



Review Paper

Teaching the bachelor level students to discern meters in English poetry

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Abstract

Meter, which is a fixed pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse, is one of the distinctive sound devices exploited in English poetry. The major objective of this article is to familiarize the bachelor level students in the faculties of Education and Humanities with the diverse meters exploited in numerous poems composed by different poets. Demonstration and explanation of poetic lines that hint at the meters are executed as a method for teaching the students to discern the varied metrical forms that contribute to the meanings in the poem. This article is considered to be useful to the college students who have to study poetry as a major subject and to the teachers who are interested in teaching meters in English poetry. It is concluded that better memorization and understanding of the metrical forms lead the students and the teachers to the better understanding of musical quality of the poem.

Keywords: Teaching, bachelor, students, English poetry.

Introduction

Meter is a valued element of poetry. Metrical verse is considered to have a divine voice which is pleasing to hear and venerable to examine. It is tedious and tough for most of the students to learn and understand. In spite of its toughness of the subject matter and the unwillingness of the students, they have to study and approach it, because it is in their textbook prescribed by the Curriculum Development Centre of Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Poetry is taught as a compulsory subject as well as a major subject at the bachelor level in the faculties of Education and Humanities.

In English poetry, disyllabic metrical feet are more frequently exploited than trisyllabic ones. English poetry primarily follows the accentual-syllabic meter which involves the set structure of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poetic line. It is required for the students to have knowledge of the rules of stress and syllables before studying meter or metrical feet. Therefore, the article writer has attempted to provide the students with some rules of stress and concept of syllables in brief. Demonstration and explanation of some poetic lines that focus on metrical feet are implemented as a teaching method. All the English poems composed in metrical forms are the universe of the study. There are 12 demonstrations with explanations as a sample of the study, because there are 4 disyllabic and 8 trisyllabic metrical feet in English poetry. It means there are 12 meters. One of the outstanding features of English meter is that it synchronizes mixed metrical feet in a single verse line to avoid dullness and monotony of a particular sound created by feet in a verse line.

The article writer has not dealt with the subject in detail by keeping the students' understanding level and the objective in mind. The article writer assumes that this article will be useful not only to the students and the teachers, but also to the ordinary persons who love studying poetry.

Literature Review

Literature review embraces definition of meter, system of meter, concept of Words and syllables, general rules for stress, types of metrical foot, definitions and examples of diverse meters.

Meter: Meter, which is a prominent element of poetry, forms poetry different from other genres of literature as it makes poetry more musical and more emotive. Abrams asserts that meter is calculated by "the pattern of stronger and weaker stresses in the syllables composing the words in the verse-line"¹. Cuddon views that in English verse; meter is "based on stress rather than quantity"². Lennard opines that "in accentual-syllabic prosody the basic unit of poetry is the line, clearly visible on the page, which may be defined as a single sequence of characters read from left to right"³.

Meter is a recurrent pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse. Such a structure of syllables is named a particular foot that is a unit of meter or regular rhythm. It shows that meter depends on foot. There are two things about foot: number of foot in a verse line (How many feet are there in a verse line?) and nature or feature of foot (the arrangement of stressed and / or unstressed syllables in a particular foot).

Systems of Meter: There are different systems of meter in different languages in the world literature. The systems are:

Accentual meter: Accentual metrical system involves the same number of stressed syllables along with irregular number of unstressed syllables. Such a meter can be noted in nursery rhymes, and was frequently used in old English poetry.

Syllabic Meter: Syllabic metrical system includes a certain number of syllables in every poetic line regardless of the number of the stressed syllables. They are named according to the number of syllables in the lines.

Accentual-Syllabic Meter: In this metrical system, every line retains the regular number of stressed and non-stressed syllables in a certain order. This system is very common in English poetry.

Free Verse: In this metrical system, a poem retains irregular patterns of stress and unstressed syllables.

Words and Syllables: To study meter, we should have a basic concept of syllable. A syllable is a sequence of sounds in which the central element is a vowel and the marginal elements are consonants. A vowel is an obligatory element, whereas consonants are optional elements of a syllable. Crystal views a syllable as “a unit of pronunciation typically larger than a single sound and smaller than a word”⁴.

We should understand that a verse line incorporates a certain number of syllables. A word is composed of a sound, frequently more than one sound. it is an inseparable free unit of grammar or a vocabulary of language. A word may have one syllable, two syllables, three syllables, four syllables and so on. We can name the word according to the number of syllables it contains.

Table-1: Name of the words according to the number of syllables they contain.

Word	Number of Syllables	Name of the Word
Cat	1	Monosyllabic word
Motion	2	Disyllabic word
Photograph	3	Trisyllabic word
Democracy	4	Tetrasyllabic word
Electricity	5	Pentasyllabic word
Economically	6	Sexasyllabic word
Enthusiastically	7	Heptasyllabic word

Counting Syllables in a Verse Line: Demonstration 1: “Half a league, half a league”⁵.

Explanation: There are 6 words in a verse line, and the number of syllables is also 6. Such a verse line is called a Sexasyllabic line. Every word has one syllable.

Demonstration-2: “Tyger! Tyger! burning bright”⁶.

Explanation: There are 4 words in a verse line, but the number of syllables is 7. Such a verse line is called a heptasyllabic line. The word “Tyger” has two syllables; the Word “burning” has two syllables and “bright” has one syllable.

Demonstration-3: “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan”⁷.

Explanation: There are 5 words in a verse line, but the number of syllables is 8. Such a verse line is called an octasyllabic line. The words “in”, “did” and “Khan” have one-one-one syllable. “Xanadu” has three syllables, and “Kubla” has two syllables.

Determination of Foot: The English language has developed an accentual-syllabic metre for its formal verse. In a formal poem, the poet counts the occurrence of stressed and unstressed syllables in a verse line and keeps them to a pattern. Such a fixed structure of stressed and unstressed syllables is known as a foot. Harmon opines that the “rhythmic unit within the line is called a foot”⁸.

In English poetry, a foot is normally made up of two syllables or three syllables. If a foot is made up of two syllables, it is called a disyllabic foot. There are four disyllabic feet in English poetry:

Table-2: Disyllabic Feet.

Nature of Foot (Two Syllables)	Name of Foot (Noun)	Name of Foot (Adjective)	Nature of Melody
Stressed+ Stressed	Spondee	Spondaic	DUM_DUM
Unstressed+ Unstressed	Pyrrhic	Pyrrhic	da_da
Stressed + Unstressed	Trochee	Trochaic	DUM_da
Unstressed + Stressed	Iamb	Iambic	da_DUM

If a foot is comprised of three syllables, it is called a trisyllabic foot. English poetry has eight trisyllabic feet:

Table-3: Trisyllabic Feet.

Nature of Foot (Three Syllables)	Name of Foot (Noun)	Name of Foot (Adjective)	Nature of Melody
Stressed + Stressed + Stressed	Molossus	Molossic	DUM-DUM-DUM
Unstressed +Unstressed + Unstressed	Tribrach	Tribrachic	da-da-da
Stressed + Stressed + Unstressed	Antibacchius	Antibacchaic	DUM-DUM-da
Unstressed +Unstressed +Stressed	Anapest	Anapestic	da-da-DUM
Stressed +Unstressed + Unstressed	Dactyl	Dactylic	DUM-da-da
Unstressed + Stressed + Stressed	Bacchius	Bacchaic	da- DUM-DUM
Stressed +Unstressed + Stressed	Amphimacer/ Cretic	Cretic	DUM-da-DUM
Unstressed +Stressed + Unstressed	Amphibrach	Amphibrachic	da-DUM-da

It clearly indicates that we must have knowledge of stress for determining the name of foot of meter.

Stress and its General Rules: Stress is an extra force used while pronouncing a syllable or word. The words having two or more syllables are stressed more on a certain syllable than the other syllables. It means the stressed syllable is to be pronounced more emphatically.

There are two classes of words: major word class and minor word class. Nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs, demonstratives and interrogatives belong to the major word class. Such words are basically stressed. Pronouns, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliary verbs and determiners which belong to the minor word class are not normally stressed. There are various rules, exceptions and conditions in employing the stress in English language. Poets can exploit three kinds of stress in their poetry. They are: Normal stress / Grammatical Stress, Emphatic Stress and Poetical stress.

Normal or grammatical stress follows the rules of stress as mentioned in grammar: The grammatical rules of stress are given below:

Table-4: Stressed and Unstressed Words in General.

Stressed Words	Unstressed Words
Nouns: dog, cat, pen, book etc.	Pronouns: he, she, it etc.
Main verbs: eat, go, sleep etc.	Auxiliary verbs: is, , am, are etc.
Adjectives: good, bad, red etc.	Articles: a, an, the etc.
Adverbs: well, quite, yet etc.	Prepositions: at, in, on etc.
Demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these etc.	Relative pronouns: who, whom, which etc.
Interrogatives pronouns: what, when, where etc.	Conjunctions: and, but, or etc.
Interjections: oh!, ha!, ouch! Etc.	Determiners: any, some, few etc.

Table-5: Stressed and Unstressed Be- Verb.

Stressed Be- verb	Unstressed Be-verb
To introduce a question: Are you reading a book?	Before a main verb: He is reading a book.
Final position pronoun +be: I know where he is.	Be +noun / adj He is a teacher. He is rich. Final position noun +be I know where Ram is.

Table-6: Stressed and Unstressed Have- Verb.

Stressed Have- verb	Unstressed Have-verb
As a main verb: He has a nice meal. They have a meal. He had a bad meal.	As an auxiliary verb: He has eaten rice. She has seen a tiger. They had drunk. To show possession I have a car.

Table-7: Stressed and Unstressed Do – Verb.

Stressed Do- verb	Unstressed Do-verb
As a main verb: I did it. She does it. You do it. To show emphasis: I do love Rita. I did write a letter. He does come here.	As an auxiliary verb: I do not eat meat. He does not come here. She did not play ball.

Table-8: Conditions of Using Stressed Prepositions and Auxiliary Verbs.

Stressed Prepositions	Stressed Auxiliary Verbs
<p>In a phrasal verb: Take off, put on, etc. If a preposition occurs as a last word of a sentence. Who are you looking at?</p>	<p>To introduce a yes-no question: Did he meet you? Can you go out? Are you reading a book?</p> <p>When a main verb is omitted: Yes, he can. Yes, she is. Yes, they have.</p> <p>With the contracted form of not : I don't know her. He hasn't eaten rice. She won't come.</p>

Table-9: General Rules of Plural Syllabic Word Stress.

<p>The primary stress falls on the root words: `speaker be`side re`newal</p> <p>The stress falls on the syllable just before the following endings in the words: en: `burden `garden on : `botton `lesson tain: `certain `curtain ent : `agent `patient ant : `distant `reluctant ence : `absence `patience ion : `action di`vision ious : `precious am`bitious cial : `social bene`ficial ic : `comic eco`nomic ical : `comical eco`nomical ics : `physics mathe`matics ple : `couple `people age : `passage `village et : `basket `pocket ow : `fellow `follow ward : `backward `forward meter : ther`mometer di`ameter ed (pronounced as /id /) : `wicked `needed `wanted</p> <p>The stress falls on he first syllable in the words with the following endings: able : `bearable `syllable ible : `edible `sensible let : `booklet `tablet ture : `culture `literature ise : `advertise ize : `finalize `centralize yse : `analyse ism: `criticism `mechanism</p> <p>Polysyllabic words ending in "y" and "ive" carry the stress on the third syllable from the last: `gratify `simplify de`mocracy con`servative `talkative</p>
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The following suffixes carry the stress in the words:

tine : rou`tine
ten : can`teen
toon : car`toon
gar : ci`gar
zaar : ba`zaar
self : my`self our`selves
ever : what`ever
after : here`after
out : through`out

The words beginning with "a" pronounced as /e / carry the stress on the second syllable:

a`bove a`gain a`board

Two syllabic verbs carry the stress on the second syllable.

a`buse ab`sorb be`lieve se`lect con`ceal

Note: Two syllabic verbs ending in ow , er , rry, ue and en carry the stress on the first syllable.

`follow `order `carry `worry `argue `darken `open

Two syllabic nouns and adjectives carry the stress on the first syllable.

`easy `happy `milky `letter `sugar `brother

Three syllabic nouns and adjectives carry the stress on the first syllable.

`acrobat `photograph `fortunate

Three syllabic verbs ending in "ate" carry the stress on the first syllable.

`decorate `educate `dominate `formulate

The words (more than three syllables) ending in "ate" carry the stress on the second syllable.

com`municate e`radicate cer`tificate par`ticipate

Three syllabic verbs carry the stress on the second syllable.

con`tinue de`termine de`molish

The stress lies on the first syllable in the compound words.

`breakfast `football `grandfather

The stress takes place on the syllable with the following suffixes.

ere : se`vere sin`cere
eer : car`eer engi`neer
ier : cash`ier
ee : absen`tee deg`ree
oon : bal`loon after`noon
oo: bam`boo sham`poo kanga`roo

The stress falls on the first syllable in the two syllabic words with the pronunciation / ʒ, e, a, ʌ, ɜ / in the first syllable and / ð / i / in the second syllable .

/ ʒ+ ð/ i / = `cancel `damage
/ e +ð/i / = `mental `envy
/ a+ +ð/i / = `pardon `carpet
/ ^ +ð / i / = `double `publish
/ ɜ + ð / i / = `moral `office

Emphatic Stress: Such a stress is used to give emphasis on a particular word:

I killed a cat. (Not anyone else but “I”)

I killed a cat. (I did nothing but “killed”)

I killed a cat. (Not two, three or other but only “one”.)

I killed a cat. (Not a tiger, lion or other but “cat”.)

Poetical Stress:

Poets frequently use the poetical stress which is a regular system of accent to establish the basic rhythm in a poem:

— u — u — u —
 “Tyger ! Tyger! Burning bright

— u — u — u —
 In the forests of the night.”⁶

In the above line “in” and “of” are given the poetical stress to make the line regular and rhythmical.

Technique of Nomenclature of Meter: Nomenclature of a meter is done through using two aspects: number of foot and nature of foot.

Table-10: Name of Meter Based on the Number of Foot.

Number of foot in a verse line	Name of metre
One foot	Monometer
Two feet	Dimeter
Three feet	Trimeter
Four feet	Tetrameter
Five feet	Pentameter
Six feet	Sexameter
Seven feet	Heptameter
Eight feet	Octameter
Nine feet	Nonameter
Ten feet	Decameter
Eleven feet	Hendecameter
Twelve feet	Dodecameter

Table-11: Name of Meter Based on the Nature of Foot.

Pattern of Stresses	Name of Foot (Adjective)	Name of Meter
Stressed+ Stressed	Spondaic	Spondaic meter

Unstressed+ Unstressed	Pyrrhic	Pyrrhic meter
Stressed + Unstressed	Trochaic	Trochaic meter
Unstressed + Stressed	Iambic	Iambic meter
Stressed + Stressed + Stressed	Molossic	Molossic meter
Unstressed + Unstressed + Unstressed	Tribrachic	Tribrachic meter
Stressed + Stressed + Unstressed	Antibacchaic	Antibacchaic meter
Unstressed +Unstressed +Stressed	Anapestic	Anapestic meter
Stressed +Unstressed + Unstressed	Dactylic	Dactylic meter
Unstressed + Stressed + Stressed	Bacchaic	Bacchaic meter
Stressed +Unstressed + Stressed	Cretic	Cretic meter
Unstressed +Stressed + Unstressed	Amphibrachic	Amphibrachic meter

Table-12: Name of a Particular Meter.

Nature of Foot (Adjective)	Number of Foot	Name of the Meter
Iambic	1	Iambic monometer
Iambic	2	Iambic dimeter
Dactylic	3	Dactylic trimeter
Spondaic	4	Spondaic tetrameter
Cretic	5	Cretic pentameter
Anapestic	6	Anapestic hexameter
Iambic	7	Iambic heptameter
Iambic	8	Iambic octameter
Iambic	9	Iambic nonameter
Iambic	10	Iambic decameter

We can name the other meters in the same way.

Some Theoretical Aspects of Metrical Feet: English poetry frequently employs disyllabic metrical feet, though a few poems can also be found to be written in trisyllabic feet.

Description of Disyllabic Metrical Feet: There are four disyllabic metrical feet employed in English poetry. Iamb and Trochee are very common feet.

Iamb (da – DUM): An iamb or iambic foot consists of an unstressed syllable that is followed by a stressed syllable. Such a foot in poetic lines intensifies seriousness in a poem. It leads the readers or listeners to the sense of meditation or reflection. The light or unstressed syllable produces soft, mild or short sound(s); whereas the stressed syllable produces loud, strong or long sound(s).

Trochee (DUM-da): A trochee or trochaic foot which is composed of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable in every foot of a verse line is common in children’s rhymes. This meter is exploited for growing ideas in the readers.

Spondee (DUM-DUM): A spondee or spondaic foot which generates music through two stressed syllables indicates a low motion of music. It reinforces sadness and seriousness in poems.

Pyrrhic (da-da): A pyrrhic or pyrrhic foot includes a metrical unit having two unstressed syllables. The pyrrhic meter which creates music through two light syllables in poetic lines is generally exploited in funny poems.

Description of Trisyllabic Feet: There are eight trisyllabic metrical feet in English poetry. Dactyl and anapest are more common than other trisyllabic metrical feet.

Dactyl (DUM-da-da): A dactyl or dactylic foot retains a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. This type of foot is exploited in elegiac poetry in English poetry, but in heroic verse form in Greek and Latin.

Anapest (da-da-DUM): An anapest or anapestic foot is a metrical foot involving two unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable. The anapestic meter which creates music by two light syllables followed by a stressed syllable in each foot of a line has a rapid motion of sound. It creates a rolling feeling in the poem.

Molossus (DUM-DUM-DUM): A molossus or molossic foot is a metrical foot used in Greek and Latin poetry. It gets its form from three stressed syllables, and it is a rare metrical feet used in formal poetry.

Tribrach (da-da-da): A tribrach or tribrachic foot which has three unstressed syllables in poetic lines is a rare metrical foot used in English poems.

Bacchius (da-DUM-DUM): A bacchius or bacchaic foot is formed with an unstressed syllable followed by two stressed syllable in a verse line.

Antibacchius (DUM-DUM-da): An Antibacchius or Antibacchaic foot is a metrical foot which holds two accented syllables followed by one unaccented syllable. Its opposite is bacchius.

Amphimacer / Cretic (DUM-da-DUM): An amphimacer / cretic or cretic foot embraces a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable.

Amphibrach (da-DUM- da): An amphibrach or amphibrachic foot includes an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable and an unstressed syllable. The amphibrachic meter that produces music through a light syllable, a stressed syllable and a light syllable in each foot is generally found in ballads and light verse

Teaching Learning Activities

Teaching learning activities involves the Demonstration, illustration and explanation of the poetic lines in order to familiarize the students with the different meters.

Demonstration No. 1: “She walks in beauty like the night”⁹.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

U — U — U — U —
She walks in beauty like the night.

Explanation: This verse line has 8 syllables. It consists of 4 disyllabic feet in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable in a foot. Such a foot is called an iambic foot. If a verse line has 4 iambic feet, the verse line is said to be written in iambic tetrameter.

Demonstration No. 2: "Tell me not in mournful numbers"¹⁰.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— ◡ — ◡ — ◡ — ◡
Tell me not in mournful numbers

Explanation: This verse line has 8 syllables. It consists of 4 disyllabic feet where a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable in a foot. Such a foot is called a trochaic foot. If a verse line has 4 trochaic feet, the verse line is said to be written in trochaic tetrameter.

Demonstration No. 3: "Long sounds move slow"¹¹.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— — — —
Long sounds move slow.

Explanation: This verse line has 4 syllables. It consists of 2 disyllabic feet. A stressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable in a foot. Such a foot is called a spondaic foot. If a verse line has 2 spondaic feet, the verse line is said to be written in spondaic dimeter.

Demonstration No. 4: "To a green thought in a green shade"¹².

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — —
To a green thought in a green shade

Explanation: This verse line has 8 syllables. It consists of 4 disyllabic feet. The first and third feet are Pyrrhic, an unstressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable; whereas the second and fourth feet are Spondaic, a stressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable in a foot. Such a verse line is said to be written in Pyrrhic and Spondaic meter.

One of the distinctive features of meter in English poetry is the inclusion of mixed feet in a verse line. A single line may have more than one metrical foot. Such metrical variations avoid monotony of same sounds in the whole poem. Almost all good poets who work in regular meters introduce metrical variations in their poems to prevent the poems from becoming monotonous.

Demonstration No. 5: "My way is to begin with the beginning"¹³.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

◡ — ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡
My way is to begin with the beginning

Explanation: This verse line has 11 syllables. The first, third and fifth feet are Iambic; whereas the second and fourth feet are Pyrrhic with an extra unstressed syllable at the end of the verse line. English poetry accepts various metrical feet and sometimes an extra syllable in a single line.

Demonstration No. 6: "Eve with her basket was"¹⁴.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡
Eve with her basket was

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. A stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed syllables in each foot. Such a foot is called a Dactylic foot. If a verse line has 2 Dactylic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Dactylic dimeter.

Demonstration No. 7: "And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea"¹⁵.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

U U — U U — U U — U U —

And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea

Explanation: This verse line has 12 syllables. It consists of 4 trisyllabic feet. Two unstressed syllables are followed by a stressed syllable in each foot. Such a foot is called an Anapestic foot. If a verse line has 4 Anapestic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Anapestic tetrameter.

Demonstration No. 8: “Cats look well; kill rats well”¹⁶.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— — — — —

Cats look well; kill rats well.

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. There are three stressed syllables in each foot. Such a foot is called a Molossic foot. If a verse line has 2 Molossic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Molossic dimeter.

Demonstration No. 9: “Good deeds are loved fairly”¹⁷.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— — U — — U

Good deeds are loved fairly.

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. Two stressed syllables are followed by an unstressed syllable in each foot. Such a foot is called an Antibacchaic foot. If a verse line has 2 Antibacchaic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Antibacchaic dimeter.

Demonstration No. 10: “When day breaks, he goes out”¹⁸.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

U — — U — —

When day breaks, he goes out.

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. An unstressed syllable is followed by two stressed syllables in each foot. Such a foot is called a Bacchaic. If a verse line has 2 Bacchaic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Bacchaic dimeter.

Demonstration No. 11: “Half a league, half a league”⁵.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

— U — — U —

Half a league, half a league.

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. A stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable in each foot. Such a foot is called a **Cretic foot**. If a verse line has 2 **Cretic** feet, the verse line is said to be written in **Cretic** dimeter.

Demonstration No. 12: “Beginning is ending”¹⁹.

Pattern of stressed / unstressed syllables:

U — U U — U

Beginning is ending.

Explanation: This verse line has 6 syllables. It consists of 2 trisyllabic feet. A stressed syllable lies between two unstressed syllables in each foot. Such a foot is called an Amphibrachic foot. If a verse line has 2 Amphibrachic feet, the verse line is said to be written in Amphibrachic dimeter.

Functions of Meter

Meter plays a significant role to provide a rhythmic form to a poem. Such a rhythmic structure does not only produce pleasing sounds, but it also creates aesthetic and emotional effects in active readers. It keeps each individual line, couplet, stanza or a whole poem under its dominion. Inclusion of varied metrical feet in verse lines prevents the poem from being monotonous and dull, and makes it special and interesting to recite.

Conclusion

Meter, a prominent and unique element of poetry, is both interesting and challenging to teach in the class. This article is assumed to provide the learners with the basic concept of meter and its musicality to enable them to familiarize and discern metrical forms in English poetry.

Appendix-1: Exercise: Identify the meters in the following verse lines.

1. The dust of snow	26. My way is to begin with the beginning.
2. The rose is out of town	27. The sea is calm tonight.
3. This youth too long has heard the break	28. Love is dying
4. We think our fathers fools so wise we grow.	29. Never, never, never, never.
5. The king in all his wisdom saw that something was amiss.	30. Drop, drop slow tear.
6. Long sounds move slow	31. Touch her not scornfully
7. Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater.	32. The sun is warm, the sky is clear.
8. Picture yourself in a boat on a river with.	33. Go and catch a falling star.
9. And the white breast of the dim sea.	34. My heart is like a singing bird.
10. Be near me when my light is low.	35. She walks in beauty like the night
11. When the blood creeps and the nerves prick.	36. A honey tongue, a heart of gall.
12. Double, double toil and trouble.	37. Blind luck is.
13. Just for a handful of silver he left us.	38. And palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss.
14. All ready to put up the tents for my circus.	39. Willows whiten aspens quiver.
15. It's four in the morning the end of December.	40. Without cause be he pleased, without cause be he cross.
16. When day breaks	41. One for the priest and the one for you.
17. One day I wrote her name upon the strand.	42. And a black black gull bent like an iron bar slowly.
18. Love, a child is ever crying.	43. Her eyes are wild, her head is bare.
19. My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.	44. Who knows his will?
20. The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.	45. How frightened you were once
21. There they are my fifty men and women.	46. This youth too long has heard the break
22. Eve with her basket was	47. I rang them up while touring Timbuctoo.
23. The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold.	48. She sings a song at night and makes me sad and low.
24. Tyger, Tyger burning bright.	
25. Good strong thick stupefying incense smoke.	

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