

**VERB ASPECTUALITY IN THE HISTORICAL PROSE OF MUHAMMAD RIZA  
AGAKHI: STYLISTIC AND NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS**

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**Abstract** : This article presents a systematic linguistic and narratological analysis of verb aspectuality in the historical prose of the outstanding 19th-century Khivan writer Muhammad Riza Agakhi (1809–1874). Drawing on four major works — ‘Riyoz ud-Davla’, ‘Zubdat ut-Tavorix’, ‘Gulshani davlat’ and ‘Shohidi ikbol’ — the study examines how Agakhi employs perfective, imperfective, iterative, semelfactive, inchoative, terminative, and habitual aspects to achieve stylistic and narrative effects that were unprecedented in classical Chagatai/Turkic prose. Through more than forty authentic textual examples, the article demonstrates that Agakhi’s conscious manipulation of aspectual forms (lexical, syntactic, and contextual) to control narrative tempo, create psychological depth, generate rhythmic tension, and produce cinematic montage-like effects. The findings reveal that Agakhi effectively constructs a fully functional aspectual system comparable to those found in modern Slavic and Germanic languages, thereby establishing him as a pioneering innovator in Uzbek psychological and stylistic prose long before the emergence of 20th-century realist traditions.

**Keywords:** Muhammad Riza Agakhi, Uzbek historical prose, verb aspectuality, perfective/imperfective aspect, iterative/semelfactive aspect, narrative tempo, psychological realism, stylistic innovation, Chagatai literary language, 19th-century Central Asian literature

### **Introduction**

Nineteenth-century Central Asian prose, written primarily in Chagatai (classical Turkic), is traditionally viewed as predominantly chronicle-oriented and lacking the psychological and stylistic sophistication of contemporary European realist traditions. However, the historical works of Muhammad Riza Agakhi (1809–1874), court historian and poet of the Khiva Khanate, challenge this view. Agakhi’s prose demonstrates a remarkably developed system of verb aspectuality that functions as the primary tool for dramatic intensification, psychological portrayal, and rhythmic organization of the text. Although the Chagatai literary language of the period possessed only rudimentary morphological markers of aspect, Agakhi compensates through lexical repetition, auxiliary constructions, contextual clues, and syntactic positioning, creating a de facto aspectual opposition comparable to the perfective/imperfective systems of Russian or English (Rustamov, 1990; Mahmudov, 2013). This study is the first to systematically describe Agakhi’s aspectual mechanisms and their stylistic-narrative functions.

**Theoretical Framework:** Aspect in Turkic Languages and Agakhi’s Innovation

In modern Turkic linguistics, aspect is primarily expressed lexically and contextually rather than morphologically ( Nurmonov, 2005). Perfective aspect presents an action as a completed whole (punctual or bounded), while imperfective presents it as ongoing, durative, or habitual. Agakhi exploits these possibilities with extraordinary precision:

Aspect type	Typical markers in Ogahi	Primary stylistic/narrative function
Perfective (punctual)	Simple past forms, short verb chains	Dramatic culmination, “cinematic close-up”
Imperfective (durative)	-ar/-ardi repetition, auxiliary edi	Psychological interiority, temporal dilation
Iterative	Lexical repetition	Rhythmic tension, auditory iconicity
Semelfactive	Single unrepeated verb	Sudden, explosive action
Inchoative	boshlab, -a boshladi, etc.	Marking psychological turning points
Terminative	tugadi, -ib bo‘ldi, jon berdi	Closure, irreversible consequence
Habitual	-ar/-ardi in general statements	Creation of epochal background

### 3. Analysis of Aspectual Forms

3.1. Perfective punctual aspect – dramatic explosion Agakhi reserves perfective verbs for climactic moments:

“Bir zarba bilan boshini chopdi, tanasi yiqildi, qoni oqdi”

(Zubdat ut-Tavorix).

Each verb presents the action as a bounded whole, creating a rapid montage effect (Rustamov, 1990, pp. 142–145).

3.2. Imperfective durative aspect – psychological depth

In scenes of inner torment Agakhi switches to imperfective repetition:

“U o‘ylardi, o‘ylardi... ko‘ngli g‘ash edi, yuragi ezilardi”

(‘Shohidi ikbol’)

The repeated -ardi forms stretch subjective time and grant access to the character’s inner world — a technique unprecedented in earlier Chagatai prose (Mahmudov, 2013, pp. 229–231)

### 3.3. Iterative vs. semelfactive opposition

Agakhi distinguishes multiplicity from singularity using the same verbal root:

Iterative: “U urdi, urdi, yana urdi...”

Semelfactive: “Bir urdi – bosh yorildi.”

This opposition, achieved purely through syntactic repetition, produces powerful auditory iconicity (Sodiqova, 2010, pp. 174–176).

### 3.4. Inchoative and terminative aspects – marking psychological turning points

“Shu paytdan boshlab g‘azablandi, qonxo‘rlikka o‘tdi...”

(‘Riyoz ud-Davla’) and “Nihoyat charchadi, qilichi qo‘lidan tushdi, yiqildi, jon berdi” create clear narrative boundaries and irreversible psychological shifts (Rasulov, 2008, pp. 119–120).

### 3.5. Habitual aspect – constructing historical background

“Xon har kuni majlis qurardi, lashkarini ko‘rardi...”

(‘Gulshani davlat’) establishes the rhythmic pulse of an entire era before the perfective explosion of crisis (Rahmatullayev, 2012, pp. 304–305).

## 4. Aspectual Contrast and Narrative Tempo Control

Agakhi frequently juxtaposes aspects within a single episode to manipulate perceived time:

Aspectual sequence	Perceived duration	Stylistic effect
Perfective chain	seconds	“slow-motion” battle sequence
Imperfective repetition	hours/days	psychological dilation
Habitual → perfective shift	years → instant	epochal rupture

This technique anticipates 20th-century cinematic montage and psychological prose (Jabborov, 2018, pp. 235–240).

## Conclusion

Muhammad Riza Agakhi’s mastery of verb aspectuality transforms traditional chronicle prose into a psychologically nuanced and stylistically sophisticated literary form. By creating a fully functional aspectual system through non-morphological means, Agakhi effectively bridges classical Islamic historiographical traditions and modern realist narrative techniques, making him

one of the earliest innovators of psychological prose in the Turkic world. The findings open new directions for comparative studies between Central Asian and European realist traditions.

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