

**INVESTIGATION ALLITERATION FROM ABD AL-QAHER
JURJANI'S PERSPECTIVE**Fatemeh Yusefi¹Shahriar Giti²

Abstract: This acritical studies alliteration in Jurjani's perspective in order to grasp its significance in all poetic speech and its connection to aesthetics of poetic discourse. We tried, using the analytical method, to make clearer just what role each of words and meanings plays in the beauty of the alliteration and its acceptability. The results showed that in Jurjani's opinion, the beauty of speech is not summed up in words. Had the beauty of the alliteration merely relied on words, it would have become something undesirable. He believes that what determines goodness or badness of alliteration is its meaning.

Keywords: Alliteration, Aesthetics, Eloquence, Jurjani. Rhetoric.

Introduction

Al-Jurjani, Abd al-Qāhir bin Abd ar-Rahman Abu Bakr was a scholar, syntax expert and eloquence theorist. His birth date is unknown. He was from an Iranian origin and was born in Gorgan (Foroukh, 1989). He learned syntax from Abi al-Hussein Muhammad Binal-Hassan al-Faressi (died 1030 A.D) (Ibn al-Anbar, 2007). Something that surprised many biographers about his life is that Abd al-Qāhir never left Gorgan, not even in pursuit of knowledge (Suyuti, 2005). Jurjani has been given several epithets like Imam in Syntax and Courtesy, Arabic Language Sheikh, Founder of Semantics and Eloquence, Scholar with useful works, Jurist, Speaker, etc.

Jurjani started to teach in Gorgan after his master, Abi al-Hussein al-Faressi. Many students moved there to learn syntax and courtesy. Among his

¹ PhD student, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. Email: Fyusefi9@gmail.com.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran. Email: sh_giti@uma.ac.ir.

students are Ahmed-ibn Abdullah Mahabadi, Abul-Hassan Ali-ibn Muhammad Fasihi, Fazl-ibn Ismail Tamimi, Muhammad-ibn Ahmed Abiverdi, Ahmed-ibn Ibrahim Shajari and Khatib Tebrizi. Jurjani was a Shafi'i jurist and an Ash'ari Islamic scholar (Ibn Qazi, 1986). There are opposing views about the time of his death. His death is generally said to be in 1078 (Foroukh, 1989)

Unlike Jurjani, eloquence experts before him mostly paid attention to speech components regardless of the fact that a work owes its beauty to the composition of its components and verse – something that is of central significance in contemporary literary criticism and aesthetics (Shafiei Kadkani, 1991) Nevertheless, although he made new contributions to the field of eloquence, he did not come up with a general theory. Had he done so, it would have prevented the multiplicity of arguments by eloquence experts (Daif, 2004)

Our aim in this study is to examine the alliteration in Jurjani's perspective in order to grasp its significance in all poetic speech as well as its connection to aesthetics of poetic

discourse. At the same time alluded to what the other rhetoric scholars share with him and what in which he differs from them in this regard. This is mainly done with a focus on Jurjani's central tenets of sound propriety and semantic comprehensiveness to bring to light how much this figure is proportionate to aesthetics.

Question of the Study

In Jurjani's perspective what is the determiner of alliteration's goodness or badness in poetic discourse.

Hypothesis of The Study

For Jurjani, Words are the only criterion to determine goodness or badness of the alliteration.

Material and Method

One thing about Jurjani that is of significance is how he was influenced by the Greek philosophy and Aristotle's thoughts. Jurjani came to know about Aristotle's thoughts and classifications through Avicenna's works. He based his arguments on that and could properly adapt Arabic syntax rules to Aristotle's thoughts (Badavi, 2002). Of course, the

proximity between Jurjani and Aristotle's opinions is not so big to downgrade his works as an imitation of Aristotle's. Therefore, it is safe to say that the impact of Greek teachings on Jurjani's opinions is insignificant. However, since Abd al-Qager has been a speech scholar and fond of rational and chimerical issues, it comes as no surprise that his opinions share characteristics with those of Greek scholars' (Zarrinkoob, 1977). Jurjani has left a strong impact on the researchers after himself, including, Fakhruddin Razi (died 1209 A.D), who based his book "Nihayat al iajaz fi derayato al al-I'jaz" on Jurjani's two works: "Dalā'il al-I'jaz (Intimations of Inimitability)" and *Asrār al-Balāghah* (The Secrets of Elucidation) .Skaki (died 1229 A.D) wrote the book "Meftahol al- uloom" based on Jurjani and other rhetoric experts' opinions (Daif, 2004). Yahya-ibn Hamzeh Alavi (died 1344 A.D) also referred to Jurjani as the founder of rhetoric. Jurjani's opinions have found their way into exegesis. One of this is "Al-Kashshaaf 'an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil" or "the Revealer" by Zamakhshari (died 1144). He is known to have been the first exegete who embarked on a rhetorical

exegesis of the Quran based on Jurjani's opinions (Daif, 2004). Jurjani's works have even influenced Persian poetry and literature. Khaqani and Hafiz were among the poets who got familiar with his opinions (Shafiei Kadkani, 1991). Alliteration literally means two things of the same material and substance. In literary terms, it refers to two similar-sounding words with different meanings (Tajlil, 1988). Other names of the alliteration in Arabic include *Tajnis*, *Mojaneseh* and *Tajanos*, which are all derived from *Jens* or material, and material is the substance that yields variety of forms. The naming of this rhetorical figure is because the letters of the words are of the same substance (Safdi, 1978).

The Components of Aesthetics and its Connections with Alliteration

The first component of aesthetics, which is talking about something beautiful, falls with the ambit of psychology. This is because loving beauty and enjoying it is something spiritual. And psychology, as we know it, is the knowledge of internal life of

human, of his joys, pains, memories, judgments and likings.

The second component of aesthetics, which is the subject of arts, has nothing to do with technical principles and rules of any particular form of art, or arts in general.

Rather, what is of aesthetic significance in arts is examining the artist-art relations and art's view about the world and creation of beauties (Daneshvar, 1996). Rhetoric is the basis of art and rhetorical figures are the basis of arts.

Generally, in a work of art, the artist embarks on creating something with the intention of promoting or explaining it one way or another. He enjoys freedom in choosing the elements that best help him express his feelings and leanings. He always makes use of a rhetorical figure, knowing full well that conveying feelings, or promoting things of any kind, will not be possible without having the means of expression. Therefore, studying rhetorical figures is the preamble to aesthetics (Gatala, 1957).

The material for music, which is a type of art, is voice and rhythm. It has extricated itself from the burden of the

material world; it has no dimensions and has an immensely powerful spiritual aspect. That is because hearing sense is more spiritual than visual sense, and spiritual movements in music make our spirit fly (Daneshvar, 1996).

Moreover, any chunk of speech comprises some phonetic and audio elements that work together in a balanced and proportionate manner. Therefore, based on the existing balance in any conceivable phonetic chunk, different types of music are conceivable (Shafiei Kadkani, 1991). Influencing the self, which is the ultimate goal of any extraordinary poetry and speech, is achieved through fantasy, and at times through arousing emotions.

This is, of course, done with meter and rhyme too, whose influence on human fantasy is because of the word and its music. There is another reason that can considerably boost this influence, if not pushed too far: rhetoric and its embellishments (Zarrinkoob, 1977). From among all rhetorical figures, alliteration and its various types can have the greatest influence on hearts because of its musical phonetic aspect. Poetry has no intention except making the language musical.

All definitions of music will revert to this in their final analysis that “poetry is the musical embodiment of the language”. Image, meaning, expression, are all various representations of this music, and music in this sense has a far greater meaning than its usual conventional concept. The acceptance of every literary masterpiece relies on their proximity to this conceptual realm of music. Of numerous duties that critics have listed for poetry, the only rightful and genuine one is the one that Valéry talked about: The duty of poetry is getting back the right that has been denied by music and all poets struggle to reclaim the lost right of poetry (Shafiei Kadkani, 1991). The music of poetry has some representations that could be summed up as:

1- External Music of Poetry: it means the meter of poetry that is adaptable to all poems written on a meter.

2- Peripheral Music of Poetry: it refers to everything that influences the musical system of poetry but not observable all along the poem. There are lots of peripheral music representations. The repeating words (*Radif*) and rhyme are the most remarkable ones.

3- Internal Music of Poetry: different types of the alliteration are in this category. This realm is the most significant in the music of poetry and many literary masterpieces owe their strength, cohesion, and aesthetic backbone to this type of music. To explain its representations, poetry critics have used different expressions like mellifluousness, tonality, and musical, with each having a special meaning in music (ibid. 391).

Since alliteration has something to do with theories of word and meaning association, its manifestations should be traced in psychological studies. Alliteration results from similar-sounding words, in which all or part of them associate with rhythm. This association, which in turn will bring to mind their meanings, creates a special joy for the listener.

In fact, alliteration creates music in speech on the one hand, and associates the same word with different meanings on the other. This will expand fantasy and attract the listener. This is the reason behind beauty and art. Beauty and dignity in speech originate from two sources: one is the rhythm and resonance

of words and the other is the pleasurable force of meaning association. That is why linguists believe that three features of sound, meaning, and grammar join to generate each speech chunk. Rhetorical and expressional issues are closely intertwined with psychological and aesthetic analyses.

Traces of this can be seen in Abd al-Qafer al-Jurjani's opinions in "Secrets of Rhetoric", where he demonstrated rhetoric in simile and alliteration (Tajlil, 1988). And it is right at the confluence between rhetoric and aesthetics and art that hearing or even seeing two alliterationed words bringing about a special joy and excitement.

Then, heeding the truth that resides beyond words is the primary support for aesthetics. That is, one of the foundations of aesthetics is using words, and the other is heeding the truth. This is the most important characteristic of art that allows the artist to stimulate a major part of our mental force; because art is the only medium of conveying excitements (Gatala, 1957). From Aristotle's point of view, the beauty of words hinges on both letters and meaning.

However, Abd al-Qafer breaks away from Aristotle in the rhythm and content of words, but not in semantic content. He believes that it is in the realm of semantics that meaning dominates words, because word carries the burden of meaning and it is inconceivable to imagine a word apart from thinking process. In his perspective, a word in the realm of alliteration will be beautiful without the intervention of meaning only if the people frequently use that word. Savage and unpleasant words will not find their way into the realm of beauty even though meaning has an elevated standing in mind (Jurjani, 1981).

Discussion

Ancient Definitions of the Alliteration

Rhetoricians disagree over the definition of alliteration. For instance, Rommani sees alliteration as the expression of meanings with words that share the same root (Rommani, 1967). Qudama ibn Ja'far says, alliteration is the same meaning expressed by alliterationed words as a morphological derivation. He separates homophonic alliteration as "conforming" (Qudama). Ibn al-Mu'tazz notes that alliteration is

using a word that is the same as the other (Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 1945). Ibn al-Athir refers to alliteration as the same words with different meanings, especially when he has homophonic alliteration in mind. Therefore, he sets the main condition for alliteration as same-sounding words of different meanings (Ibn al-Athir, 1939).

Skaki used the concept of similarity in defining alliteration (Skaki, 1937). In his definition, he makes no mention of difference in meaning. As a result, it can be concluded that he divides the benefits of speech in verbal and spiritual. He classifies alliteration into verbal techniques category. The concept of similarity in his definition, however, is indicative of difference of meaning in alliteration.

Shams Qeis Razi, who is one of the most meticulous and elegant rhetoric experts, has put forward a more general definition of alliteration: "Alliteration is likening words to each other, and it comes in various types: homophonic, homographic, compounded, recursive. They are all pleasant and palatable. They invigorate speech and prove speaker's eloquence and vigor provided that they are not used more than two to four times in a verse" (Razi, 1948). Jalal al-Din

Qazvini maintains that alliteration is similarity of words in variety, number, form, and order of letters. He divides it in categories like, *Momsal*, the same part of speech, and *Mostowfi*, two different parts of speech (Qazvini, 2002). He continues the classification in the same vein, but we stop mentioning them here to prevent verbiage.

There are slight differences among definitions put forward for alliteration in rhetoric books despite overall similarities. Rommani's definition seems to be the most dependable among them, although it is not comprehensive. Qudama defined alliteration using the word itself, which is not acceptable. Using "alliterationned words" in the definition is coming full circle because based on his definition; we can know alliterationned words only after knowing alliteration. The justification for Qudama's definition is that he uses "alliterationned" in its usual and verbal sense of "similarity", not idiomatic sense. Therefore, defining it in morphological derivation terms is also flawed because it merely includes derivational alliteration and excludes the other types.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's definition is also implausible, and that of Ibn al-Athir's could not be comprehensive in that it leaves out the other types of alliteration – paired or linear. Generally, the primary condition for alliteration is difference in meaning with the same-sounding words. Ibn al-Athir attributes the difference in meaning to the similarity of alliteration words. However, in homographic alliteration, it results from difference in phonemes (vowels and consonants). Perhaps this was the reason why Qudama draws a distinction line between homophonic and derivational alliteration by calling the former “conforming”. Skaki does not stipulate difference in meaning as the condition for alliteration. However, the two conditions of similarity of words and dissimilarity of meanings are still there.

Discussing Abd Al-Qader Al-Jurjani's View about Alliteration and Reviewing Rhetoric Experts' Opinions

The best type of alliteration can only happen when it is natural and follows the natural meter of speech. The artist should not feel any obligation

except stimulating mental propriety in order to naturally give birth to words. Alliteration creates music in speech on the one hand, and, associates the same word with different meanings on the other hand.

This will expand fantasy and attract the listener. This is the reason behind beauty and art. Beauty and dignity in discourse originate from two sources: one is the rhythm and resonance of words and the other is the pleasurable force of meaning association. That is why linguists believe that three features of sound, meaning, and grammar join to generate each speech chunk.

Therefore, the rhetorical figures that augment the music of speech – whether external music, like meter and rhyme or internal music, like simile and metaphor – are of paramount significance. Not only are they partly responsible for creating literary masterpieces, but they also nurture rhetoric, art and beauty. The aesthetic analysis of the alliteration holds that it is a simultaneous display of multiplicity and unity because alliteration words have physical unity, whereas the meanings are various and numerous. These waves of physical similarity and

semantic dissimilarity will together create a special pleasure – a pleasure that will result in beauty or understanding of it. Arts and rhetorical issues are, in fact, representations of a liaison between alliteration and un-alliteration elements in a speech chunk that originates from human instinctive talents. It is so pleasant that in the creation of the alliteration, its external and verbal structure warms heart, without any pretention or limitation. Neither alliteration nor speech enslaves one another (Paygozar, 2000). From Abd al-Qager al-Jurjani's point of view, two alliteration words are pleasant and sweet when they ascend a high standing in the realm of reason (Jurjani, 1981).

It is clear that distinguishing between good or bad speech is not only dependent on words. They do not convey any meaning so long as words of special kind and quality are not put together in an organized way. Therefore, in Jurjani's opinion, the beauty of speech is not summed up in words; rather, it is the meaning, along a pleasant word, that gives taste and vigor to alliteration. Had the beauty of the alliteration merely relied on words, it would have become something undesirable. That is because

words are servants of meanings; meanings are in charge of words.

Almost all rhetoric scholars agree that the best type of alliteration is the homophonic one. Of course, this type of the alliteration does not invariably have this quality. The homophonic alliteration is considered the best when it appears spontaneously without the poet feeling any obligation except stimulating mental propriety and natural creation of speech.

Abd al-Qager stipulates that alliteration is desirable and pleasing when it spontaneously drags the word to the snare of the meaning. Like this quote from Shafi'i who retorted when asked about wine: "People of Mecca and Medina (*Haramain*) have consensus that it is proscribed (*Tahrim*)". Or like a verse by Buhturi: "You keep knocking on Babak's castle door (*Bab*) to loot and destroy it".

The secret of its charm and beauty lies in truthful secretion of taste and prevention of artificiality. Propriety of sound between words "*Haramain*" and "*Tahrim*" and between "*Babak*" and "*Bab*" on the one hand, and propriety between each of these words on the

other, indicates a pleasant and desirable alliteration. Here is a verse by Abu Tammam addressed to Yahya ibn-Abdullah Rafe'ie:

*Ma mata men karame z zamane fa
ennahoo yahya lada yahya -bne
abdollahi*

Meaning: “Every generosity and magnificence that dies will be revived (*yahya*) with Yahya ibn-Abdullah” (Tabrizi, 1970).

In this verse, the second element of the alliteration, “*Yahya*” associate with the first element because of external similarity. This in itself creates connection and cohesion among the parts of the speech. However, the other dimension of this alliteration is the semantic one. The poet has so deceptively repeated the words that, at the first glance, it seems as if he has done so for more emphasis. However, as we look more closely, we figure out something else. The second word expresses a new meaning. All this originates from a mental meaning, not a sensory sound of letters. Therefore, as Abd al-Qager says, the beauty of the alliteration is because of the aforesaid charm, something that makes us think

the second word means the same as the first. There are countless examples of this alliteration in the works of poets. Like this verse by Abu Tammam:

*Yamodduna men Ayden awasen wa
awasem tasulo be asyafen gawazhen
gawazheb*

Meaning: “In war, they raise the protective and defending arms, arms that attack with sharp cutting swords” (Tabrizi, 1970).

According to Taftazani, there is a homographic alliteration between protective (*awasen*) and defending (*awasem*), and between sharp (*gawazhen*) and cutting (*gawazheb*). It is because of the extra letters at the end of the word. Before seeing the end of the second word, the reader thinks it is the first word repeated for emphasis. Nevertheless, after reading the entire word, he learns something new, which adds to the beauty of the alliteration for him. This is a verse by Abolfath Bosti:

*Nazeraho fima jana nazeraho
Awdaani amot be ma awdaani*

Meaning: “Her eyes committed a crime against me. Her crime is murdering me with her eyes.”

In the first part of the verse, the two words “*nazeraho*” (eyes), and “*awdaani*” (murdered) are homophonic alliteration and in Abd al-Qager’s opinion, this type of the alliteration has a lofty musical value compared to other types. The beauty of this alliteration is that when we come across the second “*nazeraho*” and “*awdaani*”, the first words are still reverberating in our ears and our mind associates between these two. However, after a while it heeds the meaning, and discovers with awe that although the words have look alike, they differ in meaning. Therefore, this verbal unity and discovering the ambiguity – multiplicity together with unity – sound extremely incredible and pleasing. The musical value of these alliterationed words rests with the similarity of their letters, particularly when there is semantic propriety between the words. Propriety in general leads to the creation of beauty. This has so lofty a standing that Al-Biruni maintains: “Human instinct is compatible with anything that is organized, and abhors anything that is

not” (Shafiei Kadkani, 1991). As Erik Newton notes, “If human’s mind has a thirst, it is for understanding the truths and the associations among them” (Newton, 1964). Khanlari also believes, “any kind of proportion and symmetry creates unity among scattered elements, and that makes understanding of the whole faster and easier. This will create pleasure and joy” (Kkanlari, 1974).

According to Abd al-Qager Jurjani, the alliteration has gained acceptance because of the meaning. He believes what determines goodness or badness of a figure is nothing except the meaning. He stipulates that speech is pleasant and good if words are ruled by meaning, not the other way around. That is because whenever meanings are left to their own devices, they will call forth the best of the words, and will express themselves in the guise of words with the help of an eloquent speaker or writer. Here, speech will be naturally adorned with proportionate meanings and words benefiting from their inherent features.

Yet, when they use predetermined words and subordinate meaning to them in composing speech, due to reasons like obscene meaning or inadequate word to express the meaning,

they forgo meaning just for the sake of the beauty of word. Obviously, here the words look like a beautiful garment dressed to an ugly figure, and exterior decorations look like a golden necklace on pigs' neck. Speech, whose verbal aspects excel spiritual ones, is not pleasurable and influential. Therefore, the speaker has to be careful to give precedence to meaning (Rajayee, 1961: 420). Here are two verses by Buhturi:

**Yaasha anel majde el-ghabiyyo wa lan
tra fi soadeden araban le ghayre
ariben**

Meaning: “A stupid person keeps away from grandeur and glory and only a sage pursues grandeur” (Buhturi, 1964).

**Fagad asbahta aghlaba taghlabiyyan
ala aydi -l-ashirate wa-l-goloobi**

Meaning: “You have become the most victorious of a fake origin, because of your lineage and their hearts” (Buhturi, 1964, p. 93).

The words “*arab*” (purpose, wish) and “*arib*” (sage, intelligent) in the first verse, and “*aghlab*” (most victorious) and “*taghlabi*” (Attributed to

the Banu Taghlib, an Arab tribe) in the second are musical and formed quasi-derivational alliteration. Yet, they are different meaning-wise. They possess all the requirements of an acceptable alliteration from Jurjani’s point of view, because they have spontaneity of words and propriety of meanings. These two have increased the artistic value of alliteration from an aesthetic point of view.

Considering the examples of pleasant alliterations in Jurjani’s opinion, we can recognize unpleasant alliterations as well. An example of that can be seen in a verse by Abu Tammam:

**Garrat begorrane ayno-ddin
wanshatarat belashtarine oyono-
sherke fastolema**

Meaning: “The Quran has lit up the eyes of faith and hanged and gouged the eyes of polytheism” (Tabrizi, 1970).

Here the poet has used “*garrat*” (light up) to go with “*Quran*”, and feels the obligation to use “*belashtarine*” (hanged) because of “*wanshatarat*” (gouged). This resulted in an artificial convoluted speech. He entangles himself

in a vortex of the alliteration. The following verse is another example:

*Zahabat be mazhabehi a-samahato w-
altwat fihe-ezoon: a-mazhabon am-
mozhabon*

Meaning: “Generosity and largesse have vanished after his departure. Many doubted whether his extreme magnanimity was in his nature or out of insanity”.

The poet has felt obligated to use convoluted terms here (Mazhabon) that have no semantic propriety and comprehensiveness. He constrains himself to preserve musical propriety of words without semantic relevance, which resulted in a flimsy unlively alliteration.

It is worth mentioning that some rhetoric scholars believe distinguishing verbal from spiritual figures depends on taste (Taghavi, 1938). Studying the opinions of rhetoric experts has made it clear that verbal similarity and semantic dissimilarity is one of the fundamental conditions of the alliteration. Skaki and his followers classify the alliteration into verbal

technique category and stress more on verbal similarity.

It goes without saying that excessive attention of rhetoric scholars to the musical aspect of the alliteration has, at times, led them to forget about semantic dissimilarity. However, unlike Al-Jahiz and Qudama ibn Ja'far and others who attributed the eloquence of alliteration to word, or Abū ‘Amral-Shaybānī, Hassan ibn-Bashr Amadi and others who attributed it to meaning, Abd al-Qager Jurjani has proposed a new theory. Having meticulously criticized the theories of both groups, he introduced his view, “Theory of Verse”. In the past, scholars would liken words to a garment or sheath that would overshadow thoughts and cover them (Ashamvi, 1984). Jurjani has embarked on debunking their theory. He elevated meaning after establishing his own theory and referred to it as the basis for goodness or badness of speech. He maintained that words are servants of meanings and the value of the alliteration does not depend on the rhythm of words and their verbal appearance.

Result

Jurjani attributes the goodness or badness of the alliteration to meaning and relegates words to the position of servants of meaning. He sees sound propriety and semantic comprehensiveness as central in determining goodness or badness of the alliteration. As far as he is concerned, the distinguishing criterion for words is a good taste, and for meaning is having a pleasant position in mind.

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