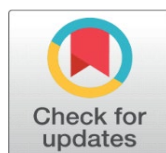


A DISCOURSE ON THE METRICAL COMPOSITION OF TENYIMIA LYRICAL POETRY: FOLK POETRY

Neizevonuo Suokhrie ¹✉

¹ Assistant Professor, Tenyidie Department, Pfutsero Government College, Phek, Nagaland, India



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Corresponding Author

Neizevonuo Suokhrie,
neizevonuo@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a discourse on the metrical composition of Tenyimia Lyrical Poetry. The Tenyimia Lyrical Poetry is one of the major type among the different varieties of Tenyimia Poetry. It has a unique form of versification and metrical composition. So, this paper will attempt to explore the versification and metrical system of Tenyimia Lyrical Poetry with special reference to folk poetry. Tenyimia literature has a very rich oral literature, which not only entertain but also act as an agent of preserving and transmitting cultural values, beliefs and knowledge. The lyrical poetry can also unfurl the poetic art which are aesthetically pleasing. Tenyimia literature with its elegant and classicism canons needed an exposure to the world literature. In the process of developing and exposing the Tenyimia literature, the present paper has a very significant role in unveiling the beauty and unique components and features of its metrical system with reference to the ancient folk poetry. Therefore, it is deemed vital to present and publish this paper to explore and conform the degree of our forefathers' poetic entities as well as to empower and fortify our identity and cultural continuity. The paper shall be analytical in nature and shall adopt the qualitative research method.

Keywords: Tenyimia, Song-line, Folk Poetry, Lyrical Poetry, Metrical, Versification

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to project the beauty and distinct features of Tenyimia folk poetry which is a rare attempt in English medium. The paper also has an objective to promote the Tenyimia literature, sublimating the values and poetic beauties that are hidden in the abyss of the ancient poetry which were passed down through many generations. To entertain with the poetic beauties, to promote, preserve and to transmit the cultural values, beliefs and knowledge. And to highlight the poetic perception of our forefathers' and to maintain a cultural continuity through ancient lyrical poetry in Tenyimia literature.

Tenyimia literature, inscripted in the language tenyidie was found to be initially furnished by the American Missionaries in the 18th century. Though the early works of the American Missionaries were very much different from the present Tenyidie, it is vitally important to acknowledge the contributions of the missionaries in the history of Tenyidie. Among the missionaries, Rev. Charles Dewitt King was the first American Baptist Missionary, who came in the land of Tenyimia in 1881 and started a mission school. History recorded that he wrote books in Tenyidie and the students in the mission school were taught in Tenyidie in the year 1884 but due to the destruction led by war in Tenyimia area, his books were lost which was believed to have burnt down during the destruction ([Liezietsu \(2022\)](#) 15).

Later, in the year 1884 his works were revived by Dr.Sydney W.Rivemburg (Chaha Ketsau). He inscripted the language in written form once again in romans script marking as the first documented Tenyidie literature, whose works were recorded in a published books, “U Niedimia, chapter 6” written by Shürhazelie liezietsu and “Tenyimia Diemvü Dze, chapter 11” written by Beilieü. The tenyimia literature was further escalated by another missionary, Rev. J.E.Tanquist (Tenku Chaha) when he constituted a literature committee in 1939 called “Angami Literature Committee [Liezietsu \(2022\)](#) 63.

“In 1970, the Angami Literature Committee was amended and renamed as Tenyimia Diemvü Houdo (Tenyimia Literature Committee) and later (1971) changed to Ura Academy to expand its activities in promoting the study of all cultural aspects of the Nagas and the Tenyimia people in particular....the era of Ura Academy brought to light many scholarly activities, including stage shows, cultural shows, dramatic performances, traditional songs and music concert. The development in Tenyidie literature, in both literary art and non-literary art, was accelerated [Kuolie. \(2019\)](#) 7.” Hence, since then till date Tenyimia Literature is gaining more popularity, especially with its rich tradition of folk literature; containing folksongs, folktales, proverbs, riddles, myths and folk poetry.

Therefore, Tenyimia Literature in the process of rapid growth needs a discourse on poetic art of Tenyimia folk literature, which is believed to be an open access towards the hidden beauty and richness of Tenyidie poetic art. So this paper is an attempt to explore the lyrical poetry with reference to the ancient Angami poetry. The present study will focus on the versification and metrical composition of the Tenyimia Lyrical poetry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the establishment of the literature committee, Tenyimia literature has a collection of written documents by various Tenyidie writers, regionally in Tenyidie language. But having taken place recently in the research activity with outside world, it has a trifling contribution in exploring and analyzing the literature. A research paper on stylistic analysis of a Tenyimia lyric poem on ‘Avu Nei Hu’ was taken up by Kevizonuo Kuolie. Kuolie, in order to exposed the cultural meanings embedded in the text, the interpretation was identified by the stylistic theoretical parameters forwarded by H.G.Widdowson and Geoffrey Leech. This paper is very resourceful and it is one of the first attempt to produced a systematic research study on lyrical poetry.

Another paper was attempted by Neizevonuo Suokhrie on the renowned Tenyimia lyrical poetry, “Avu Nei Hu”. The paper aims to highlight the enduring significance of folk music as a vital component of cultural heritage. It further emphasized the role of folk poetry and music in preserving and transmitting the rich

cultural history and identity. Another lyrical poetry was explored in a paper by Dr. Metseilhouthie Mor and Dr. Rukulu Kezo on the poem “Shüsie Aneipfü” where they translated the poem as “My Fair Beloved” which showed the interconnection between religion and nature. This paper revealed the premises that Nagas had a strong sense of connection with nature which penetrated every aspects of Nagas. Recently more research papers, dissertations, thesis and research projects were attempted and published relating to Tenyimia literature.

3. METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on both primary and secondary sources. The research adopted a qualitative research method to carry out an in-depth study and analytical with aims to invigorate the rich hidden standard of Tenyimia poetic art in folk lyrical poetry. The paper will follow the guidelines of MLA 7th edition.

4. TENYIMIA LYRICAL POETRY

Tenyimia Lyrical poetry, typically focuses on presenting the thoughts, emotions and deep feelings of an individual. The Tenyimia Lyrical poetry can be broadly categorised into two major sections viz. folk lyrical poetry and modern lyrical poetry. Both the types of lyrical poetry has deep concerns of feelings and emotions but it has a vast thematical variation in dealing its subject matters. Folk lyrical poetries are based on individuals and personal, where, modern lyrical poetry has a broader trending societal affairs to dealt with. The lyrical poetry that has been passed down through generations without a written record were considered as folk poetry which are recorded as those poetry prior to the year 1939 (before the constitution of the literature board and the language inscription) where the poets were unknown. The lyrical poetry that were composed by poets after the year 1939 with an inscripted literature were considered as modern. Thus, Tenyimia poetry is considered to have two main literary age.

According to Kuolie in his remarking book, ‘Diemvü Rhitho Bodeko’ he said, “lyrical poetry is the most important type of poetry among the different types of Tenyimia poetries. He also assert that the metrical composition method is distinctively clear. Even though the lyrical poetries has a diverse thematic subject, the procedure of metrical distribution is same for the entire poetry that counts as Tenyimia lyrical poetry. Because the lyrical poetries are composed to be sung with a pre-existing traditional tune [Kuolie. \(2019\)](#), Diemvü Rhitho Bodeko 80.” The pre-existing traditional tune mentioned here is the mutual traditional line “So hi mo zo sono diyo le” which we found frequently in many folk songs of Tenyimia tribes ([Keyho \(2015\)](#) 40).

5. INTERPRETATION OF THE METRICAL COMPOSITION IN TENYIMIA LYRICAL POETRY

Tenyimia people are found to be very fond of songs and composing poetries to be sung. The renowned traditional song-line “So hi mo zo sono diyo le” has 9 syllables in a line which is religiously needed to be followed when composing a lyrical poetry. And so every lyrical poetry that has been passed down through many generations were documented with the same metrical distribution in the poetry composition as shown in the examples given below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
So	Hi	Mo	Zo	So	No	Di	Yo	Le

So every folk lyrical poetries were found considering the popular Tenyimia song-line while composing a lyrical poetry to be sung. The rigid versification and metrical distribution according to the pre existing tune is shown in the table below with an example from a short Angami folk poetry, 'Thenu Nie We' for the purpose of analysing the present paper.

The poem 'Thenu Nie We' was compiled by Shürhozelie in his book Üca-53, published by Ura Academy. The poem is about a girl and a boy, who seemed to have a profound feelings and caring affection for one another. But underscoring the rich societal norms of our forefather's moral eminence of humility and shame, they both revealed, profound impact of their love towards one another by demeaning oneself and commentated one another by favourable appraisal through out the poem.

Thenu Nie We (A short Angami folk lyrical poem)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The	Nu	Nie	We	Ke	Mhie	Jü	Vuo	-O
The	Pfu	A	Zha	Ke	Zie	Nie	Rü	Sa
Le	Rü	Tuo	Mu	Hie	We	Nie	Rie	Prei
Nie	Nu	Pfü	Nuo	Chü	Ke	Tuo	Mia	Nie
Mia	Thuo	Dza	Re	Mia	Cü	La	Ke	Lie
Le	Rü	Tuo	Mu	A	Se	Hie	Sie	U
Me	Nyie	Pou	Nuo	Sei	Bo	Di	Gei	Ba
Cie	Thie	Pou	Ro	The	Cie	Puo	Rhe	Chü
Lie	Huo	Vuo	-O	The	Nu	Mia	Rü	Li
Cie	Thie	Pa	Ro	The	Cie	Puo	Pie	Ze
Ke	Ta	Sie	Sü	Ra	Ke	Tho	To	Lo

(This short Angami folk poetry is taken from the book 'Üca-53, p.29 (2004)' compiled by Shürhozelie.)

The poem is a very short poem, it has only eleven lines. In the table we can see that, the distribution of syllables are equal with nine syllables in every line. Thus, the lyrical poetries can be long or short but the poet has to choose the right vocabularies to fit into the pre existing song-line. As we further look into the poem we see that validating the rigorous metrical composition the poet were subjugated by the law for which they were subdued with the usage of suffixes even though the syllable is not necessary to be accentuated segregately. So in the poem we have the last syllable 'o' in the first line of the poem and the fourth syllable 'o' in the ninth line of the poetry which were segregated for the lone purpose of the metrical distribution.

Another important feature of folk lyrical poetry is lyrical arrangement of syllables that requires an intermission with breaks or pauses. This intermission or disconnecting of poetry lines are inevitable in Tenyimia lyrical poetry which is not known to many Tenyimia poetry readers as well as modern lyrical poet of present times. As mentioned earlier, the poetries are composed to be sung in a pre existing traditional song-line; the intermission in the poetry are thus, stressed to

emphasized the act of tuning the lyric into the melodious song or poetical composition. This intermission is needed not only for the purpose of singing a traditional song out of the lyrical poetry but it also refers to the requisition of poetry recitation. Kuolie asserted in the light of the recitation of lyrical poetry as, “the nine syllables in each poetry line will be divided in two groups, where the first group comprises of the first four syllables. This first four syllables are to be resounded repetitively without breaks which will be followed by a break or a pause. And after that the second group, comprises of the last five syllables will be resounded repetitively. Which is accounted for beauty and a melodious sounding while reciting a lyrical poetry [D. Kuolie. \(2019\)](#), Diemvü Rhitho Bodeko 82.” The process of intermission in Tenyimia lyrical poetry is shown in the table below from the first 3 lines (stanza 1) of the poem ‘Thenü Nie We’.

1	2	3	4	+	5	6	7	8	9
The	Nu	Nie	We	+	Ke	Mhie	Jü	Vuo	-O
The	Pfu	A	Zha	+	Ke	Zie	Nie	Rü	Sa
Le	Rü	Tuo	Mu	+	Hie	We	Nie	Rie	Prei

The metrical composition of Tenyimia lyrical poetry is thus remarked with its method of distributing each line of the poetry into nine syllables. And also its unique procedure of breaking the nine syllables into two with pauses and repetitive mode has proved evidently essential in the study and recitation of lyrical poetry.

6. CONCLUSION

The metrical composition for lyrical poetry can be apprehended by the distribution of syllables and the disconnecting procedure of poetry lines with pauses and breaks. The set of associated binary division has ornamented the recitation mode of Tenyimia lyrical poetry in a unique way. The beauty of folk poetry does lie much in its metrical composition which is an asset not only for the Tenyimia literature but of Nagas and the world literature. In folk lyrical poetry, more research scopes on other peculiar features like figurative expressions, language usages, thematic study etc. can be attempted too.

The construction of Tenyimia literature within Tenyimia region is rapid but its exposure to the world literature still flies with leaden wings. Therefore, educationist, scholars and researchers concerning the Tenyidie and Tenyimia literature should attempt more research works on crucial topic to promote and explore Tenyimia literature both in the regional language and the medium of English. Which will be a weighty resource for identity and cultural continuity; to preserve, promote and transmit our valuable cultural wisdom, societal norms and the ethical legacies of our ancestors to the young generation of 21st century.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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