

Semantic and Grammatical Features of Rhyming Units in Nodim Namangani's Ghazals

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ABSTRACT

*This article examines the semantic and grammatical organization of rhyme-radif complexes in the ghazals of the late nineteenth-century Uzbek poet Nodim Namangani. The study addresses a recurrent problem in descriptions of classical rhyme: phonological correspondence is often recorded separately from the lexical meaning and syntactic work of the line-final units. The material was drawn from the 1964 edition of *Tanlangan she'rlar* and checked at the level of the individual bayt. Rhyme sets were identified, the radif was separated from the variable rhyme word, and the resulting units were classified by lexical category, grammatical form, semantic relation, and compositional position. The analysis shows that Nodim uses a stable radif as a grammatical operator applied to a changing series of lexical items. Noun rhymes usually construct an image field, predicates mark a recurring state or result, and locative or possessive forms bind the lyrical statement to a particular speaker and place. The sequence giryon–hayron–pinhon–yakson–armon–Namangon, for example, moves from emotional states to a geographical name without weakening the sound pattern. The findings indicate that rhyme in Nodim's ghazals participates in semantic progression and sentence structure; it cannot be treated as an ornamental echo at the end of the line.*

Keywords: Nodim Namangani, ghazal, rhyme, radif, poetic semantics

INTRODUCTION

Rhyme is one of the most audible regularities of a ghazal, but audibility alone does not explain its role. A repeated terminal sound links lines that may contain different images, grammatical subjects, and speech intentions. In a classical Turkic poem, the connection is frequently strengthened by *radif*, the unchanged element that follows the rhyme. The two devices therefore occupy the same textual boundary while performing different tasks: the rhyme word varies, whereas the *radif* returns in an identical form. Their interaction is linguistic as well as metrical.

Roman Jakobson's account of the poetic function remains useful here because it relates patterned equivalence to the sequence of discourse [1]. Words placed in corresponding positions become comparable even when their dictionary meanings are remote. Lotman likewise treats recurrent formal units as carriers of new relations inside an artistic structure [2]. These propositions are especially relevant to the ghazal, whose autonomous bayts are held together by meter, rhyme, *radif*, and the gradual redefinition of a shared lyrical situation. The formal recurrence does not erase lexical difference. It makes that difference perceptible.

Studies of stylistics and poetic language have described rhyme as a site where phonological, lexical, and syntactic organization meet [3; 4]. Research on meter also shows that the terminal position of a verse line is structurally marked and therefore attracts attention to the word that occupies it [5]. Such general theories, however, must be adjusted to the terminology of classical Eastern poetics. In Uzbek scholarship, the concepts of *raviy*, *ridf*, *qayd*, *vasl*, *xuruj*, and *mazid* describe the internal structure of the rhyme, while the distinction between restricted and extended rhymes records what follows the *raviy* [6]. Hamroyeva's study of Turkic theoretical sources demonstrates that this vocabulary developed through a sustained reading of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic verse rather than through a single, uniform scheme [7]. The terminology is indispensable, yet classification by letters and elements does not exhaust the semantic question.

Nodim Namangani (1844-1910) wrote at a moment when the established language of the ghazal continued to function alongside new social experience, local literary contacts, travel impressions, and forms of public address. His poems preserve familiar images – the beloved's stature, hair, face, the lover's tears, separation, and spring – while placing them in configurations peculiar to his lyrical voice. The 1964 *Tanlangan she'rlar* provides the most accessible printed corpus of this work [8]. A. Xalilbekov's biographical and literary study established the principal facts of Nodim's life and situated him in the Namangan literary environment [9]. That historical account remains necessary, but it does not offer a detailed linguistic description of the poet's line-final units.

The present study asks three related questions. First, what semantic relations arise among words united by one rhyme pattern? Second, what grammatical contribution does radif make to those lexical items? Third, how does the order of rhyme words direct the movement of a ghazal or a multi-stanza poem? The object of analysis is not every rhyme attested in Nodim's surviving work. The article concentrates on representative complexes whose linguistic organization can be checked in the printed text and whose recurrence reveals a consistent compositional function.

The working hypothesis is that many of Nodim's rhyme-radif complexes can be described as a relation between a lexical variable and a repeated grammatical operator. The term *operator* is used in a restricted analytical sense. It denotes the stable predicative, relational, or evaluative contribution of the radif to successive rhyme words; it does not imply that every radif is a function word or that lexical meaning disappears. The model helps distinguish what changes from one bayt to another from what remains grammatically constant.

This approach also clarifies the boundary between rhyme, radif, and repeated morphology. A sequence such as *qolmisham* can operate as a lexical-grammatical radif because it independently predicates the speaker's continuing resultant state. By contrast, identical case or possessive endings attached to different stems may create morphological parallelism without

necessarily constituting a separate radif. The distinction is important in the analysis of Chaghatay and nineteenth-century Uzbek verse, where orthographic practice, historical phonology, and inflection all affect the visible end of the line.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary source is Nodim's *Tanlangan she'rlar*, prepared by A. Tursunov and A. Xalilbekov and published in Tashkent in 1964 [8]. The collection contains ghazals, mukhammas, takhmises, poetic letters, and works connected with travel. The article uses ghazals as its principal material and refers to a takhmis where the same mechanism becomes particularly clear. Printed page numbers are supplied for every extended quotation. The edition retains historical lexical and grammatical forms in a normalized Cyrillic transcription; examples in this article are transliterated into the current Uzbek Latin alphabet without modernizing their morphology.

The corpus was examined manually by bayt. Each recurrent line-final sequence was divided into 1) the changing rhyme word, 2) the unchanged radif, when present, and 3) recurrent inflectional material whose status required separate evaluation. The ravy and the preceding sound material were then identified with reference to classical rhyme terminology [6; 7]. This stage prevented two frequent errors: treating the whole graphic ending as rhyme and treating any repeated suffix as radif.

The next stage combined four types of description. Phonological analysis established the consonant or vowel supporting the rhyme and noted recurrent material before it. Morphological analysis identified the part of speech and inflectional form of each rhyme word. Syntactic analysis determined whether the rhyme–radif complex served as predicate, nominal constituent, spatial relation, or another sentence element. Semantic analysis traced the relations among the rhyme words and asked whether their sequence formed enumeration, gradation, contrast, localization, or a movement from sensory to emotional meaning.

The study follows contextual interpretation rather than a frequency-based corpus design. The surviving printed corpus is too small, and its editorial history too complex, for raw counts to justify broad statistical claims. Moreover, a rare rhyme may carry greater compositional weight than a frequent one. The analysis therefore gives priority to reproducible textual evidence: a form is discussed only where its reading and location can be established. Apparent anomalies caused by scanning or optical character recognition were checked against the page image and were not attributed to the poet.

Translation posed a separate methodological problem. English glosses are provided to make the argument accessible, but rhyme, vowel length, grammatical person, and historical forms cannot always be reproduced simultaneously. The translations are thus semantic guides, not substitutes for the Uzbek text. Formal claims refer to the transliterated original. Where an Uzbek word carries several contextual associations, the discussion identifies the relevant meaning instead of forcing a single-word English equivalent.

The analysis is qualitative, but its categories are applied consistently. A rhyme set is considered semantically progressive when the order of its items changes the lyrical situation, rather than merely supplying interchangeable end words. A radif is considered grammatically active when it assigns the same relation or predication to several different rhyme words. Contextual renewal is recorded when an unchanged radif acquires a different local sense through its new collocation, syntactic subject, or image.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The rhyme set as a semantic series

One of Nodim's clearest rhyme sets occurs in the ghazal with the radif *birinchi* ("the first"). Its opening bayt reads:

*Mahbublar ichinda ul mahliqo birinchi,
Dilbarlar orasida ul dilrabo birinchi.*

"Among the beloved ones, that moon-faced beauty is the first;
among the charmers, that heart-ravisher is the first" [8: 45]

The subsequent rhyme words include *xushnavo*, *ado*, and *muddao*. They share the terminal long vowel conventionally treated within the rhyme structure, but their meanings do not form a list of synonyms. *Mahliqo* names appearance through a conventional comparison with the moon; *dilrabo* describes the effect of the beloved on the lover; *xushnavo* refers to pleasant voice; *ado* may denote manner or expression; *muddao* shifts toward the desired object or purpose. The radif *birinchi* applies the same superlative ranking to each domain. The poem consequently constructs the beloved's priority by moving across visual, affective, auditory, behavioral, and intentional fields.

This movement matters because the semantic distance among the rhyme words is controlled by their common terminal position. Jakobson's principle of equivalence explains why the reader compares them [1], but the comparison in this ghazal is not abstract. Each new bayt supplies a fresh criterion under which the beloved is declared "first." The unchanged radif stabilizes the judgment; the rhyme words change the evidence. A description that labels the set merely as a vowel rhyme would miss this organization.

The internal order also prevents repetition from becoming static. The second cited bayt develops the portrait:

*Ruxsorasi qizil gul, sochi misoli sunbul,
Ovozi misli bulbul, shirin ado birinchi.*

"Her cheek is a red rose, her hair resembles hyacinth, her voice is like a nightingale; in sweet expression she is the first." [8: 45]

The line accumulates conventional similes, yet its final phrase does more than close the meter. *Ado* gathers the separate features into an embodied manner. The radif then converts description into rank. Sound correspondence, lexical choice, and predication converge at the end of the line.

A related but semantically different arrangement appears in the ghazal whose rhyme words include *sanubar*, *anbar*, *gavhar*, *axgar*, and *dilbar*, followed by *sadqasi* ("a sacrifice for"):

*Qomatingni sarv, shamshodu sanubar sadqasi,
Kokilingga mushk ila udi muanbar sadqasi.*

“Cypress, box tree, and pine are a sacrifice for your stature; musk and fragrant aloe are a sacrifice for your tresses.” [8: 43]

Here the rhyming words name plants, fragrance, mineral value, fire, and the beloved. Their relation is established less by shared denotation than by the grammar of submission expressed in *sadqasi*. Natural and precious objects are introduced only to be placed below the beloved. The radif creates a repeated evaluative construction: X is offered for Y. The lexical variables change, but the direction of comparison remains constant. In the *birinchi* ghazal, the beloved heads a scale; in the *sadqasi* ghazal, external objects are subordinated to parts or qualities of the beloved. Identical recurrence therefore supports two distinct semantic architectures.

This evidence suggests that semantic unity in a rhyme set need not mean lexical proximity. Nodim often selects words from different fields because the common grammatical frame can relate them. The tension between phonological sameness and lexical distance gives each end word a double identity: it belongs to the sound series and also introduces information that the previous member did not contain. Lotman’s description of recurrent elements as generators of structural relation is borne out by these examples [2].

Radif as a grammatical operator

The operator model becomes most visible when the radif is predicative. In a ghazal built around *qolmisham* (“I have remained”), the rhyme set includes *giryon*, *hayron*, *pinhon*, *yakson*, *armon*, *paykon*, *mehmon*, and *Namangon*. The opening states:

*Yor etib azmi safar, man zori giryon qolmisham,
Aqlu hushumdin judoyu notavon qolmisham.*

“The beloved resolved to travel, and I have remained weeping and wretched; separated from reason and consciousness, I have remained powerless.” [8: 49]

The radif contains lexical aspect and first-person marking. *Qol-* denotes continuation or a resultant state, *-mish* presents that state

as established, and *-am* identifies the speaker. Every preceding rhyme word is therefore incorporated into the same first-person predication. *Giryon qolmisham* is not simply “weeping”; it is the speaker’s recognition that departure has left him in that condition. The grammatical form carries the temporal residue of the event.

The rhyme words order the consequences of separation. *Giryon* begins with visible grief, *hayron* marks mental disorientation, *pinhon* introduces concealment, *yakson* suggests destruction or leveling, and *armon* names unfulfilled desire. The later proper noun *Namangon* changes the scale of reference. Its sound permits it to enter the same series, while its denotation locates the conventional lover in a specific cultural geography. The move from emotional adjectives and nouns to a place name is not a defect in semantic consistency. It is the point at which the lyrical state acquires local coordinates.

The proper noun also illustrates why a rhyme dictionary cannot by itself explain poetic use. In isolation, *Namangon* is unrelated to *giryon* or *armon*. In the ghazal, *qolmisham* assigns the place name a relation to the first-person subject, and the preceding emotional sequence prepares it as the site of abandonment. Phonology admits the word into the paradigm; grammar and sequence make that admission meaningful. The localizing effect supports Xalilbekov’s placement of Nodim within the Namangan literary environment, but it is established here by the poem’s language rather than by biography alone [9].

Another predicative radif, *o’ldi* (“became”), combines with *lolazor*, *oshkor*, *tor-u mor*, *barg-u bor*, and *beqaror* [8, p. 42]. The verb marks a change of state. Consequently, the rhyme words do not describe a timeless tableau. Spring landscape, disclosure, disorder, foliage, and inner restlessness are presented as results. The sequence begins in the visible world and ends with the subject’s instability. Because *o’ldi* is repeated, the outer transformation and the inward response are grammatically parallel. The poem’s contrast emerges through the lexical subjects attached to the same resultative predicate.

The complex *ustindadur* (“is upon/above”) performs another kind of predication. It follows words such as *jon*, *notavon*,

guliston, *ravon*, and *jahon* [8: 51]. The locative relation can remain spatial in one bayt and become evaluative or figurative in another. Its grammatical identity is stable, while the conceptual relation changes with the noun before it and the clause that precedes it. This is contextual renewal: repeated form does not entail repeated meaning in full. The reader hears the same closure but reconstructs its relation each time.

The distinction can be summarized as follows.

Table 1. *Semantic and grammatical functions of selected rhyme–radif models*

Rhyme words	Radif	Grammatical contribution	Semantic movement
<i>mahliqo, dilrabo, xushnavo, ado, muddao</i>	<i>birinchi</i>	ranking predicate	successive grounds for the beloved's priority
<i>sanubar, anbar, gavhar, axgar, dilbar</i>	<i>sadqasi</i>	evaluative relation	natural and precious objects subordinated to the beloved
<i>lolazor, oshkor, tor-u mor; barg-u bor, beqaror</i>	<i>o'ldi</i>	resultative predicate	external change develops into inner unrest
<i>giryon, hayron, pinhon, yakson, armon, Namangon</i>	<i>qolmisham</i>	first-person resultant state	grief is intensified and finally localized
<i>jon, notavon, guliston, ravon, jahon</i>	<i>ustindadur</i>	locative or figurative predicate	spatial relation is contextually reinterpreted

The table does not reduce the poems to formulas. It separates the recurrent contribution from the contextual variable so that their interaction can be observed. The same lexical item might behave differently in another syntactic frame, and the same radif may acquire a local shade of meaning from another collocation. The model is therefore descriptive, not generative: it accounts for the printed examples without claiming that the poet composed by an explicit rule.

Sensory meaning and figurative extension

Nodim's takhmis on a ghazal by Alisher Navoiy offers a concentrated example of semantic extension. The stanza ends its

five lines with *xirmon*, *afg'on*, *Kan'on*, *rayhon*, and *hijron*, followed by the radif *isi* ("the scent of"):

*Toki savdodin dimog'im kuydurur xirmon isi,
Charx domonin tutar bu nolayi afg'on isi,
G'unchadek qon etdi dil bir Yusufi Kan'on isi,
Gar bahor el topsa bo'stondin gulu rayhon isi,
Kelur ul rayhon ila guldin manga hijron isi.*

"The smell of the harvest burns my mind with passion; the scent of this lament seizes the skirt of the heavens; the trace of a Joseph of Canaan has made the heart blood-red like a bud; although in spring people find the scent of flowers and basil in the garden, to me those flowers and basil bring the scent of separation." [8: 66]

The English word "scent" cannot preserve every turn of *isi*. In the first and fourth lines the construction remains close to physical smell. In *afg'on isi*, an audible lament is represented as something perceptible by smell, producing a synesthetic transfer. *Kan'on isi* activates the story of Joseph, whose shirt and scent signify recognition and reunion in the literary tradition. The last line reverses the conventional promise of spring: basil and flower no longer announce presence but carry separation.

The radif's lexical form never changes. What changes is the semantic type of the noun in the possessive construction. *Xirmon* and *rayhon* can be sources of physical odor; *afg'on* cannot, except through figurative transfer; *Kan'on* supplies an allusive source; *hijron* names an emotional condition. The stanza thus travels from sensation through synesthesia and cultural memory to inward meaning. This progression is made legible by the grammar of possession: every rhyme word is construed as the source or defining attribute of *isi*.

The final line is particularly important for authorship within the takhmis. The inherited Navoiy line establishes the spring image, while Nodim's added lines prepare a reading in which fragrance is already unstable. By the time *hijron isi* arrives, the reader has encountered fire, lament, and the Joseph allusion. The closing reinterpretation is therefore earned by the sequence. It demonstrates that adding lines to another poet's ghazal is not a matter of finding matching sounds alone; the new lines must construct a semantic path toward the quoted line.

Morphological parallelism and the boundary of radif

Historical Uzbek verse frequently places the same suffix sequence at the end of several lines. Such repetition requires careful classification. In forms such as *jonig'acha*, *devonig'acha*, *nihonig'acha*, *domonig'acha*, *Kayvonig'acha*, and *paykonig'acha*, the segment *-ig'acha* contains possessive and limitative morphology. The common ending reinforces the sound correspondence and gives the series a shared grammatical direction, approximately “up to/as far as.” Yet the suffixes remain bound to their lexical stems. Calling the entire recurrent segment an independent radif would conceal the morphological structure.

The same caution applies to series containing possessive and ablative forms, such as *diyorimdan* and *yorimdan*, or predicative forms such as *parishondur*, *giryondur*, and *zindondur*. Repeated inflection can contribute to rhyme and syntactic parallelism at once. Its function should be stated morphologically before it is interpreted poetically. Classical rhyme terminology offers a finer account of the stable consonantal core and the elements surrounding the ravyi [6; 7]; modern grammatical description explains the suffixal sequence. The two systems answer different questions and should not be collapsed.

This distinction improves semantic analysis. In *diyorimdan* and *yorimdan*, first-person possession and the ablative case encode the speaker's relation to homeland and beloved. Their parallel form invites comparison between two sources of separation. In *parishondur*, *giryondur*, and *zindondur*, the copular element turns distinct lexical bases into comparable states or judgments. The grammar is not incidental to the rhyme: it specifies who experiences the state, from what source movement occurs, or how a quality is predicated.

It is nevertheless useful to recognize a continuum. At one end stands a clearly independent lexical radif such as *birinchi*. At the other end stands inflection that cannot be separated from the word. Between them are grammaticalized or enclitic elements whose orthographic and prosodic independence varies historically. The printed edition does not always resolve that continuum, and an article based on one normalized text should avoid claims about manuscript spelling that the source cannot

support. The safer procedure is to state the observable morphology, identify the recurrent sound structure, and reserve the label *radif* for cases where the repeated unit has adequate formal and semantic independence.

Rhyme, syntax, and compositional progression

The rhyme–radif complex occupies a syntactically strong position because it often completes the clause as well as the line. Leech notes that poetic patterning can foreground a linguistic choice by placing it against an established expectation [3]. In Nodim’s ghazals, the expectation is both phonological and grammatical. Once *qolmisham* has appeared in the opening bayt, later lines are heard as incomplete until a new condition of the speaker is supplied and the predicate returns. The reader anticipates the structure while remaining uncertain about the lexical item that will fill it.

This combination of expectation and variation helps unify the ghazal without requiring a narrative plot. The bayts may change image or address, but the terminal construction preserves a common speech situation. The first-person marking of *qolmisham* repeatedly brings the utterance back to the abandoned speaker. The evaluative noun *sadqasi* brings each image back to praise. The ordinal *birinchi* restores the same act of ranking. Grammatical recurrence therefore supplies a compositional axis across relatively autonomous couplets.

The long radif *sog‘indim man, sog‘indingmu?* (“I missed you; did you miss me?”) makes this dialogic function explicit:

Sani, ey yori jononim, sog‘indim man, sog‘indingmu?

Ko‘zum nuri, dilu jonim, sog‘indim man, sog‘indingmu?

“You, my beloved of beloveds, I missed you; did you miss me?
Light of my eyes, my heart and soul, I missed you; did you miss me?” [8: 64]

The refrain contains two coordinated speech acts: assertion and question. Its person contrast – first person in *sog‘indim*, second person in *sog‘indingmu* – creates an absent addressee within every return. The internal rhymes *jononim–jonim* and later pairs

such as *hamdam–mahram* intensify the sonic organization before the refrain arrives. Yet the crucial effect lies in syntax. Each line begins with a new form of address or recollection and ends with the same unanswered question.

Repetition here represents persistence, not informational emptiness. The assertion remains constant because the speaker's longing remains constant; the question remains open because the beloved's response is unavailable. Each new antecedent changes what has been remembered, but the refrain re-establishes the asymmetry between speech and silence. A purely phonological account could identify repeated syllables, but it would not explain why the interrogative suffix is essential to the poem's emotional structure.

The examples also permit a functional distinction among parts of speech. Nominal rhyme words commonly enumerate images or conceptual objects: *sanubar*, *anbar*, *gavhar*. Adjectival and participial forms present states: *giryon*, *hayron*, *pinhon*. A verbal radif supplies tense, aspect, person, or modality to that lexical material: *qolmisham*, *o'ldi*. Relational nouns or postpositional constructions can organize location and value: *sadqasi*, *ustindadur*. These tendencies are not rigid rules, but they explain why the grammatical profile of a rhyme set affects the movement of the poem.

The strongest evidence for semantic design is sequential rather than lexical. The set ending in *Namangon* begins with the abandoned speaker's states and arrives at the place in which he remains. The set ending in *hijron isi* begins with physical odor and culminates in an emotion construed as odor. The *birinchi* series moves across separate grounds for praise while preserving one ranking. In each case, rearranging the rhyme words would alter the argument or emotional curve even if meter and rhyme remained correct. Order is therefore part of the evidence.

This conclusion also places necessary limits on interpretation. Not every rhyme sequence will display a continuous gradation, and the pressure of meter and available rhyme vocabulary can influence lexical choice. A semantic reading becomes persuasive only when it can show a relation supported by syntax, collocation, image, or the position of a bayt.

Formal recurrence creates the opportunity for comparison; the local text determines whether that opportunity becomes progression, contrast, enumeration, or simple continuity.

CONCLUSIONS

The examined material shows that Nodim Namangani's rhyme words participate in structured semantic series. Their unity does not depend on synonymy. Words from different lexical fields become comparable because they occupy the same terminal position and enter the same grammatical construction. This explains how *giryon*, *armon*, and *Namangon* can form a coherent sequence: the common sound pattern admits them to one series, while *qolmisham* relates each item to the continuing state of the first-person speaker.

Radif has a demonstrable grammatical role in these poems. *Birinchi* ranks successive qualities; *sadqasi* expresses subordination and value; *o'ldi* presents change as a result; *qolmisham* marks a continuing first-person condition; and *ustindadure* establishes a relation that can be spatial or figurative. Describing the rhyme word as a lexical variable and the radif as a repeated operator makes these differences explicit without reducing the poem to a mechanical formula.

The analysis further distinguishes independent radif from repeated morphology. Possessive, case, limitative, and copular endings can strengthen rhyme and syntactic parallelism, but their bound status must be recognized. Classical rhyme terminology and modern grammatical description are complementary at this point: the former identifies the sound structure around the raviy, while the latter explains the inflectional relations carried by the ending.

Nodim's line-final units also organize composition. The sensory meaning of *is* expands through synesthesia and allusion before reaching *hijron isi*; the refrain *sog'indim man*, *sog'indingmu?* repeatedly joins a declaration to an unanswered question; and the place name *Namangon* converts a conventional state of separation into a locally situated utterance. These findings support a reading of rhyme as part of meaning and

sentence structure. Further work should compare the patterns established here with manuscript witnesses and with the ghazals of Nodim's contemporaries, particularly Muqimiy and Furqat, so that individual preference can be distinguished from the conventions of the period.

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