

Crafting an Imaginative Style: Sirajuddin Ali Khan-i Arzu and the Development of Linguistics and Philology in the Eighteenth Century¹

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Introduction

Sirajuddin Ali Khan Arzu (1689-1756 CE) was a prominent polymath of the eighteenth-century Mughal India, a brilliant scholar, linguist, lexicographer, grammarian, and commentator who was fluent in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and Sanskrit. He was a genius in the field of poetry, and he taught a whole new technique to those who believed the beauty of poetry to be the expression of original ideas in attractive language. He had a near-uniform command over several poetic genres like the *ghazal*, *qasida*, and *masnavi*. His dominance in lexicography and linguistics is undeniable. Khan-i Arzu's critical ability, which is uncommon among Persian intellectuals, may be found in his criticism of Persian classics, as well as his treatises *Tambih-ul Ghafilin* (Censuring the Ignorant) and *Dad-i Sukhan* ((A Gift of Poetry 1741-1750 CE). Arzu's *Navadir-ul Alfaz* (Rare Words/Urdu dictionary), *Siraj-ul Lughat* (Lamp of Words, 1734-5

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CE) and *Chiragh-i Hidayat* (Lamp of Guidance) opened a whole new world for the critical study of lexicography.

This paper attempts to explore the many oeuvres of Khan-i Arzu, his contributions in the development of literary culture. It examines his linguistic expertise and comparative philology and the socio-cultural aspects of the era in which he was practicing his craft. This article would show how Arzu's universal view of language and the linguistic concord (*tawāfuq*) between Persian and Indian vernacular languages like Urdu, allowed his work to connect Persianate and Indian literary practices. He created a literary critical framework for poetry in Urdu on the lines of Persian and Arabic, which were not previously available for vernacular poetry. Most importantly, I argue that intellectuals like Khan-i Arzu, who efficaciously defended the cause of Urdu by strengthening a strong public opinion in its favour, led to the replacement of Persian with Urdu in the eighteenth century. It was under his influence and mentorship that the new generations of poets in Delhi started exploring the possibility of writing in *rekhta* and this led to the transformation of the Perso-Urdu literary landscape of India.

Early Life and Family

Christened Sheikh Sirajuddin Ali, the title *ustad* Khan was conferred upon him; he adopted the poetic name Arzu; he was, however, famous by the name of Khan-i Arzu (Anwar 64). We have a number of sources through which information about the life of Arzu could easily be explored and more light could be shed on his literary erudition. From this viewpoint, the foremost source is Arzu's own *tazkirah* (biographical memoir), *Majma-un nafā'is* (Gathering of Souls, 1750-51 CE). Apart from this, his contemporaries and disciples have also provided important information about him, the list includes Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami's, *Sarv-i Azad/Ma'asir al-Kiram* (The Untended Cypress) and *Khazana-i Amirah* (The Imperial Treasury); Bindraban Das Khushgo, a close friend and disciple of Arzu, deserves special mention, as he provides vital information about Arzu's life.

Arzu's account about himself in the *tazkirah Majma-un nafā'is* (Gathering of Souls) does not mention either the date or place of his birth. Bindraban Das Khushgo, mentions his date of birth in *Safīna-i Khushgo* (Khushgo's Notebook) and provides Arzu's father's chronogram for the occasion of his son's birth, *nuzul-i ghaib* (descent from the divine), computing the numerical equivalent of the words leads to 1099/1687-8 CE (Khushgo 312). Khushgo mentions that Shaikh Husam-ud Din (Arzu's father) came along with the army of Aurangzeb to Gwalior (Khushgo 313). Azad Bilgrami in *Khazana-i Amirah* describes Arzu as Akbarabadi implying he was born in Akbarabad, the medieval name of modern-day Agra city in Uttar Pradesh (Bilgrami 116).

Arzu had an enviable pedigree – a mix of Sufic and poetic bloodline. His father Shaikh Husam-ud Din served in the army of Aurangzeb and was among the *mansabdars* of the state (Anwar 64). He had a poetic bent of mind and composed poetry under the *nom de plume* (*takhallus*) of Husami and Husam. Shaikh Husam-ud Din traced his lineage from Shaikh Kamal-ud Din, the son of sister of Sufi saint Shaikh Nasir-ud Din Maḥmud, famous as *Chiragh-i Dihli* (d. 757AH/1356 CE). On his mother's side, he descended from the famous Sufi saint Muhammad Ghaus Shattari of Gwalior (d. 917 AH/1653 CE), with further clan linkages to Khwaja Farid-ud Din Attar of Nishapur (d. 627 AH/1221 CE). His mother's family was based in Gwalior and hence Arzu spent a good part of his early childhood there. Arzu had his initial training in poetry and education under his father at Agra. He was initiated into the field of education quite early, so much so that by the age of six he had finished reading different books in Persian besides *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) and *Bostan* (Garden) of Sa'di; he acquired academic finesse in Arabic by the age of fourteen and was thus considered exceptional in his age group. Khushgo reports that Arzu at times memorized about hundred to two hundred Persian verses in a single night (Arzu *Majma'un-nafā'is* 9; Khatoon 18; Khushgo 313; Dudney, 2013, 33-34).

With the death of his father in 1703 CE, Arzu faced financial as well as other difficulties at his home front and had to join the army of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Deccan under the commandship of Prince Muhammad Azam Shah. Arzu had served in the army for about nine months, when Emperor Aurangzeb died on 3rd March 1707 CE. The struggle of succession started with Prince Azam declaring himself the king on 14th March 1707 and marched towards Agra for a confrontation with Prince Muhammad Mu'azzam, who was also contesting for the throne of Hindustan (Irvine 6-12). In the ensuing battle at Jajmau Azam Shah was killed and Prince Mu'azzam became the Emperor. Arzu stayed in Gwalior for some time and then moved to Akbarabad (Agra). *Safina-i Khushgo* reports that Arzu stayed here for almost five years during the rule of Jahandar Shah (1712-13 CE) and got the opportunity to hone his skills in the art of poetry in the company of poets like Shah Gulshan, Mirza Hatim Beg 'Hatim', Azmatullāh Kāmil, Muhammad Muqim Azad, Mian Ali Azim among others (Khushgo 313-314; Arzu *Majma'un-nafā'is* 3; Khatoon 20; Dudney, 2013, 35). According to Khushgo, with the enthronement of Farrukh Siyar, Arzu was attached to the court at Delhi, though soon he was sent to Gwalior on some assignment and spent six years in his home town (*watan*) and got ample time to compose poetry (Khushgo 314).

During this era of political flux, Arzu's services were terminated and he remained without employment. The unfolding of political events of the

time had a close bearing on Arzu's career. It would not be out of context to recall the developments at Delhi and Agra, starting with the imprisonment and murder of Farrukh Siyar and ending with the neutralization of the Saiyyids of Barha in 1133 AH/ 1720 CE, who had completely dominated the political arena as the king-makers. These events had a close bearing on Khan-i Arzu and made him resolute, enduring, modest and acquiescent. The support of his teachers and contemporaries such as Mirza Muhammad Afzal Sarkhus, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil, Mir Abdul Jalil Bilgrami, and Nasir Ali Sirhindi refined his poetic acumen and made his compositions sombre, serene and suave to the extent that by the age of twenty-five, Arzu had become popular figure (Khatoon 24).

Arzu's stay at Delhi and Awadh

Arzu came to Delhi in 1720 CE and through his connections with Anand Ram Mukhlis (d. 1751 CE), he was able to secure a *mansab* of 80 *sawar* and a *jāgir* along with the title of Isti'dad Khan, which brought economic stability and made his life comfortable (Khushgo 319)ⁱ. Mukhlis was instrumental in introducing Khan-i Arzu to his prospective patron- the *Khan-i Saman* of Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah, Mu'tam ud-Daula Ishaq Khan 'Ishaq' Shustari and even facilitated his entry in the intellectual circles in which he participated for more than three decades (Storey 834-5, Dudney, 2013, 36). Arzu continued to receive the patronage of Shustari and subsequent to his death in 1739-40 CE from Shustri's son Najam-ud Daula, and later his younger brother Salar Jung. In the beginning of 1754 CE when Salar Jung went to Awadh, Arzu also accompanied him (Bilgrami 118). He was an eye witness to the incursion of Nadir Shah and the carnage of the residents of Shahjahanabad by his troops in March 1739 CE, heralding the end of Mughal power. Arzu came to Awadh along with Salar Jung. He was introduced to Nawab Safdar Jung the governor of the *suba* of Awadh and Allahabad by Salar Jung, who was happy to endow him a stipend of rupees three hundred per month. Khan-i Arzu was destined to enjoy the patronage of Nawab Shuja'ud-Daula for only two years. He died on 26th January 1756 CE.

Arzu's versatility: An outline of his works

Khan-i Arzu was a prolific writer who covered a wide range of subjects, including poetry, grammar, lexicon, phonetics, and linguistics, to name a few. The list of his critical works is given by Arzu in both *Atiyah-i Kubra* (The Great Gift, 1735 CE), which provides a fuller account of his poetic productivity and takes into account a list of sixteen of his works, though it does not include *Siraj-ul Lughat* work on lexicography (Storey 835-38); and *Majma-un nafā'is* (1752 CE) which enlists thirteen of Arzu's critical works, with the exclusion of eight that were part of *Atiyah-i Kubra* (Anwar 64-71).

Arzu started composing poetry at an early age of fifteen for the first time during his sojourn in Mathura. The poetic style of Khan-i Arzu was a delightfully harmonious blend of his individualism and the concepts and expressions borrowed from the poets he imitated. He considered the expression of original thoughts in elegant language to be the beauty of poetry. Arzu's surviving literary works are in fragments since there is no extant *Kulliyat* (complete works) in which all of them have been collected. Sirajuddin Ali Khan-i Arzu's works can be categorized into commentaries, dictionaries, and general critical works (including his *tazkira*).

Lexicography

In the field of lexicography Khan-i Arzu has an edge over earlier lexicographers for novel research, precise elucidation, analysis and illustration of words and expression (Anwar 70). Arzu's *Sirāj-ul Lughat* (1734-5 CE) is major work based on original research of exceptional significance. It has approximately forty thousand words in it and is an indispensable reference work for people interested in the study of ancient poetry of Iran as it contains the words and quotations of older poets that are not found in preceding dictionaries. The importance of *Sirāj-ul Lughat* lies in its commentary on *Burhān-i Qatī* (Decisive Proof, 1654 CE) and *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (Dictionary of the Wise/ Rashidi, 1652 CE) and it was mainly concerned with correcting the earlier dictionaries. It also reveals close affinity of Persian with Sanskrit (Blochmann 26)ⁱⁱ.

Chirāgh-i Hidāyat (Lamp of Guidance) is smaller work containing approximately five thousand words and is repeatedly referred to as the second volume of *Sirāj-ul Lughat*. It has words and terminologies with explications that were in use in the poetry of modern poets (*shu'ra-i mutakharīn*) succeeding Jāmi and did not find mention in the older dictionaries such as *Farhang-i Jahangiri* (Dictionary of Jahangir) and *Burhān-i Qatī*. Arzu has written in the introduction of this work that here two types of lexicons are included- (i) those words whose meaning is difficult and often the Indians are not aware of it, and (ii) those lexicons whose meaning is known, however there are problems about its usage among some, as per the common language of native speakers. So, this is not for the people of Iran or Turān but the Persian speakers of India (Arzu *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* 2). This awareness of fresh usages and how they fit into a longer tradition is the distinguishing feature of Khan-i Arzu's philosophy.

Navādir-ul Alfāz (Wonders of Words, c.1752 CE), is Urdu Persian dictionary of Indian words. Arzu bases his claim of concord between Sanskrit and Persian on linguistic observations. He comments in *Navādir* on the phonetic, morphological and the semantics of various cognate words. The words that are exceedingly close in meaning and sound are

considered by him as testimony of linguistic proximity between the two languages (Azim 261-69). On the whole, it can be said that his dictionaries demonstrate Arzu's conscious plan of codifying Persian literary culture, *Sirāj-ul Lughat*, reassesses the oldest component of the new Persian poetic tradition with fresh research methodology such as like the use of *tawāfuq-ul lisānin* (linguistic harmony) among Indian words and Persian, and in a way, makes it unique. He formalized modern developments in the tradition and provides status to them by creating the new old in his *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*. In *Navādir-ul Alfāz* he focuses on Indian languages and its concord with Persian (Azim).

Arzu is recognised as the best critic of eminence, and his commentary on Persian texts is insightful and filled with archetypal newness (Blochmann 25). These may be broadly divided into commentaries on the works of early and the contemporary poets. In the first category are commentaries called *Khiyaban* (avenue), observations on one of the most influential works of Persian prose *Gulistan* (The Rose Garden/ 1258 CE) of Persian poet Sa'di.

The works related to contemporary poets are linked with the literary deliberations in Delhi with the advent of an Iranian poet and scholar Shaikh Muhammad Ali Ḥazin (1692-1766 CE). It includes *Sharah-i Qasa'id-i 'Urfi* (Commentary on panegyric poetry of Urfi), Arzu in a detailed remark refutes all the objections raised by Mulla Munir. *Sirāj-i Munir* (A Lamp for Munir), deals with Mulla Munir's critical work *Kārnāmā-i Munir* (Commentary of Munir), where Munir has critiqued poets such as 'Urfi, Talib, Zulali, and Zuhuri, who are his elder contemporaries and some of the most respected poets of the day. According to Arzu, Munir was attempting to create rift between the old and new styles. Munir criticizes these poets harshly though he maintains in the preface that he is not an adversary of any of these poets. In a way, there is no intended personal attack involved rather a reasoned critique of their work. He analyses some fifteen verses by each poet. Arzu in *Sirāj-i Munir*, examines each of those verses and quotes part of Munir's commentary, and puts in his own comments on the commentary.

Dād-i Suḵhan (A Gift of Poetry) is a short treatise on different aspects of style, versification Muhammad Jān Qudsi (d. 1646-7 CE), who was a poet laureate during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, wrote an ode (*qasida*). Mulla Shaida (d. 1632 CE), one of the contemporaries of Qudsi commented on some of the verses to the dislike of the composer. Munir made a counter comment over this commentary; at last, Arzu undertook the analysis of the *qasida* of Qudsi and contributed in the debate in his *Dād-i Suḵhan* with the citation of his predecessors. Furthermore, *Dād-i Suḵhan* has three interesting prefaces on critical theory that Arzu also claims to be unique in the tradition. *Tanbīh-ul*

Ghāfilīn (An Admonition to the Heedless), has objections of Arzu to some three hundred verses of Hazin (Anwar 27). It was the tussle between Arzu and Hazin that captured the attention of Indo-Persian scholars as it suited the narrative of Indians versus Iranians.

General critical works

Arzu's role in poetics and stylistics is archetypal as he was himself a poet and hence in a better position to deal with this aspect of grammar than anyone else. *Atiyah-i Kubra*, is a work on the subject of discourse, an attribute of rhetoric, Arzu claims it to be the first treatise in Persian to deal exclusively on the subject (Bilgrami 228; Keshavmurthy 27-54). Arzu's *tazkirah*, *Majma'un-Nafis*, occupies a unique position among Persian anthologists and biographers. Apart from being *tazkirah* of old and contemporary poets, it contains copious selections of their verses (some forty thousand couplets), critical observations, discussion on contentious issues, and Arzu's personal judgments on different aspects of Persian literary practices. Arzu's *Musmir* (Fruitful), is one of the most outstanding works dealing with linguistic notions and the tenets of language, or, 'the science of the elements of language' (*'ilm-i usūl-i lughat*) (Arzu *Musmir* 1; Khatoon 129-30)ⁱⁱⁱ. Though based on an Arabic model, it claims to be the first text to apply those techniques to Persian and Indian languages (Arzu *Musmir* 221). Arzu wrote *Musmir* during the last days of his life, probably during his sojourn in Awadh before his death in 1756 CE (Keshavmurthy). It also symbolizes the high point of Arzu's maturity as a scholar. We get reference of Arzu's every other existing text in *Musmir* which is a result of his thinking about the nature of language and literature. He was the first to successfully delve on the issue of language, which according to him was of paramount importance. He refers to it as an account of the science of the elements of language (*'ilm-i usūl-i lughat*) or philology (Dudney 2013, 81-90). *Musmir* provides useful insights into Mughal-period conceptualization of language. According to Arzu all the Iranians converse in Persian only but with regional variations in terms of pronunciations and hence one would notice regional diversity in the Persian of Shiraz, Qazvin, Gilan and Khurasan. Khan-i Arzu makes learned observations on lexicography, phonetics and phonological transformations. He is of the view that native speakers of a language (*ahl-i zabān*) also commit mistakes in the usage of the words as the others. He quotes the verses of Sa'di and also Hazin, the Iranian poet who came to India, to demonstrate the inevitable mistakes in it (Arzu *Musmir* 34-35; Dudney 2013, 106-112).

Arzu goes on to discuss the old controversy, whether the Indian scholars and poets have a right to make amendment in Persian language practice, vocabulary and phrases. Arzu is of the view that when the Persian scholars (Iranians) have permitted changes in the Arabic idioms

(*tasarruf*) such as the word *mi-syair* (to walk), *ta-myizad* (distinguish) as used by Mulla Urfi and others and the Persian idioms has been changed following the rules of Arabic language, then why not the Indian scholars doing the same be permissible? (Arzu *Musmir* 37-39). Khan-i Arzu ardently advocated for Indian Persian (*Sabk-i Hindi*) in *Musmir*. The Persian language in its long history of existence in the Indian sub-continent must have acquired some specific characteristics peculiar to original Persian of Iran. Nonetheless, Arzu does not see any harm in it; there were variations in the language even within different locales in Iran.

Arzu invokes Al-Suyuti's concept of correspondence of languages (*tawāfuq ul-lesānin*), an idea of instantaneous existence of similar words in two or more languages, i.e., Persian and Arabic or in Persian or Hindi or in all the three languages. In some cases, there are examples of borrowings naturally undergoing phonetic changes as in the case of *dol* (دول) in Hindi to *dalv* and *dol* (دول، دول) in Arabic and Persian means bucket (Arzu *Musmir* 209-10; Khatoon 227). Khan-i Arzu's view in regard to the variations in the form of similar words is that the difference of dotted or non-dotted letters and specificity of a letter in a language, does not constitute structural difference. He cites few examples to make this point clearer, *dast* (دست) is Arabic, while the dotted one *dasht* (دشت) is Persian; however, the meaning in both the cases is the same i.e., desert. Afterwards, according to Arzu, if the words in question are approximate to each other in terms of pronunciation, then even their varied structure does not constitute a difference. For example- *matra* (متر) is a Pahlawi word meaning rain and *matra* (مطر) is Arabic also meaning rain, similarly *maya* (مایا) in Pahlawi means water and *ma'a* (ماء) in Arabic also means the same (Khatoon 228). Arzu laid the foundation of linguistic and comparative philology, and was the first to point out the harmony (*tawafuq*) of Persian with Hindavi and Sanskrit language in his work *Musmir* (Dudney 2013, 120-122).

Arzu argued that Persian could not be the property of Iranians only and held that Indian poets have every right to modify the language as per need in the Indian milieu. If Persian language over the years can loan idioms from the Arabic, Turkish and Aramaic language and become inherent part of it then how can the Hindi words be proscribed (Arzu, *Musmir* 160). Arzu lays emphasis on this aspect of his argument of the right of the native Indians to make changes (*tasarrufat*) constantly over again in his other works such as *Mahabbat-i 'Uzma*, and *Dad-i Sukhan*.

Khan-i Arzu: Espousing the cause of Urdu

Arzu excelled not only in respect to his contribution to Persian but also championed the cause of Urdu. The famous eighteenth century Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir considered him to be the most learned and eloquent personality of his times (Mir 3). Muhammad Husain Azad in *Āb -i Hayat* (The Water of Life) writes-

Khan-i Arzu can make the same claim on Urdu language, which Aristotle can make on philosophy and logic. As long as all logicians will be called the descendants of Aristotle, all Urdu speakers will be called the descendants of Khan-i Arzu. As his Persian works left him no time for composition of a *divan* in Urdu, it would be enough to say here that it was Khan-i Arzu who educated those promising pupils who came to be called the reformers of Urdu (Pritchett 129).²

There is no *diwan* (collection of poems) of Arzu in Urdu, the corpus of his Urdu verses that are found in various biographical memoirs (*tazkirahs*) are too few in comparison to his Persian verses that would accord him a place in the literary history of the language. However, he commands enviable influence and respect in the intellectual circles for successfully defending the cause of Urdu by strengthening a strong public opinion in its favour that successfully culminated in the replacement of Persian with Urdu. His services to Urdu are manifold. Arzu drew the attention of younger generation poets towards *rekhta* and was guide, mentor and friend of a number of upcoming poets of the day.

Khan-i Arzu viewed languages as permeable and acknowledged that from ancient times Hindi words had been entering into Persian lexicon. Urdu freely borrowed Persian words and grammatical structures, themes, similes and metaphors etc. the intensity of this process got strengthened during the eighteenth century. The main difference between refined traditions of Persian is that it represents centuries old poetic erudition, whereas vernacular *rekhta*/Urdu is based on poetic practice alone. This is almost analogous to other languages of the world as well, take the example of early modern Europe, here the vernacular language existed harmoniously along with the Latin for centuries and developed critical tradition once they got influenced by it (Burke 105-110; Daudpota 114)^{iv}.

Khan-i Arzu fixed the principles of dictation (*imla*) and shed light on the rules of accident and syntax (*qava'id sar'f-o-nah'u*) and lexicon of Urdu language. In the field of philology, Arzu laid the foundation of the explication of words in an abridged (*ikhtisar*) but clear term. In the field of lexicography, the ground for the explication of the meaning of word is made with utmost simplicity. Mir Abdul Wasey Hanswi compiled *Gharaib-ul Lughat*, a glossary during the reign of Aurangzeb for the

² I have used Frances W. Pritchett and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi tr. & ed., *Āb-i Hayāt: Shaping the Canon of Urdu Poetry*, 2001, p. 129.

benefit of the students. It is supposed to be the first regular dictionary of Urdu language. It included meaning of unusual Urdu words and its equivalents in Persian, Arabic and Turkish which are not commonly known to Indian. Hanswi's main motive in *Gharaib* was to provide the meaning and usages of uncommon words and phrases in clear terms for greater public benefit and usages (Jalibi 154-55). Arzu felt that meanings and explications of many of the words in the dictionary were erroneous and inadequate. He wrote *Navadir-ul Alfaz* to address the shortcomings of *Gharaib-ul Lughat* and included in it many words from Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit, which had become part of Urdu language. Arzu in *Navadir-ul Alfaz* (completed in 1751 CE), incorporates all the words of *Gharaib-ul Lughat* of Hansawi and made a number of additions in it. He tried to follow alphabetical order, provide descriptions of the pronunciation of words wherever it is necessary and also explain the semantic shades of each entry with profound clarity. He also draws analogy of words appearing in other languages such as Indian, Persian, Arabic, Turkic etc., which augments the scholastic value of *Navadir*. Arzu carefully explicates the words, their meaning and relationship through his deep knowledge and understanding of the subtle distinctions in the meaning of the same word. In the explication of words, Arzu depends on the socio-cultural, historical and topographical surroundings. For the word and terminologies atypical of India, *Navadir* provides intricate descriptions, in contrast to Hansawi's *Gharaib-ul Lughat*.

Hansawi has included in his *Gharaib*, Urdu words that were current at the time in the manner in which they were pronounced by the general masses, i.e., *zacchah* (*zacha*), *ryhal* (*rahal*), *āftāwa* (*āftābah*), *pajawa* (*pazawah*), *charkhai* (*charkhi*), etc. these words are still spoken in the same way even today. Hansawi has used *chhura* (dagger) in the meaning of *us'tara* (razor), which is not used in modern day in the earlier applied connotation. *Us'tara* is used by barbers and *chhura* by butchers or robbers. Since the time of Amir Khusrau up till the eighteenth centuries *chhura* has been used in the meaning of *us'tara* (razor). Arzu also informs that in the metrical verses of Amir Khusrau also *chhura* has been used in the sense of *us'tara* (razor) and in the *qasbas* of India is spoken in the same way (Jalibi 156). Sayyid Abdullah in his introduction to *Navadir-ul Alfaz* has given a long list of words, which reflects politico-religious and cultural conditions of the era (Abdullah). Those concerned with the history of Urdu language cannot afford to overlook these words as they come with detailed explanation. Listed below are some of the terms with detailed explanation from *Navadir-ul Alfaz*:

- *Anb/Anbh*: A fruit of a well-known tree found in India; in the *risalah* (*Gharaib-ul Lughat*) the given meaning is *nagzak*. However, *Anb* is a peculiar fruit of India, the Persian speakers in

India invented the name *nagzak*, a word not of Persian origin and hence also not found in Iranian speech. (p. 38).

- *Jaman*: in the *risalah (Gharaib-ul Lughat)* the word means a fruit of tree known as '*Synhak*'...however, *Jaman* is specialty of India and hence it is not found in the standard dictionaries such as Qamus and others. Perhaps it will be listed in books on medicine. '*Synhak*' is also not found in Persian dictionaries... (p. 172).
- *Suraj Mukhi*: the *risalah* the word means a flower that keeps turning its face in the direction of the sun (*aftab parast*). However according to *Kashf-ul Lughat* the word *aftab parast*, means any dark blue flower. According to others any flower that turns its face to follow the sun is the *aftab parast* and this seems to be a better elucidation.
- *Sehra*: In the *risala* the word means a crown made of flower from sweet shelling plants, pearls and the likes. It adorns the head of people at the time of their marriage and also on the kings which hangs over their faces such as '*basak*'. But '*sehra*' is not a crown, instead it is something that is put on head and which hangs over the face. The word for the crown is '*mukat*' which the kings and Amirs in India put on their heads. Nonetheless, *sehra* is not the custom of Iran and *basak* which was the custom of old Iran means the crown. (p.297).

Navadir provides indication on the subject of linguistic concord and the import of words from other languages like Persian, Turkish and Arabic that became part of Urdu. From this point of view *Navadir* is not merely a dictionary but is the first book of linguistics of Urdu language (Jalibi 157). Khan-i Arzu observed systematic correspondence between Sanskrit and Persian mainly on phonological but also on morphological and semantic levels and he was the first to make an explicit statement that there is linguistic agreement between these languages (Arzu *Musmir*, 221)^v.

Under the discussion of correspondence of idiom Arzu even describes the origin of the words such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Sanskrit (*Hindi-i Kitābi*). Similarly, in explicating the meaning of words he makes it clear that the synonymous words of daily usage (*rozmarrah*) of Persian in Urdu daily usage, example- *abr shawad* (Persian), its cognate in Urdu is *bādal uthe* (rise of cloud). He also points to the wrong usage of words among the general public such as *ravis* (written as *rvs*) common people pronounce it as *raus*; *kangrah* is pronounced as *kangwura*. Similarly, he gives ample reference of Sanskrit, Gwaliyari, Rajasthani, Kashmiri, Punjabi, *Zabān-i Akbarabad*, *Zabān-i Shahjahanabad* also.

Some of the examples of words where Arzu finds linguistic concord (*tawafuq-i lesanin*) are listed here (Arzu *Navadir-ul Alfaz*, 6- 7, 23, 167, 358; see also Azim):

Sanskrit (<i>Kitabyi-i Hindi</i>)	Persian
<i>Abhr</i>	<i>Abr</i> (cloud)
<i>Aap</i>	<i>Āb</i> (water)
<i>Asv</i>	<i>Asp</i> (horse)
<i>Angust</i>	<i>Angust</i>
<i>Barchhi</i>	<i>Barchakh</i>
<i>Thal</i>	<i>Tal</i>
<i>Chhagal</i>	<i>Chaghal</i>
<i>Dāk</i>	<i>Tāk</i>
<i>Kēs</i>	<i>Gēs</i>
<i>Hīng</i>	<i>Ang</i>
<i>Kachwā/Kachuā</i>	<i>Kasaf</i>

In explaining the meaning of words Arzu slots in many scholarly works, his own practical knowledge and provides fascinating information. Through his concept of linguistic concord (*tawafuq*) the inherent relationship between Persian and Sanskrit is established (as we have seen in Musmir), Arzu discusses the origins of words and trace their meanings historically. He attempts to place *rekhta*/Urdu in the same cultural frame work as Persian. His discussions and observations about languages in *Navadir* is more refined Hansawi's *Gharāib*. As such describing a fruit *ādu* Arzu writes, initially it was not grown here but now it is grown in the gardens of Shahjahanabad. However, *ādu* of Kabul, Kashmir and other foreign countries is softer, sweeter and juicier than that of Shahjahanabad which is sour (*tursh*) in taste. About tobacco he writes, it was imported from foreign country into Dakan and from there came to India and gained currency during the reign of Emperor Akbar.

In *Navadir* Arzu consistently alludes to the principles of orthography and lexicography, he says the cadence of the ignoramus can't be classed as an accomplishment. For any idiom to attain the degree of authoritative (*sanad*), it must be spoken alike among the common readers (*'awām*) and connoisseurs (*khawās*), duffer and scholar (Arzu, *Navadir-ul Alfaz* 24). In such scenario the idiom with same inflection, as it is spoken should be entered in the dictionary. Example- *khat zan* (خط زن) is actually *qat zan* (قَط زن) –a flat piece of wood or bone on which nib of a pen is cut) however, Indian are not able to utter ق (qāf), م (swād), ض (zwād), ط (tōye), ظ (zōye), ع (a'in), غ (g'hain), ف (fā) properly and hence to bring in the distorted form of the words into the dictionary would be futile. The ignorant

pronounce *masjīd* (mosque) as *mahjīd*, it can never be given the status of *sanad*, however when *mahjīd*, is used by all alike then it would become incontrovertible (Arzu *Navadir-ul Alfaz* 229). Arzu makes a distinction between general readers ('*awām*) and connoisseur (*khawās*), and stresses that a poem should preferably appeal to both even if common readers will miss the subtleties of its meaning. However, the usage of expert poets should not be subject to the whims of common readers who lack the training to understand literary subtleties. Crucially, simply being a native speaker of a language does not qualify one as an expert because literary judgment requires particular training. He even asserts that native speakers (*ahl-i muḥāwārah*) and non-native speakers (*ghair-i īshān*) are equal as the dexterity to test the precedents only matters (Dudney 2010, 1-19; Keshavmurthy). Moreover, according to Arzu the finest elucidation is the one that is not constricted by any one interpretative style (Arzu *Dād-i Sukhan* 30).

According to Arzu, it is legitimate to use any translated word from Urdu or everyday language (*rozmarrah*) into Persian by anyone competent in the art of poetry/discourse such as Amir Khusrau. Mastery is the key here; those who do not have the expertise are not allowed such privilege. Similar sentiment is shown in *Dād-i Sukhan's* second preface where Arzu deals with the capability of Indians who are the non-native speakers of Persian in altering its usage of lexis and idioms. Persians had themselves accepted Turkish and Arabic words and structures, their connotations altered significantly in the Persian usage, from Turkish as was spoken in Central Asia. He writes that the hostility of Iranians towards Indian alteration in the Persian language as per colloquial practices (*rozmarrah*) is baseless. Referring to Amir Khusrau, Arzu says, he is such a master (*ustād*) whose usage was pioneering rather being flawed (Arzu *Dād-i Sukhan* 7-8; Dudney 2013, 187-189).

Arzu recognizes the intense ties between languages and the pulls of regional influence on them to the extent that even the formalized dialect such as literary Persian could not escape from it. There is concurrent mutual push and pull of established tradition (sophisticated) on the local/regional language and culture. In *Musmir* he articulates that the structure of authority originates from the imperial court and every one irrespective of region composes poetry in the established language of the court (Arzu *Musmir*, 9; Dudney 2013, 105-06).

Khan-i Arzu elevated *Sabk-i Hindi* to a respectable position vis-à-vis *Sabk-i Irani* in the unique cultural milieu of the subcontinent, so far denied by Iranians. Arzu's Urdu compositions are of historical significance to understand the growth and development of Urdu poetry. One of his feats in relation to Urdu is that he set the primary meaning of the words, its accent and tenor and played the role of architect in publicizing the

idiomatic Urdu (Anjum *Gharaib*, 34-45). There is no *diwan* of Arzu in Urdu; however, his compositions found in different *tazkiras* gives an impression of steadiness and gravity akin to his Persian compositions (Chandpuri 14-15; Gardezi 7; Khalil 20-23). There is obvious influence of Persian on his composition and style. Some scholars have contended that Arzu was primarily a poet of Persian language and only for the sake of changing the taste (*tafañun-i taba'*) composed few couplets in Urdu (Mir 3-4) however, this does not seem to be the case. In an era when Persian had already reached its highest point, Arzu by composing in *rekhta* was crafting a precedent for imitation by other poets. When Khani Arzu advised Sauda and other poets to use the medium of *rekhta* in their composition to create an impression in the field, then it was but natural that he himself should compose in *rekhta* and show the way.

It also meant that there was hardly any scope left for further growth in Persian, whereas *rekhta* had a lot of possibilities. By analyzing his Urdu poetry one can surmise that they are more mature than that of other Persian poets of the time writing in *rekhta*. It gives a feeling of maturity and does not at all present the impression of having been composed in the initial phase of Urdu poetry in north India. When historical analysis of any poet is undertaken, it does not take into account the high levels of poetic composition only but also the efforts of the poet to express feelings conscientiously and sincerely despite the limited resources at command.

Arzu was upholding the early tradition of Urdu *ghazal* and was infusing a sense of poise among the new generation of poets. Some of his verses are related to the traditional theme, i.e., love and grace of the beloved and a complete picture of early Urdu poetry cannot be imagined by ignoring these verses of Arzu. One of his *ghazal* is:

Āta hai subh uth kar teri barābri ko

Kyā din lage hain deykho khurshīd khawryi ko (Mir 4).

The beloved comes every morning with its warmth

Look what a day has come to see the Sun blazing

In the above verses, Arzu portrays the radiance of his beloved. Sun which rises in the morning and brings along light and warmth, with the use of the phrase '*kyā din lage hain*' (what sort of day has come?) he has instilled dynamism in the expression and how the sun is competing with his beloved. There is another verse of Arzu:

Jān kuch tujh pe a'timād nahi

Zindagāni ka kyā bharosa hai? (Mir 4)

My love somehow, I don't really trust you

What is the reliability of life?

These *ghazals* are distinct from the style of poetry that was current at the time, as the propensity of double entendre (*san'at-i ihām*) is absent. This was culturally the most vibrant era. Here we can actually feel the

somberness and freshness (*taza-goi*) of Persian poetry in its tenor and a sense of celebration in the language and rhetoric of Arzu. In his *ghazals*, the early imprints of the spirit could be found that attained elegance in the poetry of Mir, Dard and Sauda.

Conclusion

This paper explored the diverse oeuvres of Khan-i Arzu, his persona and intellectual and literary contributions. Arzu groomed two generations of Urdu poets and provided leadership in the art of poetics in such a way that inspired mind traversed the course initiated by him. His outlook in the art of poetry is considered to be authoritative. Poets of *rekhta* and Persian in Delhi regarded his opinion as indisputable and sent their works and manuscripts for correction to him. Mir Taqi Mir writes that all the experts of the art of *rekhta* are invariably the student of Arzu. He describes Arzu as his teacher and expresses high opinion about him (Mir 3-4). Bindraban Khushgo had presented his *tazkirah*, *Safina-i Khushgo* to Arzu for correction (Khushgo 318). Anand Ram Mukhlis used to take his advice in the art of poetics and eloquence of language. Hakim Lahori in his *tazkirah*, *Mardum Didah* (Biographical Dictionary of People) writes that he had sent his *diwan* to Arzu with the request to look at it and advice on the aesthetics of the compositions (Lahori 57). Mirza Rafi Sauda owing to suitability of metrical temperament used to compose in Persian and took advice from Khan-i Arzu. Saiyid Fateh Ali Husaini Gardezi notes in his *tazkirah* that Najmuddin Shah Mubarak Abru and Sharfuddin Mazmun, the founders of *rekhta*, also benefited from his guidance (Gardezi 7).

Looking at the era in which Arzu lived, we notice that he is overspread everywhere. He not only lured the younger generation of poets towards *rekhta* poetry (*rekhta-goi*) on the lines of Persian but also made them comprehend the principles of the art, and instilled self-confidence so that they can feel proud of composing in it. In order to promote and popularize *rekhta* among the new generation of poets *Majlis-i mushaira* (assembly of poets) was organized on the 15th day of every month at his house. A *mushaira* was the most important literary and social gathering of the time where poets recited their compositions in front of the other poets and the masses and sought the applause from the audience (Qudratullah 155-56). Amongst them were included members of the aristocracy and even the Emperor, for all wrote poetry and loved listening to it. The poets and audience expressed their appreciation or made brief critical comments upon completion of a verse recited by poets. This distinctive character that evolved as part of *mushairas* also contributed greatly to the development of Urdu poetry. Mir Taqi 'Mir' in his *tazkirah* refers to the *mushairas* held at the residences of Mir Sajjad, Mir Ali Naqi and Hatim (Mir 61; Mushafi 80). Mir himself regularly convened a *majlis-*

i rekhta on the 15th of every month. It has been recorded that Khwaja Mir Dard used to organise a *mushaira* on the 23rd of every month. Arzu was not only a great poet but also a critic and articulated his views on the science of linguistics and varied facet of culture and poetics. Arzu was patron, guide and the organizer of mushairas, laid the foundation of linguistic research in Urdu language and by comparing Persian with Urdu words established the field of comparative philology. It was under the influence and mentorship of Khan-i Arzu that a whole new generation of Delhi poets became conscious that Persian was not their mother tongue and their hard work would not help in attaining the level of the Iranians in poetry. Hence, they started to explore the possibility of writing in their own tongue, i.e., *Rekhta* or Urdu, transforming the literary cultural milieu of north India. It would be appropriate to end our discussion with a *quatrain* of Mirza Rafi Sauda (1713-1780 CE) which on the one hand, reflected the views of Arzu and, on the other, of the new generation of poets, clearly illustrated their outlook towards Urdu poetry *vis-à-vis* Persian:

*Jo chahe yah ke kahe Hind ka zabāndān sha'ir
To behtar uske liye Rekhta ka hai āiyin.....
kahan tak tu unki zabān ko durust bolega
Zabān apni mei tu bāndh ma'ani-i rangīn. (Sauda 80-81)*

If one wants to be called poet of Indian languages,

Nothing better for him than writing in Rekhta.....

To what extent can you speak their language accurately?

Compose colourful poetry in your own language (My translation)

Notes

¹ Mukhlis was the vicegerent of I'timad ud-Daula Qamr ud-Din Khan and Saif ud-Daula Abdus Samad Khan, the governor of Lahore and Multan, see *Khazana-i Amirah*, p. 118; Anwar, Manohar Sahay. 'Sirajuddin Ali Khan-i Arzu Aur Unki Tasānīf', p. 65; Khan, Shahnawaz. *Ma'asir ul Umara*, Vo. II, ed. Bevrige, Henry and Bains Prasad, pp. 488-91.

² Arzu writes in the preface to *Sirājul Lughāt*, "As far as the correctness of meanings and the explanation of difficult passages are concerned, no dictionary comes up to *Farhang-i Rashīdī*, whilst *Burhān* has certainly the merit of being the comprehensive vocabulary existing. But in both dictionaries, there are erroneous statements; especially in *Burhān*, which is full of wrong meanings and spellings as shall be seen below. To correct them is the only object of this dictionary", as cited in H. Blochmann, 'Contribution to Persian Lexicography'.

³ Arzu in the introduction to *Musmir* states that this work is based on Jalal ud-Din Siyuti's *Muzhir*, the only difference is that it is about Persian lexicography, whereas Shaikhs' work is related to Arabic lexicon. However, this work of his could be comprehended by those who are well aware of both the language, see *Musmir*, ed. Khattoon, Rehana, p. 1.

⁴ Arabic influences can be seen during the evolutionary process of Persian language also. When the Arabs conquered Iran, there was no formal literary tradition in Persian. The pre-Islamic Persian poetry is not available and merely few earliest examples worth mentioning are to be had from two hundred years after the establishment of Islam. Most of the early Persian writers were from Arabic background. With the establishment of Arab rule in Persia, the Iranians started taking interest in the Arabic language. Arabic was the official, courtly language of the Arabs and was seen as the embodiment of sophistication and culture, see Daudpota, Umar Muhammad. *Influence of Arabic Poetry on the Persian Poetry*, p.14. For an analogous case of English literature during the Hundred Years' War when the increasing hostility to French consequently augmented absorption of French influences. English language became more and more like the French, See Daiches, David. *Literature and Society*, pp. 39-41, 1938.

⁵ See *Musmir*, p. 221, where Arzu writes- 'though there have been numerous lexicographers and other researchers in Persian and Hindi language, to date no one, except this humble (*faqir*) Arzu has discovered the harmony/correspondence (*tawafiq*) between Hindi and Persian. I have used this principle to assess the accuracy of some of the Persian words, which I have illustrated in my books like *Siraj-ul Lughat* and *Chiragh-i Hidayat*.

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