

# The Art of Tajnis In Medieval Poetics: A Comparative Study of Razi And Tarazi's Treatises

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**Abstract:** This article provides a comprehensive comparative-typological analysis of the art of tajnis (homonymy) in two monumental works of Eastern poetics: Shams Qays Razi's "Al-Mu'jam" and Ahmad Tarazi's "Funun al-Balagha." The research initially traces the textual history and publication of these manuscripts, highlighting the scholarly contributions of Edward Browne, Abdulwahhab Qazvini, and Mudarris Razavi. The core of the study focuses on a detailed structural and semantic examination of the seven specific types of tajnis including tajnis tom, zoid, noqis, and murakkab – as defined in both Persian and Turkic traditions. By analyzing original poetic fragments from masters such as Khaqani and Nizari, the article illustrates how Tarazi integrated Razi's theoretical framework into Turkic literature while expanding its scope through trilingual examples (Turkic, Persian, and Arabic). The findings demonstrate the continuity of classical poetic theory and Tarazi's role in synthesizing multi-linguistic literary devices, providing a deeper understanding of the evolution of medieval rhetoric.

**Keywords:** Eastern poetics, Shams Qays Razi, Ahmad Tarazi, "Al-Mu'jam", "Funun al-Balagha", Tajnis theory, Classical rhetoric, Aruz, Turkic-Persian literary relations, Poetic typology.

**Introduction:** It is well known that Shams Qays Razi's work, "Al-Mu'jam" is considered one of the most significant sources for the study of prosody (aruz), rhyme theory, poetic arts, and literary genres. Unique manuscripts of this work were collected and brought to light by the English researcher Dr. Edward Browne and the Iranian scholar Mirza Muhammad Abdulwahhab Qazvini. Abdulwahhab Qazvini was among the first to synthesize the various manuscripts of the work. After adding an introductory section, he submitted three copies to the "Catholique" (Kotolukiya) printing house in Beirut. As a result, the treatise "Al-Mu'jam" was published in several copies in 1909 (1328 AH). The work was published for a second time in 1935 by Mudarris Razavi, a professor at Tehran University. This treatise was further studied and published in five volumes by the same scholar, and later, between 1957 and 1960, it was issued in six volumes by Tehran University. Similarly, Ahmad Tarazi's work, "Funun al-Balagha"

stands as a vital source in Turkic poetics, reflecting the evolution of thoughts regarding the science of aruz (prosody), rhyme, poetic arts, and literary genres [1].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Shams Qays Razi's "Al-Mu'jam" has served as the theoretical foundation for numerous scholarly studies on poetics. Specifically, researchers such as K. Toyserkani, P.N. Khanlari, A. Zarrinkub, A. Azer, A. Sattorov, and Kh. Sharipov have frequently referenced "Al-Mu'jam" in their works [2]. Later, the work was extensively studied by the Orientalist scholar N.Yu. Chalisova. Initially, in her doctoral dissertation dedicated to Rashiduddin Vatvat's "Hadaiq us-Sihr" she conducted a comparative analysis of these two masterpieces [3]. In her Russian translation of "Al-Mu'jam" Chalisova presented the original poetic fragments alongside their Russian counterparts. In the preface, she provided a rigorous academic analysis and presented significant scientific conclusions.

Furthermore, the Orientalist R. Musulmonqulov presented his findings on the theory of classical Eastern poetics in his study, "Persidsko-tadjikskaya klassicheskaya poetika. X–XV v.v." (Perso-Tajik Classical Poetics: 10th–15th Centuries), where he performed a series of comparative analyses regarding Razi's treatise [4].

## RESULTS

Among the shared poetic arts is Tajnis (Arabic: homogenous/of the same kind). It is a poetic device based on using words in a verse that are identical or similar in form. While primarily used in poetry, it is occasionally found in prose. Sources on the science of *badī'* (rhetoric) distinguish several types of tajnis [5, 235]. The art of tajnis is present in both treatises. Shams Qays Razi defines it as follows: "Tajnis is the use of words similar to one another; it is considered a proof of eloquence and a witness to a man's mastery" [6, 271]. Within his explanation, Razi also touches upon other arts that share similar characteristics.

Sheikh Tarazi refers to this art as "at-tajnisot" and provides the following definition: "Tajnis occurs when a poet brings two words into a verse that are of the same kind in one respect. And this art consists of seven types" [1, 86]. Both authors identify seven types of tajnis in their respective works. We shall proceed with a comparative analysis of the types of tajnis based on the aforementioned table. First, let us examine "Tajnisi Tom" (Complete Homonymy) in the work "Al-Mu'jam".

According to R. Musulmonqulov, Raduyoni defined *tajnisi tom* as the similarity of two or three words in letters and vocalization (*harakat*) despite having different meanings. Vatvat, however, described it as "two or more words differing in meaning but identical in pronunciation and spelling" [4, 17]. Shams Qays Razi provides the following definition: "Tajnisi tom is the employment of two words that are identical in form (*muttafiq-ul-lafz*) but different in meaning (*mukhtalif-ul-ma'ni*)" [6, 271].

Essentially, *tajnisi tom* occurs when two homonyms convey distinct meanings. Razi provides the following *beyit* (couplet) by Khaqani as an example:

Mafkhari Khoqonist madhi tu, to dar jahon,  
Subh barad obi moh, meva barad mohi ob.

Analysis: We analyzed the *beyit* as follows: As long as

the world exists, you are the pride and honor of Khaqani; that is, your praise will flourish while the world lasts. The morning carries away the moonlight (the disappearance of the moon at dawn), and when the fruits ripen, the reflection of the moon appears in the water. Alongside *tajnis*, this couplet also utilizes the arts of *mubolag'a* (hyperbole), *istiora* (metaphor), and *takrir* (repetition).

In "Funun ul-Balogha" Tarazi provides this definition: "This type is such that within a *beyit*, two words are brought forth which are identical in form (*surat*) but opposing in meaning (*ma'no*), such as /ol/ and /ol./." As an illustration, he cites a *beyit* by Khoja Kamal:

Xoki poyat bar saram toji Kay ast.

Inchunin sari Kay buvad muhtoji toji.

Analysis: According to Persian-Tajik dictionaries, "Kay" refers to a historical figure, one of the kings of Iran. The underlying theme of the couplet is that love is loftier and more magnificent than kingship. The analysis reveals the presence of *tajnis*, *tashbeh* (simile), and *mubolag'a*.

*Tajnisi Zoid* (Augmented Homonymy). Regarding "Tajnisi Zoid" Qays Razi defines it as follows: "Tajnisi zoid is when one of the homonymous words (*mutajonis*) has one letter more than the other." This type is based on words that are similar in form, but one contains an extra letter or two. The following *beyit* is cited as an example:

Dar hasrati ruxsori tu, ey zeboro'y,

Az nola chun nol gashtam, az mo'ya chu mo'y. [6, 273]

Analysis: In this couplet addressed to the "fair-faced" beloved, the lover's state is depicted through *tajnis*, *tashbeh*, and *mubolag'a*. Due to the longing for the beloved's beauty, the lover's *nola* (lament) has turned them into something as withered as a *nol* (a seed or stalk).

Tarazi defines "Tajnisi Zoid" as follows: "This art is such that two words are of the same kind. The letters are identical and the vocalization (*harakat*) is consistent. However, at the end of one, an extra letter is added, such as: *hol* and *holi*, *nol* and *nola*.

Continuing the analysis, we turn our attention to the insights of Vatvat and Atoulloh regarding these refined poetic devices, followed by an exploration of *tajnisi noqis* and *tajnisi murakkab*. Vatvat defines *Tajnisi Zoid*

(also known as tajnisi muzayyal) as a state where words match in letters and vocalization, but a letter is added to the end of the second word. According to R. Musulmonqulov, Atoulloh's views on this art were particularly systematic. He concluded that tajnisi zoid is nearly identical to tajnisi tom, with the sole distinction being the addition of a single letter, which could appear at the beginning, middle, or end of the word [4, 19].

Tajnisi Noqis (Deficient Homonymy). Regarding the next type, Tajnisi Noqis, Qays Razi provides the following definition:

"Tajnisi noqis is when the homonymous words (mutajonis) are identical in letters (script) but differ in vocalization (harakat)." In other words, the words look the same in writing but are pronounced with different vowels. Razi cites a poem by Qatran as an example:

Piyoda shavad dushman az aspi davlat,

Chu boshi bar aspi saodat savor.

Bar aspi saodat savoriyu dori

Bar dast andarun az saodat sivor. [6, 273]

Analysis: Through the use of tajnis, tanosub (proportionality), tashbeh, and tazod (anthesis), the poem conveys that an enemy cannot harm one who walks with fortune and happiness.

Tarazi's definition offers a similar structural view: "This type is such that two terms are homonymous. The letters are identical, but they differ in vocalization, such as: turk (تُرْك - Turk/Soldier) and tark (تَرْك - abandonment)." He provides the following illustrative verse:

Bizga bor javrung vafodin yaxshiroq.

Qilmagil, ey turk, bu odatni tark.

Tajnisi Murakkab (Compound Homonymy). Qays Razi defines Tajnisi Murakkab as follows: "It is when one of the homonymous terms is a single simple word, and the other is composed of two words." In this type, the phonetic identity is created by comparing one whole word to a combination of two separate words. He cites the following example:

Sarvboloye, ki dorad bar sari sarv oftob,

Ofati dilhost v-andar didagon z-on oft ob.

This very same beyit is also cited by Tarazi, who attributes it to Mavloni Nizari. Notably, the word oftob (sun) is mirrored by oft ob (water fell). Due to the

nature of tajnisi murakkab, expressing it in this broken form is considered academically accurate.

Tarazi's own definition and example further clarify this: Sochi savdosidur bozor bizga,

Nasimi, ey sabo, bo zor bizga.

Here, the word bozor (market) is homonymous with the compound bo zor (with a cry/lament). Tarazi adds an example from Qavomiddin Ganjavi:

Be vafoyi tu mehri jon nochiz,

Bo havoyi tu mehrijon chu bahor.

Tarazi distinguishes two sub-types of this tajnis: Muvofiq: Where the words match in both script (xat) and sound (lafz), as mentioned above. Mafruq: Where the words match in sound (lafz) but differ in their written script (xat). This is also known as tajnisi mafruq.

Yuzing misli qachon gulzor bo'lg'ay?

Ki bulbul oshiqi gul zor bo'lg'ay? [1, 89]

The next type of homonymy is called "Tajnisi Mutarra". Qays Razi defines it as follows: "It is when the homonymous words (mutajonison) are identical in the majority of their letters, except for the letter at the edge (the final letter of the word)". This type occurs when words similar in form differ by only one or two consonants. A couplet by Muizi cited in "Al-Mu'jam" is also found in "Funun al-Balagha":

Az sharori teg' budi bodsoronro sharob.

V-az ta'oni rumh budi xoksoronro ta'om. [6, 276]

Tarazi provides the following definition and example for this type:

Eshitmadim nechakim kezdim ofoq,

Ko'zi, qoshidin o'zga yerda ofot.

"This is when the two homonymous words are identical in all letters except for the final letter "to" (t), which is different, such as: ofoq (horizons) and ofot (calamities)". [1, 90]

The following type is "Tajnisi Khat." Razi does not provide a formal definition but explains it through verses:

Hamoi xushtar, ki no'shi andar in muddat mayi sofi,

Hamon behtar, ki po'shi andar in mavsims hazodi kan.

Tarazi's definition is as follows: "This is when two words are similar in their written appearance (script) but not

in their pronunciation (sound).” Example:

Chu binavisht shab farshi zarbaft rog’.

Shuda charx to’ti sifat hamchu zog’.

The final type is “Tajnisi Muzdavaj”. Qays Razi defines it as: “Tajnisi muzdavaj is when homonymous words follow one another synonymously”. This refers to words similar in form appearing side-by-side at the end of a verse. An example from Muizi is also present in Tarazi’s work:

Hast shakkari yor yoquti tu, ey ayyor yor,

Nest kasro nazdi on yoquti shakkarbor bor.

Tarazi refers to this type as “Tajnisi Mukarrar” (Repeated Homonymy) and defines it thus:

Qomating savdosi yolg’uz sarvni kuydurmani,

Ol yanog’ing hayratidan yig’ladi gulzori zor.

“This occurs when two words are brought together in the parts of the verse, joined to one another, whether the first word is longer than the second or not, such as: gulzor-zor”.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident that although some types of the poetic art of tajnis analyzed here differ in name, they are essentially the same in substance. However, Sheikh Ahmad Tarazi provides a broader explanation in his treatise. Furthermore, Tarazi presents his examples in three languages –Turkic, Persian, and Arabic–whereas Qays Razi limits himself to Persian couplets. In some instances, Tarazi cites the exact verses found in “Al-Mu’jam” which proves his familiarity with Razi’s treatise.

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