

Lecture Nine: Prosody

*Lesson Plan

- 1-Introduction
- 2-Features of Prosody
- 3-Scansion and Meters
- 4-Examples of Scansion
- 5-Evaluation

*Lesson Objectives

- To Define Key prosodic concepts as meter, stress and foot.
- To identify stressed and unstressed syllables
- To recognize the metrical patterns as the Iamb, trochee, anapest, ...
- To scan verses then short poems correctly

*Keywords

Prosody, Stress, Intonation, Foot, Meter, Scansion

1-Introduction

Poetry has many features that help in its analysis. **Prosody and scansion** are key elements to comprehend and study any piece of poetry.

-Prosody refers to the study of versification. It is another word for studying the rhythm, stress, foot, meter and intonation of poem. It is also the systematic study of metrical structure.

In verse, **Foot** is the smallest metrical unit of measurement. The prevailing kind and number of feet, revealed by scansion, determines the name of the meter of a poem. The foot is a unit of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Foot is basically divided into a certain number of syllables; that number identifies the name of the foot as follows:

2- Features of Prosody

The word 'prosody' comes from ancient Greek, where it was used for a "song sung with instrumental music". In later times the word was used for the "science of versification" and the "laws of metre", governing the modulation of the human voice in reading poetry aloud. In modern phonetics, the word 'prosody' and its adjectival form 'prosodic' are most often used to refer to those properties of speech that cannot be derived from the segmental sequence of phonemes underlying human utterances. Without any hesitation we may justify prosody as "the grammar of verse" . It is the study of the rhythm, stress, and intonation. Prosody has two branches-

Versification (dealing with the laws of metre) Prosody, therefore, is concerned with the external framework of verse not with its internal thoughts. Like music, poetry is attached with the modulation of speech. It is based on two elements- time and tone. While time is expressed by quantity, tone is presented through accent

A-What is Syllable?

The unit of pronunciation is called syllable. A syllable is a sound or a combination of sounds which can be pronounced at a time with single force. It may consist of a full word or a part of a word. A syllable depends upon a vowel sound no matter how many vowels are there. The number of syllables in a word is equivalent to that of vowel sounds.

Number of vowel sounds in a word = Number of syllables

Such as, the word 'soul' is a monosyllabic in spite of having double vowels, but only one vowel sound. Apparently the very word 'beautiful' is a tri-syllabic (beau-ti-ful), although there are five vowels.

B-What is Stress?

Stress is 'a strong or special exertion of the voice on one word, or one part of the word, so as to distinguish from another.'" It is a generic name comprising both emphasis and accent, which are in fact, special type of stress.

C-What is Intonation?

The way in which our voice rises and falls while speaking is called intonation. It is the music of the language.

D-What is Accent?

Accent is the stress or loudness of voice thrown upon a single syllable in pronouncing a word. It helps the particular syllable to stand out from the other syllable.

E-The Meter refers to the number of feet used in each line. The name of meter depends on how many feet are found in the line. Meter is the rhythmic pattern of a poetic line. The meter can be:

F-What is Foot?

Each accented syllable makes one metrical division of a line of verse. This metrical division is called a foot. "A Foot consists of one accented syllable and one unaccented syllable". The number of syllable to a foot is generally two: it may, however, be three, but it cannot be less than two or more than three.

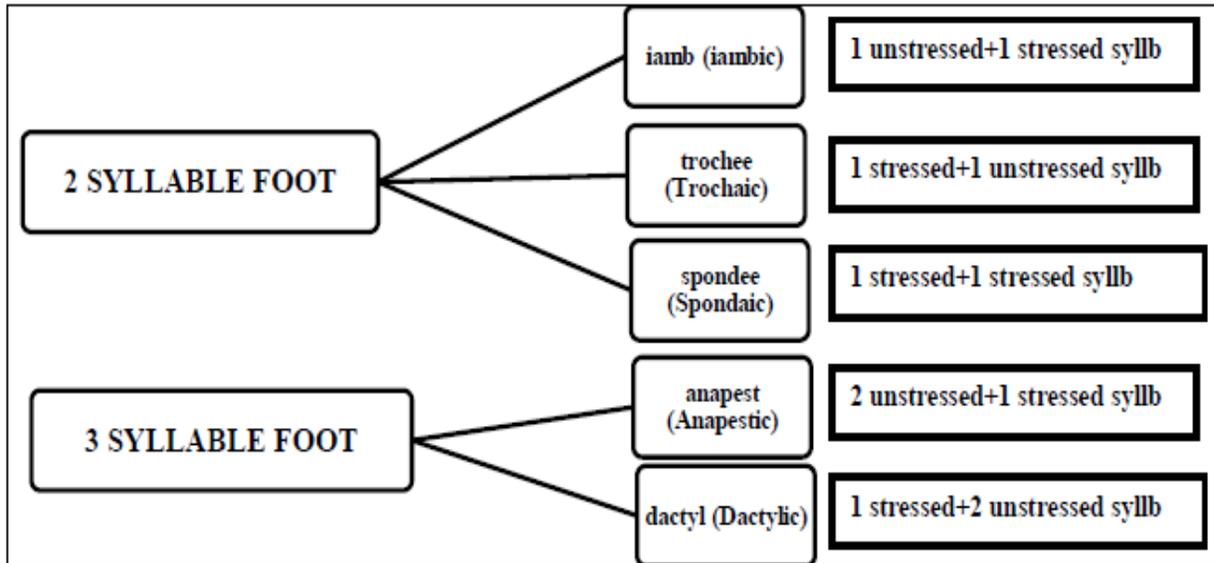
***Monometer**, a rare form of verse in which each line consists of a single metrical unit (a foot or dipody). The best-known example of an entire poem in monometer is Robert Herrick's "Upon His Departure Hence"

Thus I
Passe by,
And die:
As One,
Unknown,
And gone:
I'm made
A shade,
And laid
I'th grave,
There have
My Cave.
Where tell
I dwell,
Farewell.

***Dimeter** refers to the line that consists of two feet, **Trimeter** (line of three feet), **Tetrameter** (line of four feet), **Pentameter** (line of five feet), **Hexameter** (line of six feet), **Heptameter** (line of seven feet), **Octameter** (line of eight feet)

-**Prosody Scansion** refers to metrical scanning of verse relying on the division of lines into syllables, feet and repeated patterns.

3-Scansion and Meters



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It is the study of the rhythm, stress, and intonation. Prosody has two branches- Prosody, therefore, is concerned with the external framework of verse not with its internal thoughts. Like music, poetry is attached with the modulation of speech. It is based on two elements- time and tone. While time is expressed by quantity, tone is presented through accent.

4-Examples of Scansion

Examples of Scansion

1-Iambic Meter: a poem by Dryden

With ravished ears
da DUM da DUM

The Monarch hears
Assumes the God
Affects to nod

And seems to shake the spheres
da DUM da DUM da DUM

2-Iambic Pentameter (2syll×5 feet):

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
1 2 3 4 5

3- Trachaic Tetrameter (2syll×4 feet):

Tell me not in mournful numbers.
1 2 3 4

4- Anapestic Trimeter: (3syll×3 feet):

And the sound of a voice that is still.
1 2 3

5- Dactylic Hexameter: (3syll×6 feet):

This is the forest primeval the murmuring pines and the hemlocks.
1 2 3 4 5 6

5- Evaluation

A-A Short Test

1-Choose the correct answer

1. Prosody mainly refers to the study of:

- A. Literary themes
- B. Sentence structure
- C. Rhythm and sound in poetry
- D. Narrative techniques

2. In poetry, “meter” refers to:

- A. The length of the poem
- B. The regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables
- C. The number of stanzas
- D. The emotional tone

3. A “foot” in prosody is best defined as:

- A. A complete line of poetry
- B. A group of syllables forming a rhythmic unit
- C. A stanza pattern
- D. A rhyme scheme

4. Which of the following is an example of a poetic foot?

- A. Metaphor
- B. Iamb
- C. Symbol
- D. Alliteration

5. An iambic foot consists of:

- A. Two stressed syllables
- B. A stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one
- C. An unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one
- D. Three unstressed syllables

6. “Iambic pentameter” means a line contains:

- A. Five stressed syllables only
- B. Five iambic feet
- C. Ten unstressed syllables
- D. Five rhyme patterns

7. The main purpose of studying prosody is to help students:

- A. Memorize poems
- B. Understand poetic rhythm and sound patterns
- C. Translate poems
- D. Rewrite poems

8. Which element is NOT part of prosody?

- A. Meter
- B. Rhyme
- C. Imagery
- D. Rhythm

B- A Global Task

1-Define the following terms: Scansion, Meter, Foot, Prosody

2- Scan the following Lines and find out the meter used in each one:

From what highth fal'n, so much the stronger provd

He with his Thunder: and till then who knew

The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those

Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage...

3-Write a paragraph about prosody and its main features