



Pathology of Contemporary Song Lyrics

Mohammad. Sabri¹ 

1: Phd Student of Persian Language and Literature, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran:
m.sabri@khu.ac.ir

Abstract: Song lyrics, as an interartistic and interdisciplinary genre, follows principles that are often overlooked in many contemporary musical works. The growing dominance of commerce and industry over art, and the subsequent mass production of musical works, have overshadowed many of the literary and musical values and conventions of song lyrics. The excessive focus on quantity over quality has led contemporary lyrics to face serious challenges and flaws. These issues have not only destabilized the position of lyrics but have also negatively influenced the artistic taste of audiences. The present study aims to identify and examine the most common structural and content-related flaws in contemporary lyrics and to analyze the underlying causes of their emergence. The data of this research include a selected sample of popular lyrics from pop, traditional, and fusion styles, analyzed through a descriptive-analytical method, utilizing qualitative content analysis, and considering the principles of literary criticism and lyric studies with regard to structural and thematic features. The findings of the research reveal eleven recurring types of flaws in the structure and content of contemporary Lyrics. These flaws include the mixture of standard and colloquial language, defective rhymes such as redundancy (īṭā) and pleonasm (shaygān), inconsistency between positive and negative verbs, faulty rhyming patterns, weak composition such as omitted words or phrases, inappropriate expressions, incorrect use of prepositions and misplacement of sentence components, redundancy, diminishing the status of the beloved, gender bias, incorporation of foreign words, lack of cohesion and coherence, misinterpretation or arbitrary reading of lyrics, and excessive focus on melody at the expense of lyrical quality.

Keywords: Lyrics, Pop Music, hybrid Music, Pathology, Criticism.

- S.M. Arta (2025). "Pathology of Contemporary Song Lyrics". Semnan University: *Journal of Linguistic and Rhetorical Studies*. 16(42). 311-350.

[Doi: 10.22075/jlrs.2025.36189.2567](https://doi.org/10.22075/jlrs.2025.36189.2567)



1. Introduction

In the modern era, audiovisual media have deeply permeated society, shaping both collective culture and individual experience. Among artistic forms, music holds a particularly influential position, given its continuous presence in everyday life and its capacity to reflect and affect public emotion. The proliferation of digital and virtual platforms has intensified this influence, increasing the quantity of music produced while often diminishing artistic and literary quality. This rapid production and distribution have led to the neglect of poetic and musical standards, as commercial and industrial priorities increasingly determine artistic direction. In a country like Iran renowned for its rich poetic tradition lyrics represent a vital link between contemporary audiences and the nation's literary heritage. When public engagement with literature declines, lyrics can act as a bridge connecting everyday listeners with poetic language. However, this role requires that songwriters adhere to both literary and musical principles, ensuring artistic integrity across structure, theme, and expression. This research thus addresses a central question: *What are the major structural and thematic weaknesses in contemporary Persian song lyrics?*

2. Methodology

The research focuses primarily on popular and widely circulated songs produced in recent years, while also considering select older works. By listening to a diverse array of tracks across pop, traditional, and hybrid pop-traditional styles, and simultaneously analyzing their lyrics, the study identifies recurring weaknesses. A descriptive-analytical approach, grounded in these auditory and textual observations, is employed to examine the structural and thematic characteristics of the lyrics.

3. Results

The study reveals several recurring weaknesses in contemporary Persian lyrics. These include the mixing of standard and colloquial language, defective rhymes such as redundancy (īfā) and pleonasm (shaygān), inconsistency between positive and negative verbs, faulty rhyming patterns, weak composition such as omitted words or phrases, inappropriate expressions, incorrect use of prepositions and misplacement of sentence components, redundancy, diminishing the status of the beloved, gender bias, incorporation of foreign words, lack of cohesion and coherence, misinterpretation or arbitrary reading of lyrics, and excessive focus on melody at the expense of lyrical quality.

Additional issues, though often external to the lyrics themselves, include song covers and copying, neglect of social themes, censorship, unequal competition, and low-quality music videos that fail to reflect the lyrical content. These aspects warrant separate investigation to facilitate a comprehensive critique of the music industry.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Many weaknesses in contemporary lyrics, including those examined in this study, are concealed beneath elaborate melodies. Music practitioners often prioritize melody and arrangement, with considerable attention given to how a track sounds on car stereos, large speakers, or at social gatherings. Arrangements, mixing, and mastering processes are designed primarily to enhance this auditory experience.

Audiences typically engage first with melody, and their satisfaction is closely linked to the pleasure derived from rhythm and note sequences.

The structural and thematic weaknesses of contemporary lyrics largely stem from a commercially driven focus and a neglect of literary and musical principles. Addressing these issues requires balanced attention to both form and content. Music professionals should approach lyrics and melody with equal care, avoiding excessive reliance on melody alone, and fostering an integrated development of both elements. Recognizing these shortcomings and striving to remedy them can improve lyrical quality and, ultimately, elevate the artistic sensibilities of audiences.