

反復表現のもつ文体的効果 — *or* の場合

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Repetition for Stylistic Effects — In the Case of *or*

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本論文は、反復表現、特に *or* の反復に焦点を当て、現代英語から古英語作品にまで遡りながら、その文体的効果を検証するものである。*or* の反復は、ディケンズの *A Christmas Carol*、the Bible、シェイクスピアの *Romeo and Juliet*、同じくシェイクスピアの *Hamlet*、チョーサーの *Summoner's Tale*、同じくチョーサーの *General Prologue*、そして *Beowulf* において、共通して検証することができ、その文体的効果は多岐に渡る。反復表現は、語彙や表現の多様性を重視した際には、避けられるべき事項として考えられ、ときに幼稚な印象を与えると評価されることもある。また、*or* のような等位接続詞を用いた構文は、洗練されていないと見なされることもある。しかし、反復表現のもつ文体的効果は大きく、ときにそれは聴衆及び読者を引きつける要因となりえると言え、*or* の反復もまた例外ではないと考えられる。

1. Introduction

This paper investigates repetition for stylistic effects, especially in case of repetition of a coordinate conjunction *or*. This paper attempts to

prove the stylistic effects investigating several writing examples from present-day English (PE) to Old English (OE).

A coordinate conjunction *or* is usually considered that it has a function to limit or to correct what one has said already. The function of *or* is important when it is used as a conjunction. The function of the use of *or* in this paper is taken not only as a coordinate conjunction but also as a marker which adds stylistic emphasis in the texts and which can draw the readers' or audiences' attention to the texts when the use of *or* is repeated.

It is considered that repetition of lexical item is effective to add cohesive ties between lines and this area has been studied by Halliday and Hasan (1976)¹, Leech and Short (1981)² and Gutwinski (1974)³. Especially Gutwinski (1974, 57)⁴ admits the effectiveness of coordinate conjunction as a means which adds cohesive ties. These studies are done mainly on PE, however this paper adapts their theories not only into PE but also into Modern English (ModE), Middle English (ME) and OE.

It might be efficient to count numbers of *or* with the computer-based texts if the main purpose of this investigation is directly related to the numbers of the use. However, how and where the use of *or* is repeated is taken most importantly to prove why the use is effective in this investigation, so each text is actually read and each example is chosen.

The use of *or* is mainly divided into two groups: one is parallel use and the other is contrastive use. Parallel use lists items which have same or similar meaning as in *happy or glad*, on the other hand, contrastive use lists items which have opposite or different meaning as in *good or bad*. In this investigation, the parallel uses of *or* are mainly focused.⁵

2. Examples and Evaluations

Charles Dickens is known as one of the greatest writers in English literature and an example of repetition of *or* which can be effective to tell an unusualness of a situation is seen in his *A Christmas Carol*. Marley's Ghost appears in front of Scrooge and the Ghost tells Scrooge that three Ghosts will visit him. Then the Ghost goes away.

(1)

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say, 'Humbug!' but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

(*A Christmas Carol*. Ch. 1; emphasis added)

Scrooge is so tired that he cannot finish saying *Humbug!* which is considered as a favorite word of Scrooge. It is noticed that the repetition of *or* is used to explain the reasons why Scrooge is very tired. Having been visited by Marley's Ghost, Scrooge gets tired and he cannot stay awake any longer. It is suggested that the use of repetition of *or* to explain the reason of Scrooge's tiredness is effective to tell audiences how Scrooge is tired in this scene and how unusual experience it is to be visited by the Ghost for Scrooge. It may be true that the repetition of *or* in the example (1) makes a

sentence longer and creates a dull impression. However, the way of telling the reasons of Scrooge's tiredness, which are told continuously, is successful in the scene and the repetition of *or* can be an element which attracts the readers to the scene.

Repetition is sometimes effective to help conveying a pleasant atmosphere of a scene. In the following lines from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the repetition of *or* that is assumed to have this type of effect is seen. The Ghost of Christmas Present visits Scrooge and he takes Scrooge to streets of Christmas. The lively atmosphere of the street is described and they arrive at a grocery store.

(2)

The Grocers'! oh the Grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress:

(*A Christmas Carol*. Ch. 3; emphasis added)

It is noticed that the use of *or* is all related to the description of the grocery store. It is assumed that the liveliness of the Christmas streets is more emphasized in this scene where the grocery store is described. These descriptions go on continuously without being stopped. The technique that the writer tells things continuously helps to create the atmosphere of an excitement or an enjoyment and it seems successful in the example (2) to attract the readers' attention to the scene.

In *Leviticus* of the Bible (King James Version), a use of repetition of *or* which is effective to give wide variety of choice of words is seen. God set up laws for Israelites and many of the laws were about being holy and worshiping God.

(3)

22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer *for* a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

24 Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall you make *any* offering *thereof* in your land.

25 Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption *is* in them, *and* blemishes *be* in them: they shall not be accepted for you.

26 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

27 When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam; and from eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

(*Leviticus. 22:22-27; emphasis added*⁶)

In the line twenty-two, words related to physical injury such as *blind, broken, maimed, having a wen, scurvy* and *scabbed* are linked with *or*. Also, in the line twenty-four, it is to be noticed that the words linked by *or* are related to the physical injury. The repetition gives a strong impression of an image of the physical damage. In line twenty-seven, words related to animals such as *a bullock, a sheep* and *a goat* linked with *or* appear. Of particular interest is that *a bullock* or *a lamb* are linked in line twenty-three. The repetition of these words gives an impression of a variety of animals. That the repetitions seen in the example (3) are for stylistic effective is suggested. Connecting similar words with *or*, such as those related to physical injury and to animals, are here used to create a strong impression.

Repetition is sometimes effective for adding an emotional emphasis to a scene. This is true with William Shakespeare who is considered by many to be the greatest writer in the English literature, an example of the repetition of *or* being seen in his *Romeo and Juliet*, where Juliet realizes that she will be forced to marry Paris even though she is not willing to do so. Juliet laments for her fate. Hearing Juliet, Laurence suggests to Juliet that there is something he can do to cause the marriage not happen. At the same time, he warns her that she has to have a strong will and make a decision which will show she will not fear losing her life.

(4)

JULIET

O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of any tower,
Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk
Where serpents are. Chain me with roaring bears,
Or hide me nightly in a charnel-house
O'ercover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls,
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud --
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble --
And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

(*Romeo and Juliet*. IV. i. 77-88⁷; emphasis added)

Juliet does not hope to marry Paris. She loves Romeo. Juliet needs Laurence's help to avoid marrying Paris even if she has to be prepared to lose her life. Employing *or* repeatedly, Juliet tells Laurence how much she does not hope to marry Paris and emphasizes her strong will to do anything if she can live as a wife of Romeo. This is a scene of high emotion where Juliet declares to Laurence her true love for Romeo. The repetition of *or* helps to emphasize the atmosphere which Juliet is attempting to create. It is through this scene and through the repetition of *or* that audiences come to share the same feelings.

Another example of repetition of *or* which suggests an emotional emphasis is seen in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The Ghost of Hamlet, the late King of Denmark, tells Hamlet, son of the late King Hamlet, that King

Hamlet was poisoned and killed by Claudius, a brother of the late King of Denmark and now the present King. Hamlet promises the Ghost that he will take revenge on Claudius. After the Ghost goes out, Marcellus and Horatio come to Hamlet and Hamlet makes them promise that they will never tell anybody that they saw the Ghost.

(5)

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come,
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd some'er I bear myself --
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on --
That you, at such time seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, we know', or 'We could, an if we would',
Or 'If we list to speak', or 'There be and if they might',
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me -- this do swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you.

(Hamlet. I. v. 173-88; emphasis added)

Hamlet tells Marcellus and Horatio that they cannot say anything they know about Hamlet. In the example (5), Hamlet tells them how they

are to react and uses the repetition of *or* in these lines. Hamlet tells them that they are to pretend that they know nothing about his true state of mind. Using *or* as a binding element, Hamlet repeatedly tells them the same thing in different ways. The repetition of lines suggests an emotional emphasis on the part of Hamlet, and, at the same time, indicates to the audience the importance of what he is saying. For Hamlet, it is important that his wish by other to harm Claudius not be noticed by others in order to do so successfully. This scene, therefore, is one of the most important in the story and the repetition of *or* can be seen as a technique of the writer to hold audience attention.

Another example of the repetition of *or* can be seen in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*. A summoner starts telling a tale about a friar. At a church, the friar asks people to give him things to help the souls in purgatory. The following example is from the friar's lines.

(6)

“Yif us a busshel whete, malt, or reye,
A Goddes kechyl, or a trype of chese,
Or elles what yow lyst, we may nat cheese;
A Goddes halfpeny, or a masse peny,
Or yif us of youre brawn, if ye have eny;
A dagon of youre blanket, leeve dame,
Oure suster deere --- lo! Heere I write youre name ---
Bacon or beef, or swich thyng as ye fynde.”

(*SumT.* 1746-53⁸; emphasis added)

Being sure to mention God, the friar asks people to give him various kinds of things in a way that suggests his comical character. In

keeping with the scene, the repetition of *or* in these lines helps to create a sort of liveliness as well as emphasizing the cunningness of the friar.

Another example of the repetition of *or* is from Chaucer's *General Prologue of the Canterbury Tales*. The writer tells the reader that he will describe how people in the Tabard acted and what they said. The writer also strongly suggests how important it is to describe exactly what people did and said.

(7)

For this ye knowen al so wel as I:
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.

(*CT. GP.* 730-38; emphasis added)

Here one can feel the strong will of the writer to describe exactly how people in the Tabard acted and what they said. Using the repetition of *or*, the writer indicates that things have to be what people said, even if it is rude. Chaucer uses *or* in example (7) to emphasize the comedy of human existence accurately.

Beowulf is a well-known OE poem. Here, too, the repetition of *or* can be seen. In the following lines, King Hrothgar warns Beowulf not to be arrogant, that Beowulf should know that neither his strength nor his life

are permanent.

(8)

‘Bebeorh þē ðone bealo-nīð, Bēowulf lēofa,
‘secg betsta, ond þē þæt sēlre gecēos,
‘ēce rāedas; ofer-hýda ne gým,
‘māra cempa! Nū is þīnes mægnes blæd
‘āne hwīle; eft sōna bið
‘þæt þec ādl oððe ecg eafopes getwāfeð,
‘oððe fýres feng oððe flōdes wylm
‘oððe gripe mēces oððe gāres fliht
‘oððe atol ylðo, oððe ēagena bearhtm
‘forsitedð ond forsworcedð; semninga bið,
‘þæt ðec, dryht-guma, dēað oferswýðeð.

(*Beowulf*. 1758-68; emphasis added)

Hrothgar emphasizes to Beowulf the vanity of his strength and his life. It is interesting if it is remembered that Beowulf will be killed after a terrible battle with a dragon later on in the story. Hrothgar seems to be predicting that Beowulf will be attacked by the fire of the dragon when the words *fýres feng* (*fire's embrace*) are mentioned. The repetition of *oððe* (*or*) adds a powerful stylistic emphasis by intensifying the rhythmic structure of the lines. It should not be assumed that it is mere coincidence that the more *oððe* (*or*) occurs, the more important the surrounding imagery is for the scene.

3. Conclusion

In PE, it is usually considered that a repetition of a lexical item, a phrase or an idiom should be avoided, especially as it is a characteristic of children's speech acts. In addition, sentences which make use of coordination structure using conjunctions like *or* are understood as compound sentences. In connection with this, Wales (1989, 82-83) mentions "excessive use of co-ordination is regarded as unsophisticated in formal writing".

However, it seems too hasty to automatically judge the repetition of *or* seen in the above examples as unsophisticated. It would be almost impossible to recognize the repetition of *or* as employed in Dickens, the Bible, Shakespeare, Chaucer and *Beowulf* as anything other than sophisticated.

The repetition of *or* seen in this paper are evidences of use by writers to attract the audience, to entertain the readers and to communicate in the most effective manner possible what they want to tell to their readership. In this context, Wales (1989, 82-83) states that "[c]ompound sentences occur commonly in (oral) narratives and chronicles". This means that the compound sentences using conjunctions like *or* have an oral side in them. It is, thus, one technique at a writer's disposal to turn a readership into an audience, even if they cannot sit in front of them and read their works as oral narratives.

As this investigation illustrates, the repetition of *or* is a phenomenon which can be seen commonly through OE to PE. One would expect it to continue to be so in the future, too.

Notes

- ¹ Halliday and Hasan (1976, 288) attests "Type of lexical cohesion: I. Reiteration (a) same word (repetition)".
- ² Leech and Short (1981, 244) mentions "Formal repetition: repeated use of an expression (morpheme, lexical item, proper name, phrase, etc) which has already occurred in the context."
- ³ Gutwinski (1974, 73) attests "Occurrence of the same lexical items or of synonyms or other members of the same co-occurrence class (lexical sets) in two or more adjacent or not too distant sentences can be cohesive".
- ⁴ Gutwinski (1974, 57) attests "A. Grammatical 2. Coordination and subordination (a) connectors B. Lexical 1. Repetition of item".
- ⁵ Contrastive use of *or* will be investigated in future study.
- ⁶ The italics and the capitals are original and not mine. The use of *or* in *sperflous or lacking* seen in the line twenty-three can be an example of contrastive use of *or*.
- ⁷ Expressions *bid me* and *hide me* are also repeated in the lines. These repetition are also considered as an element which adds stylistic effects. These types of phrasal repetition will be investigated in a future study.
- ⁸ Repetition of *if* is seen in the lines and it is suggested the repetition of *if* can be an element for stylistic effects. The repetition of *if* will be investigated in a future study.

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