

## The Dance of Words: A New Perspective on Musicality in Persian Poetry

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Music in poetry is a subject of particular importance that distinguishes the language of verse from prose. Extensive research has been conducted on various aspects of poetry and its four categories: external, peripheral, internal, and spiritual music. However, one overlooked aspect in the study of musicality in poetry is the dance of music in the vocabulary. This article aims to introduce this essential musical element, the fifth type of music in poetry, which elicits aesthetic pleasure and emotional response but has been neglected until now. We will explore the branches and influential factors of this beauty that enhance the enjoyment of poetry by examining the intentional expansion and contraction of elements such as syllables, vowels, and silences. This fundamental research is based on logical analysis and arguments drawn from documentary sources. The most prominent musical factor discussed in this study is the dance of vocabulary and music through the deliberate expansion or contraction of syllables, vowels, and consonants. These techniques amplify the musical beauty and evoke a more significant emotional response in the reader through the intentional expansion or contraction of a single syllable or word, along with manipulating pauses and silences between words, syllables, and consonants.

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## Introduction

The relationship between poetry and music has long been a central topic in literary criticism, as the linguistic art of poetry distinguishes itself from prose primarily through its musical quality. Traditionally, scholars have categorized the musicality of Persian poetry into four distinct domains: external (prosodic meter/rhythm), side (rhyme and refrain), internal (phonetic harmony and rhetorical figures), and spiritual (semantic associations). While these classifications provide a solid foundation for understanding poetic structure, they often fail to account for the deeper, sensory pleasure—the “psychic affect”—derived from the act of reciting and hearing poetry. This study introduces a “fifth dimension” of musicality, termed the “Dance of Words” (*Raghs-e Vazhegan*), which operates on a phonetic level through the conscious manipulation of vowels, consonants, stretching, and silence. The research addresses the limitations of rigid prosodic analysis, which often ignores the dynamic shifts in sound that occur during the performative reading of a poem.

## Method

This research adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and documentary approach. Drawing upon library research and logical reasoning, the study investigates the musical potential of sounds and phonemes beyond the constraints of traditional *Aruz* (prosody). The methodology centers on the “recitation” (*Khvand-dar*) of poetry as the primary criterion for analysis. By performing a scansion of select verses and then comparing them with the performative/auditory realization—where stretches, pauses, and variations in syllable length occur—the study identifies how linguistic performance deviates from and enriches the static metrical framework. This approach highlights how the “Dance of Words” functions as a fluid, performative musical element.

## Results

The findings identify ten specific musical techniques—often overlooked by traditional prosody—that enhance the aesthetic and emotional impact of poetry through the manipulation of phonemes and syllables:

۱. **Vowel Stretching (*Keshish-e Masavat*):** Vowels can be elongated beyond prosodic rules, creating varying rhythmic durations that act as “musical beats” independent of the foot structure.
۲. **Phoneme-based Rhythmic Structuring:** The deliberate stretching of sounds allows individual syllables or words to replace or expand upon entire metrical feet.
۳. **Vowel Conversion:** Short vowels are often transformed into long ones (and vice versa) during recitation to satisfy the “musical necessity” of the poem, prioritizing flow over rigid rules.
۴. **The Nasal Consonant “N”:** The nasal “n” at the end of syllables—often dropped in prosodic scansion for the sake of the meter—is frequently retained in recitation, adding to the musical richness and resonance of the line.
۵. **Syllabic Transformation:** The conversion of short syllables into long ones to create harmony or emphasis.
۶. **End-of-Hemistich Variations:** Deviations in the final rhythm of a line, where poets add extra consonants or syllables to increase musical flourish.
۷. **Consonant-to-Syllable Conversion:** Adding a short vowel to an isolated consonant to transform it into a syllable, thereby completing a rhythmic “beat” not visible in the text.
۸. **Long Vowels in Final Positions:** Managing the length of “a,” “i,” and “u” sounds to maintain musical fluidity across verse boundaries.
۹. **Short Vowels in Final Positions:** Modifying the duration of terminal short vowels to fit the required rhythm.
۱۰. **Consonant Clustering:** Avoiding the prosodic elision of adjacent consonants by stretching them, thereby preserving their sonic weight and contributing to the “orchestration” of the verse.

## Conclusion

The “Dance of Words” represents an essential, though previously marginalized, layer of musicality in Persian poetry. This research demonstrates that the four traditional types of musicality are insufficient to explain the full aesthetic pleasure of poetry. Musicality is not merely a static structural feature but a fluid, performative phenomenon realized through recitation. By demonstrating that the phonetic performance of poetry frequently contradicts the rigid rules of *Aruz* in favor of “musical



necessity,” this study concludes that the true musical potential of a poem lies in the poet’s and reader’s ability to manipulate sounds to evoke specific psychological states and emotional responses.