. in doing so, he pays attention to musicality of the language in addition to its beauty.

By the time the king's flag of love  
Covered the sky like the moon of Leili  
(Nezami, 2009: 72).

His use of Arabic words is in such a way that the words and concepts of poetry make a certain conformity.

In the following couplet, the poet uses two Arabic words (*Veda'* (farewell) and *Saba'* (beast)) to connote grief and pain in addition to creating musicality. This illustration of sadness culminates when these two words alongside the word "*Ajezi*" (helplessness) create the phonetic sequence by repetition of "ع". Repetition of this sound recalls the frustration and moans of love.

He said farewell to her out of helplessness  
And left her among all those beasts  
(Ibid: 225)

### **Compounds**

Great poets have achieved novel beautiful compounds in their poetic language that have been used by other poets as well. By applying these novel compounds, Nezami has

been able to achieve new meanings and images, and give life to his poetry.

In the following couplet, Nezami repeats the word "goosh" (corner) and builds a new combination "goosheneshinegooshsofte (the lonely with pierced ears) repeated phonemes of "G, and, Sh" to promote the musicality and at the same time, portray loneliness and sadness with these new compounds.

Van goosheneshinegooshsofte  
And that lonely with pierced ears  
Chon ganj be goosheinahoft  
Like treasure hidden in a corner  
(Nezami, 2009: 83)

In the following couplet, the poet used the compound "Bade-ye- bikhodi" (wine of selflessness) to show the fuddled state of the lover. By repeating the sound "س" (s) in combination with "ی" (yi), he not only creates new concepts in his language, but also pays special attention to conformity of words.

Az bade-ye-bikhodichonan mast  
He was so drunk by the wine of selflessness  
Kagah ne kedarjahankesi hast  
That was not aware of anyone's presence in the world  
(Ibid: 85)

### **Syntax**

Distinguished poets are well aware of how to use sentence components. One who is familiar enough with the secrets of rhetoric, can add to the beauty of his work by changing the position of subject, verb, or other components given the proportion between different combinations.

One of the most important points in poetry and in art works concerned with words is the "sentence rhetoric", i.e. knowledge of how to use sentence components" (Shafiee Kadkani, 2001: 93).

One reason for vitality and reputation of Nezami works is his familiarity with rhetorics, which has helped create a lasting effect. Sometimes Nezami deems it necessary to compose poems based on natural syntax. In such cases, he uses no literal and semantic figures of speech and just shift some pillars of the sentence to add to the dynamics of his poetry. In the following couplets, this application of natural syntax in Nezami's poetry can be seen. He uses simple language to start his poetry with the name of God:

Ey name to behtarinsaraghaz  
Your name is the best thing to start with  
Bi name to name key konambaz

Without your name, I'll never open a letter  
 Eyyeade to moonseravanam  
 Your memory is the friend of my soul  
 Joz name to nist bar zabanam  
 There is nothing on my tongue but your name  
 (Ibid: 2)

This is simplicity of Nezami's language does not harm the musicality of the poem, so that it is as beautiful as the following lines, which contain different figures of speech. That is because Nezami is well aware of the requirements of sentence syntax and for achieving imagination and musicality in his words, he knows when to use simple language and when to resort to figures of speech.

In the following couplet, the poet uses various figures of speech such as personification, irony, parallelism, metaphors and so on to illustrate the sunrise. For example, using colors such as azure, grey, yellow, and red, Nezami tries to draw a beautiful picture of sunrise.

Shabgirkecharkhelajvardi  
 At the dawn when the azure sky  
 Arastkaboodi be zardi  
 Adorned the grey color with yellow  
 Khandidaneghorseangolezard  
 The smile on the rounded face of that flower  
 Afagh be range sorkhegolkard  
 Painted the horizon with the red color of the flower  
 (Nezami, 2009: 129)

### **Musicality**

Interest in music is a phenomenon present deposited in the nature of all human beings leading them to music. There are forces in human nature that lead them to search for music. The same interest has forced them to write poetry. It can be claimed that there is music in poetry. In fact, poetry is the music of words and song is the music of sounds.

Music in poetry is not confined to the meter, but also covers any proportionality, both physical and spiritual.

"It seems that the primary factor causing a resurrection of words in the language that surprised the primitive man, was the use of music in the system of words" (ShafieeKadkani, 1997: 8).

ShafieeKadkani goes on to say: "Music is not just meter, but a collection of proportionalities that can be studied in a poem" (Ibid, 2001: 95).

### **External music in poetry**

External music of poetry is the same as "meter". In fact, the meter factor creates the most distinguished music in poetry.

Farabi believes that if poetry is accompanied by music, it will increase the imagination element. Thus, he believes that rhythm and music are factors of imagination (Ibid: 326).

In his *Meyar Al-Ashaar*, Nasir al-Din Tusi writes: "Meter is a function of the system of orderly movements, which are proportionate in number. The perception of meter gives a special pleasure to the reader, referred to as taste." (Nasir al-Din Tusi, 1990: 22).

ShafieeKadkani believes that prosody can be considered as part of musicology and argues that the founder of this science among Muslims was Khalil ibn Ahmad Farahidi (718-791 AD), who was also a professor of music (ShafieeKadkani, 343: 1997).

Regarding meter in poetry, Khanlari states: "meter is the result of order and proportion in verbal manifestations" (Khanlari, 1982: 111).

Aristotle believes that music rhythm, harmony, meter and melody is a distinguishing feature of poetry (Aristotle, 1974: 23).

For Aristotle, a poet is someone who can well create musicality in poetry and choose a special music based on the poetry theme. It is worth mentioning that great poets such as Nezami have been successful in doing so and he chose proper music for his poetry based on the themes used.

For example, Nezami used "Bahr-e-Hazj Mosadas Akhrab Maqbuz Mahzuf" (Mafoul, Mafaeln, Faloun) and poets after him applied the same in their works written following Nezami style.

Majnoonchogolekhazan reside  
 Majnoon, like an autumn stricken flower,  
 Migashtmian-e-ab-e-dide  
 Was floating on his sea of tears  
 (Nezami, 2009: 129).

### **Peripheral music (Radif and Qaafiyaa)**

Peripheral music refers to the proportionality and harmony of the final words or letters of couplets of a poem. These words at the end of couplets of poems are called the rhymes (Radif and Qaafiyaa).

Radif and Qaafiyaa are defined in *Al-Mojam* as follows:

"And know that Qaafiyaa includes the rhyming pattern of words near the end of the couplets, but it is not the same words repeated in different couplets (just the rhyming pattern is repeated). The repetition of the same words

at the end of the couplets is called Radif and follows Qaafiyaa”(Razi,2009: 227-226).

Defining Qaafiyaa,Shah Hosseiniwrites: “in Persian Qaafiyaa means to follow and to emerge behind and in technical sense, it is the last words of couplets whose last sounds are the same, on condition that the same words are not repeated in different couplets (Shahhosseini,2006: 142).

Regarding the importance of Radif andQaafiyaa in poetry,VahidianKamyar states that if a poem comes without Qaafiyaa, its beauty and importance is diminished. He says: “It should be recognized that Qaafiyaa is not only an arrangement of words in poem,but also complements the poem’s music and melody and add to its beauty.” (Vahidian,1993: 92)

According to what was said about Radif andQaafiyaa,we can say that the selection of appropriate Radif andQaafiyaa in Nezami’spoetry is one of those factors that added to the eloquence of his language.

In the following couplet,Nezami uses pun in theQaafiyaa,”Rang,Tang” and semantic contrast between “Tang” and “Farakh” in the second line to achieve melody in the couplet and increase its effectiveness.

Laakenchekonamhava do rangast  
But what can I do? The atmosphere is double-sided  
Andishehfarakh-o- sine tangast  
My thought is extensive but my chest is tight  
(Nezami,2009: 27).

Most of Nezami’s poems like Leili and Majnoon,Khosro and Shirin, etc. is in the form of Masnavi and given the fact that in Masnavi, Radif andQaafiyaa are observed in both lines of each couplet,occasionally, we see that Nezami ignores Radif in some of his poems.

Chon vamaagheazarezuyezra  
GahKuhgereft-o- gaahsahra  
(Ibid: 3)

### **Internal music**

The fitness and coordination between consonants and vowels of words in a poem can be referred to as its internal music. Another factor creating internal music in poem is the use of various types of pun. “Internal music refers to the coordination and proportion in combination of specific words and their intonations in association with each other.”(ShafieeKadkani,1997: 51).

Internal music has been used in Nezami’s poems in the most beautiful form.ShafieeKadkani notes that

internalmusic is the most important type of poetry music because sustainability and cohesiveness and aesthetic value of a large number of literary masterpieces lie in this type of music (Ibid: 392).

For example, in the following couplet, repetition of the phonemes “t,z, and r” adds to the beauty of the poetry music(alliteration).

Mikard be vaghteghamzehsaazi  
Bar taazi-o- torktarktaazi  
(Nezami,2009: 92).

In the following couplet,Nezamirepeats consonant “ه” (h) and the vowel “ا” (a) in order to createattractiveness in poetry music (alliteration). Moreover, “ه” looks like two eyes and its appearance represents the gland of the musk deer (AhoorKhotan). Another element that adds to the musicality of the poem is therepetition of “Nafeh and Ahoor” (repetition).

Azahooyecheshmenafevarash  
Ham nafe, ham ahoor’nshekarash  
(Nezami,2009: 93) (ibid, 93, 93).

In the following couplets,some types of pun are seen that help the internal music of the poetry.

### **Incomplete increasingpun**

In the following couplet, incomplete rising pun is used between the words “goosheh” (corner) and “goosh” (ear). In this couplet, in addition to puns, alliteration of “ش” (sh), “ج” (v) and “گ” (g), and repetition of the word “joosh” are seen. The application of these various literary techniques adds to the rhythm of the language.

Azmashqalehayejoosh bar joosh  
Ham gooshegereftebood ham goosh  
(Ibid: 83)

### **Incomplete differential pun**

In the following couplet, there is an incomplete differential pun between the words “ganj” and “ranj” which differ in a single letter. The pun alongside the literary technique of repetition (the word “ganj”)improves the music of words.

Dar jostaneganjranjmibord  
He suffers in seeking treasure  
Bi an kerahi be ganjmibord  
Without finding a way to treasure  
(Ibid: 84)

### **Incomplete phonicpun**

Here, the difference between the vowels/و:/in “gol” and/e/in “gel” creates inner music.



Ooo bi to chogol, to pay dargel  
Oosangdel-o- to sang bar del  
(Ibid: 88)

### Complete pun

To achieve a symphony in the poem, Nezami uses the word “Saad” twice in the first line. In the first line, it is the name of a tribe, but in the second line, it means “auspicious”.

ShakhsizeghabileBaniSaad  
A person from the tribe of BaniSaad  
Bogzashtbaroochotale’eSaad  
Passed by him like an auspicious luck  
(Ibid: 84)

### Semantic Music

As mentioned, any proportionality seen in poetry can be considered as music and melody of the poetry. Therefore, semantic proportionality of poetry including paradox, contrasts, parallelism, allusions, etc. can improve the balance and harmony within poetry.

According to Shamisa, literary techniques create music in that their deep structure includes a proportion between the parts of speech (Shamisa, 2007: 107)

ShafieeKadkanideems this kind of music as a basis for aesthetics and integrity of many literary masterpieces. He states: “These proportionalities create a kind of melody in the poem and compliance within them in a manner that does not seem artificial for the reader, is very important” (ShafieeKadkani, 2001: 97).

Parallelism: In the following couplet, there is a parallelism between “Ghazal (sonnet), Saaz (musical instrument), and Avaze (song)” that creates semantic music and increase the poetry beauty.

Har dam ghazalidegarkonadsaz  
The instrument sings a sonnet each time  
Hamkhoshghazalast –o- ham khoshavaz  
It is both adroit in composing sonnet and singing  
(Nezami, 2009: 82)

Contrast: In the following couplet, there is a proportionality of parallelism type between the words “Beit, Ma’ni, Qaafiyaa”, but there is a contrast between the words “farakh” (broad) and “tang” (tight). These create musicality in the poem.

Chon langar-e- beit-e- khishtanlang  
Ma’nishfarakh-o- Qaafiyaa tang  
(Ibid: 84)

In the following couplet, there is a contrast between “Oftan and Khisan” (falling and rising).

Khoonabejgarzediderizan  
Tears falling from my eyes like the liver’s blood  
Chon bakhtekhodoftan-o-khizan  
Like my luck which is falling and rising  
(Ibid: 85)

Exaggeration: In the following couplet, the poet resorts to exaggeration and adds music to the poetry in a beautiful way.

Tanhanamanamsetam reside  
I am not the only one who is oppressed  
Koo didehke sad cho man nadide  
He has seen as much oppression as a hundred person have seen  
(Ibid: 89).

Allusion: In the following couplet, the poet allude to the story of two lovers called “Vamegh and Azra” to achieved a symphony.

Chon vameghazarezooyeAzra  
Like Vamegh in his fondness forAzra  
Gahkoohgereftgaahsahra  
Sometimes he took a mountain and sometimes a desert  
(Ibid, 73)

## CONCLUSION

NezamiGanjavi is one of the famous poets who have remained unique in the realm of poetry. He is most famous for his poetry. In this study, the writer explored some of the external beauties of Nezami’s poetry including the use of vocabulary, compounds, and syntax each of which is effective in his works. After a review of aesthetic elements in a number of Nezami’s poems, the poet’s approach to musicality was investigated. Then, Nezami’s use of music is evaluated and it is found that the correct use of music in his poems ranging from internal, external, peripheral and semantic types of music, called “resurrection of words” by ShafieeKadkani, have helped improve the proportionality in his language. Due to the fact that most poets and scholars consider Nezami as one of the leaders of Persian literature and poetry and given that no one has been able to compete him in composing narrative poems, we can say that one of the reasons for Nezami success is his knowledge of how to build a relationship between language and music.

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