

Poetic Meter And Rhythmic Structure In The Work Of Erkin Vakhidov

Mukhammadieva Shakhnoza Bobir kizi

Lecturer at Shahrisabz State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract. This article analyzes the distinctive features of poetic meter and rhythmic structure in the works of Erkin Vakhidov. It examines the application of barmoq (syllabic), aruz (quantitative), and sarbast (free verse) meters in the poet's lyricism, highlighting their roles in shaping poetic content, musicality, and artistic-aesthetic impact. Furthermore, the study explores—through specific examples—the modern interpretation of aruz meter in contemporary Uzbek poetry, the capacity of barmoq meter to evoke a folk-like tone, and the significance of sarbast meter in expressing free thought and inner emotional experiences.

Keywords: poetic meter, rhythm, rhythmic structure, syllabic meter, Aruz meter, free verse, lyric poem, lyrical persona, poetic tone, title, lyrical experience, artistic form, poetic mastery.

Introduction. The work of Erkin Vakhidov holds a significant place in the artistic and aesthetic evolution of 20th-century Uzbek poetry. His multifaceted creative legacy uniquely expresses the national spirit, human emotions, philosophical reflection, and the phenomena of modern life. Beyond the depth of its content, his poetry is distinguished by formal perfection, melodiousness, and rhythmic diversity.

Meter and rhythm are among the essential elements that ensure the artistic impact of a poetic work. While meter determines the organization of poetic speech based on specific order and measurement, rhythm emerges through the regular yet dynamic interplay of sounds, stresses, syllables, pauses, and intonations within the lines. In this regard, examining the use of meter and rhythm in Erkin Vakhidov's poetry offers insight into the poet's craftsmanship, artistic vision, and distinctive style.

Erkin Vakhidov's work occupies a unique position in the development of both classical and modern Uzbek poetry. His artistic legacy is characterized by a harmonious blend of national spirit, human emotion, philosophical reflection, and aesthetic thought. In particular, the interplay between his system of motifs, choice of poetic meter, and imagery represents a milestone that ushered in a new artistic era in Uzbek poetry. The role and significance of Erkin Vakhidov's work in the development of 20th-century Uzbek poetry are truly unparalleled.

Literature riew. Poetic meters serve as a significant artistic device in the work of Erkin Vakhidov. Alongside the traditional Uzbek poetic meters of barmoq (syllabic) and aruz (quantitative), the poet also utilized the possibilities of sarbast (free verse). Sources note that he was equally accomplished in composing poetry using both the barmoq and aruz meters.

The barmoq meter holds a prominent place in Erkin Vakhidov's poetry. In this meter, the rhythm is created through the repetition of a specific pattern of syllable counts across the lines. The poet employed various forms of the barmoq meter in numerous poems addressing themes such as the homeland, humanity, love, youth, national identity, social life, and philosophical reflections.

*Dilga yaqin qo 'shiqalarda sening noming kuylanar,
Har bir giyoh tuprog'ingda tabarrukdir, ey Vatan* [9, 98].

In the passage above, the poet expresses his love for the Motherland through a lyrical segment, enriching it with deep inner emotions. As a result, the poetic passage—written in the syllabic meter—acquires a distinctive musicality.

*Garchi shuncha magrur tursa ham,
Piyolaga egilar choynak.
Shunday ekan, manmanlik nechun,
Kibru havo nimaga kerak?
Kamtarin bol, hatto bir qadam
Otma gurur ostonasidan.
Piyolani inson shuning-chun
O'par doim peshonasidan* [8, 126].

The following poem explores the relationship between human virtues and vices, brilliantly illustrating a distinctive aspect of human nature through the metaphor of a cup.

One of the most significant aspects of the poet's work is his major contribution to the revitalization of the aruz meter during the second half of the 20th century. Yoshlik Devoni (1969), in particular, stands out as a key work that showcases Erkin Vahidov's mastery of the aruz form.

*Kelding olamga, demak, etmas uni so 'rmak, yemak,
Yerni etmog 'ing kerak bo 'ston o 'zing, rizvon o 'zing.*

Studies highlight that the poet composed works in the aruz meter alongside the barmoq (syllabic) meter throughout his life. Erkin Vakhidov primarily utilized the possibilities offered by the ramal and hazaj meters of the aruz system. Research analyzing his ghazals specifically notes the use of the hazaj meter alongside the ramal meter. For instance, the poet's ghazal titled "Lola" is composed in the aruz meter and features lines consisting of fourteen syllables. However, in aruz poetry, factors beyond the mere syllable count—such as syllable length (long vs. short) and the arrangement of metrical feet (rukn)—are also considered crucial.

*Ko 'ngil — bulbuli g 'amgin,
Chamani — kuyi g 'amgin.
Ne ajab qafas o 'rtab,
Badanig 'a o 't tushsa! [4]*

Erkin Vakhidov is a great poet who revived the aruz meter—which was fading from Uzbek literature—and infused it with a modern spirit.

Free verse (sarbast) also appears in Erkin Vakhidov's work. In this meter, the number of syllables in a line and the alternation of long and short syllables (characteristic of aruz) do not adhere to a rigid pattern; instead, the rhythm emerges primarily through content, intonation, syntactic structure, and internal cadence.

*Keksa qarag 'ayning
Ildizin ochib,
Tortdilar qo 'sh arqon solib belidan.
Lekin u tuproqqa panjasin sanchib,
Sira qo 'zg 'almasdi
Ungan yeridan...
Nihoyat, gurs etib yerga quladi,
Butab, so 'ng ko 'tarib ketdilar,
biroq -U o 'z panjasida olib jo 'nadi
Yashagan yeridan Bir siqim tuproq [5].*

Free verse allows a poet to express philosophical thoughts, emotional experiences, or social attitudes with greater freedom. Consequently, Erkin Vakhidov's choice of meter is inextricably linked to the content: the syllabic meter (barmoq) serves the delicate, folk-style expression of lyrical sentiment; the quantitative meter (aruz)—in the form of the ghazal—embodies a classical spirit; and free verse (sarbast) provides the scope for unfettered reflection and modern poetic expression.

*Sen yiroqda,
Yoring yiroqda,
Ortanadi joning firoqda,
Tugab borar bardosh — saboting,
Uchay desang, yoqdir qanoting.
Sevar yoring vasliga mushtiq
Kechalaring otadi uygoq...
Ammo gamdan boshingni bukma,
Shahlo ko 'zdan yoshingni t o 'kma [6].*

The fact that he wrote using barmoq (syllabic), aruz (quantitative), and sarbast (free verse) meters is also noted in literary sources.

Research methodology. Lyrical works constitute the core of Erkin Vakhidov's creative output. In his works, the poet focuses primarily on the harmony between form and content; consequently, the structure of his lyrical works differs fundamentally from that of other writers and poets. According to Dilmurod Quronov: "It is appropriate to begin any discussion regarding the composition of a lyrical work with its external structure.

After all, the division into lines and stanzas serves as a sort of ‘calling card’ for the lyrical work; this feature alone generates a specific aesthetic anticipation in the reader—the excitement of encountering the miracle known as poetry—prompting them to instinctively begin reading with a rhythmic cadence. From the very start, the reader discovers a melody arising from the fusion of rhythm and word meanings; this melody weaves the meanings together, transforming them into a cohesive whole. Upon reflection, it becomes evident that we have observed how three aspects of a lyric poem’s composition—its external (textual) structure, its thematic content, and its rhythmic-intonational framework—intertwine and complement one another to realize a unified aesthetic phenomenon” [1, 220].

Indeed, the external structure of a lyrical work allows the reader to form an initial impression of the piece, which, in turn, sparks a keen interest in the poet’s work. To grasp the qualities unique to Erkin Vakhidov’s works, it is sufficient to focus on the meter and ideas of his poetry.

*Tilak qadrin bilar odamlar,
Yaxshi niyat qilar odamlar.
Do ‘stga tungi orom oldidan
Xayrli kech tilar odamlar.
Xayrli kech — hikmatli istak,
Bu istakni buyurmish yurak.
Xayrli kech — farahli tuning
Osoyishta, tinch bo ‘lsin, demak.
Yer yuzida yashagan inson
Mayliga, u qayerlik bo ‘lsin,
Tinch mehnatda kunlari shodon,
Kechalari xayrli bo ‘lsin [9, 24].*

In the excerpt above, one can also observe the poet employing a distinctive style. First of all, a distinction is made between the main text and the supplementary text (framing elements) within the textual (external) structure of a lyrical work. While division into lines and stanzas pertains to the main text, elements such as the title, genre designation, epigraph, dedication, and the date and location of composition constitute the framing elements. It should be noted that none of these framing elements are mandatory; indeed, the majority of lyrical works contain none of them. However, this does not diminish their significance; on the contrary, whenever they are employed, it is essential that they fulfil a specific ideological and artistic function.

Analysis and Results. In his lyrical works, Erkin Vakhidov places great emphasis on the underlying idea alongside the structure. This is because harmonizing idea and form makes it possible to create a work that is multifaceted, complex, and rich in meaning. The practice of omitting titles for lyrical works has become widespread—a trend partly explained by tradition; with the exception of qit’as, poems in our classical literature were generally untitled. However, the practice of titling lyrical poems has also become quite common in modern Uzbek literature.

For instance, titles given to Erkin Vakhidov’s poems—such as “The Death of Love,” “Far From You,” “Song of Parting,” and “The Spirit of Spring”—serve primarily to evoke a specific emotional state in the reader. Such titles often act as a key to understanding the lyrical persona’s inner experiences and emotional state.

To take an example, the poems “Song of Parting” or “The Moment of Parting Draws Near” are works dedicated by Erkin Vakhidov to Alisher Navoi.

*Ayriliq oni yaqindur, kema yo ‘lboning cholu(r),
Vah, meni tashlab firoqqa, yor yiroqqa yo ‘l olur
Jon borib jono bilan, sohilida bir jismim qolur,
Har qachonkim kemaga ul oy safar raxtin solur,
Mavjlig‘ daryo kabi oshufta ko ‘nglim qo ‘zg‘olur.
Men necha aytdim, ko ‘ngul, jondin kechib yor sevma deb,
So ‘ng yiroqqa ketsa tashlab, urmo oh, dod dema deb,
Ketdi yor, bas endi, kim aytdi yoshingni tiyma deb,
Yig‘lama, ey ko ‘z, nedin sohilga chiqmas kema deb,
Kim yoshing daryosidur har sorikim el ko ‘z solur [10, 124].*

In these lines, the title “The Moment of Parting is Near” establishes the poem’s core emotional essence from the outset, serving to articulate the lyrical protagonist’s anguish in the face of separation. The words “parting” and “moment” within the title signify the inevitability of the impending separation, thereby deepening the themes of longing, suffering, and the experience of parting that permeate the poem. In this regard, the title acts as a crucial poetic key that unlocks the inner world of the lyrical protagonist. Furthermore, the harmony between the title and the poem’s content facilitates the gradual unfolding of the lyrical experience. The impact of separation on the human psyche is powerfully conveyed through the protagonist’s references to the “heart,” “eyes,” and the “beloved.” In particular, images such as the river, the ship, and the shore serve as symbolic representations of the state of separation, rendering the protagonist's inner anguish all the more poignant. Thus, the title not only defines the poem's subject matter but also reveals its emotional and psychological trajectory.

Conclusion. In the works of Erkin Vakhidov, poetic meter and rhythm serve as vital tools for articulating the poet's artistic vision. Analysis reveals that the poet employed barmoq (syllabic), aruz (quantitative), and sarbast (free verse) meters in ways that aligned with the nature of the content and ideas, thereby ensuring the musicality, emotional resonance, and rhythmic integrity of his poems. While the barmoq meter allowed themes such as the homeland, humanity, love, and national identity to be expressed with a fluent, folk-inspired tone, the aruz meter enabled the blending of classical poetic traditions with contemporary subject matter. Meanwhile, sarbast meter facilitated a freer expression of philosophical reflections, inner emotional experiences, and social commentary. Erkin Vakhidov’s lyric poetry is characterized by a harmonious balance between form and content. Structural elements—such as the division into lines and stanzas, the rhythmic-intonational composition, and the title—play a crucial role in shaping the poem’s overall poetic essence. Titles such as “Ayriliq oni yaqindur” (“The Moment of Parting is Near”), in particular, act as poetic keys to understanding the lyrical protagonist’s inner state, foreshadowing the poem's emotional and psychological trajectory. Thus, in Erkin Vakhidov’s work, meter, rhythm, form, and content complement one another to create the poet’s distinctive poetic style.

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