

STYLISTIC PATTERNS OF REPETITION AND PARALLELISM IN MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH

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Stylistic, repetition, parallelism, Foregrounding Theory, speech, lexical, textual

Article History

Received: 12 June 2025

Accepted: 22 August 2025

Published: 04 September 2025

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Tahir Shah**Abstract**

The paper examines the stylistic value of repetition and parallelism in the speech "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King Jr., and demonstrates that repetition and parallelism are not only ornamental features but also essential instruments of rhetorical eloquence and literary style. Based on Foregrounding Theory, the poetic-functional-discourse-stylistic approaches proposed by Jakobson, the analysis explains how the functions of lexical repetition, anaphora, epistrophe and syntactic parallelism create a rhythmic, cohesive and thematic salience. This paper analyzed how effective reiteration of the phrases, I have a dream and Now is the time along with some other strong recurring motifs, promote the feeling of urgency, hope, and unity in the speech and making it more memorable and emotionally captivating. Such formal structuring transform abstract principles into colorful visual images, mixed with political urgency, biblical cadence and African American oral tradition. The results show that repetition and parallelism work at three interdependent levels, namely; as rhythmic persuasion, which helps to sustain attention of the audience; as thematic reinforcement, which helps to cement cohesiveness; as aesthetic elevation, which helps to relate rhetoric to literature. After all, King's speech is a political, and transcendent work of rhetorical eloquence, the greatness of which consists in the overwhelming synthesis of style and rhetorical fantasy.

INTRODUCTION**Background of the Study**

As a crossroads between linguistics and literary criticism, Stylistics provides a systematic framework for examining the literary and communicative function of language used in literary texts. Though there are many stylistic figures, repetition and parallelism are well placed in poetry for their contribution to rhythm, cohesion, emphasis and

aesthetic appeal. As Leech and Short (2007) write, repetition is not redundancy but is a discursive pattern with the purpose of emphasizing lexical items or structures, thereby increasing meaning and emotional impact. Moreover, the poetic discourse is symmetrical, balanced, and rhetorically efficient due to parallelism (repeating similar structures of the syntax) (Fabb 2015).

Repetition and parallelism are considered a longtime poetic zeitgeist. Jakobson (1960) focused on this tendency as one of the elements of the so-called poetical function of language, the focus upon the message. These figures of style are not only the sources of beauty and memorability to verse, but they also play a significant role in the question of thematic unity. As an example, Tannen (2007) mentions repetition as the discursive means that creates the sense of connection, persuasion and emphasis which seems to be extrapolable beyond the area of poetry. They are also valuable tropes in the piece of literature since they help the researchers to track the nature of form and meaning to generate aesthetic and cultural meaning (Simpson 2014).

In more recent criticism, it has been reiterated that both repetition and parallelism are not only ornamental, but also helpful interpretative clues to poetry, which draws the reader to their focus, and to interpretations of processes (Burke 2014). Another way in which poets can be more effective in their use of rhythmic and image patterns is by concentrating on structural patterns, used to sustain emotional and cognitive impact of their poems. In such a way, the critical method of the study of the aesthetic and communicative nature of the language unites literary art and linguistic analysis: the process of study of the code of repetition and parallelism of poetry. Moreover, stylistic studies of the literary traditions reveal that repetition and parallelism are also cognitively and culturally useful. Carter (2010) argues that such devices help the reader to learn and retain the sense of the poetry and Hasan (1989) mentions how parallel structures function as cohesive tie that communicates the sense of portions of the text. In oral, performative tradition, there is also an aspect of repetition, parallelism for mnemonic purposes, as illustrated by the essay on orality and literacy by Marshall McLuhan Ong (2012) on the rhetorical aspects of performance and of memory in a community.

The crucial role of such machines in poetry composition has been well known for a long time. Cuddon (2013) agrees that repetition is one of the oldest and most universal elements in poetry that enhances emotions, it unifies the stanzas and serves as a mnemonic aid. Like similitude, parallelism, a common form in Biblical poetry and oral tradition,

plays the role of rhythmic and rhetorical symmetry, which grants authority and solemnity to the poetic voice (Alter, 2011). Discussing these patterned forms, Attridge (2013) mentions that they not only produce harmony and balance, but also foreground contrast, irony, and reflect the relationship between form and content in the dynamic interplay of poetry. This concern with pattern is characteristic of modern tendencies in stylistics, and belongs to a wider change of direction towards an interpretation of the relationship between form and aesthetics in language. According to Norgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010), a repetition/parallelism study is useful to make scholars realize how poets exploit language material so as to create poetic resonance and interpretative indeterminacy. So the analysis of style, of how poets repeat and parallel - is not merely an analysis of form but of how language is doing a task of meaning, of memory and artistry in cultural and literary situations.

Statement of the Research Problem

I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr. is hailed internationally as a rhetorical masterwork and a cultural icon, yet the majority of scholarship has been less concerned with how it is rhetorically constructed than with its historical and political implications. However, this is one of the greatest elements which contribute to the speech that makes it so persuasive and poetic, as King deliberately resorted to repetition and parallelism not only to have the effect of rhythm, emphasis, but also to re-emphasize the theme of justice, freedom, and equality. However, there is a gap in understanding how these stylistic patterns are understood to work in the speech, to construct meaning, to invoke emotions and produce memorability, though the rhetorical superiority of the speech has been acknowledged. The issue is therefore that there has been very little stylistic analysis so far that is subtle enough to explain the stylistic application of repetition and parallelism that add to the aesthetic and/or persuasive appeal of this iconic text. This paper fills that gap by exploring the manner in which these patterns can serve as linguistic strategies to bring the discourse out of a political speech to a rhetorical and literary discourse forever.

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the stylistic patterns of repetition and parallelism in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "*I Have a Dream*" speech which may contribute to its rhythm, emphasis, and thematic coherence.
- To evaluate the role of repetition and parallelism in enhancing the rhetorical effectiveness and literary quality of the speech, specifically in reinforcing its persuasive power and emotional appeal.

Research Questions

- How do the stylistic patterns of repetition and parallelism in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "*I Have a Dream*" speech which may contribute to its rhythm, emphasis, and thematic coherence?
- What is the role of repetition and parallelism in enhancing the rhetorical effectiveness and literary quality of the speech, specifically in reinforcing its persuasive power and emotional appeal?

Significance of the study

The study is valuable to literature and rhetoric in that it offers one a step further than the linguistic study and a step closer to the socio-political discourse. Following the stylistic trends of repetition and parallelism in the words of the speech of Martin Luther King Jr. *I have a dream*, the study also brings to the fore the use of word choice in the effectiveness and theoretical literary art of the fourth most influential and influential text in the twentieth century. Regarding literature, the research is a contribution to the study of style since it demonstrates how repetition and parallelism as foregrounding devices operate, in order to increase the degree of rhythm, coherence and memorability. In terms of prose, it describes how this form expands the message of justice and equality that King is attempting to convey and how it affects the perception and emotional response of the listener or reader. Moreover, there is pedagogical value in the study in instructing students of linguistics, literature and communication how powerful stylistic devices might create persuasive discourse from everyday language. Moreover, it contributes to interdisciplinary research, by offering the applicability of stylistic analysis to non-fictional texts

and more specifically political speeches - broadening the scope of stylistics which is typically applied to literary genres only. Finally, this study underlines the importance of discursive practices in the construction of the past and the concept of cultural memory and will therefore be of interest to researchers in various fields, including literature, linguistics, rhetoric, history and communication studies.

Literature Review

The stylistic analysis has become an accepted critical tool for understanding poets' manipulation of language for aesthetic, rhetorical and cultural ends. Inspired by the work of such stylisticians as Halliday (1971), who argued that poetry is a sort of 'linguistic deviation' - meaning that it highlights our attention by breaking everyday rules of language, and therefore drawing our attention to meaning. Likewise, Fowler (1975) emphasized the social grounding of stylistics, insisting on a link between poetic style and ideology and culture. These views emphasise the importance of viewing stylistics as that which is not simply formal, but the relationship between form and meaning and social function.

Other great scholars have approached poetry from a discourse and reader response standpoint. Fish (1980) assumed that interpretation is affected by stylistic information cues that are present in the text and in the reader's expectations, and that stylistics is consequently inseparable from the processes of reading. This was supported by Black (2006) who proposed that stylistic analysis of poetry helps the reader to see the multi layers of meaning through the patterning of language (particularly figurative language, imagery, sound devices). Enkvist (1973) earlier called stylistics the "science of style" which deals with the way in which statistical and structural features of poetic language are responsible for cohesion and originality.

More recent work describes the interface between stylistics and cognitive linguistics. Stockwell (2002) developed the term "cognitive poetics," which extends stylistic analysis to include an awareness of how the reader's mind actually functions when consuming poetic patterns such as metaphor, rhythm and parallelism. Verdonk (2002) also stresses the importance of stylistics in understanding how

figurative words and sentences are "audited by the imagination and the emotions" of the reader, because of the repetition of words, the foregrounding of words, and the sound symbolism of language. Moreover, the approaches presupposed by these perspectives take stylistic analysis of poetry beyond description to account for the ways in which language has concrete hermeneutical and affective implications.

Further, each of the major traditions of world poetry has been studied with the aid of stylistics. Carter (2010) emphasized that stylistic techniques are helpful in demonstrating how poets are able to transform the everyday stock of language into high art. Hall (2014) extended this to multimodal stylistics and suggested that poetic meaning is often to be found in the interaction between visual, oral and textual modes, especially in the case of performance poetry. Collectively, their works show that not only is stylistic analysis central to an explanation of the craft of poetry but that stylistic analysis is also central to an explanation of the cultural, cognitive and communicative aspects of poetry.

This modern usage has been extended by modern theorists who have studied the role of the stylistic elements of a great diversity of poetical traditions. Even Fabb (2015) himself argued that the cognitive role of fixed patterns including rhyme and parallelism contributing to memorization and meaning should be incorporated into the analysis of poetic style. Moreover, Attridge (2013) once again points to the significance of rhythm and meter as resources of style that are dialogic in their relation to the semantic and cultural life of poetry. Poetry too, as Carter and Stockwell (2008) opine has the creative exploitation of natural language whereby the ordinary structural organization of language is accorded extra-linguistic roles of extreme expressive possibilities.

Stylistic analysis has, in an applied sense, been used in the analysis of literature, both of canonical and modern poetry. Instead, Wales (2014) emphasizes the role that stylistics plays in making visible the relationship between linguistic deviation and literary innovation, specifically in the field of modern and postmodern poetry, where the classic patterns are violated to create new aesthetic effects. This also carries with it, as Hasan (1989) indicates, stylistic

features serve with a cohesive and thematic relevance, and this fact suggests the poetic language operates at micro and macro levels of textual organization. In more recent work, Burke (2014) has defended the interdisciplinarity of stylistics, and its role in mediating between linguistic analysis and cognitive science, cultural studies and literary interpretation.

The study of style in poetry has also seen a continuous transformation in methodology, which is what unites the linguistic approach, the literary approach, and the cognitive approach to the question of how poets approach language aesthetically and communicatively. An early attempt, by Mukarovsky (1964), and the Prague School, refined the concept of foregrounding, or how poetic language manifests itself (how it makes itself felt), via parallelism, sound play and what has been called an estrangement of the mundane. This consideration appears to be one of the main issues of concern in stylistics when analyzing a new formal manipulation in order to attain an effect in poetry.

Pratt (1977) extended stylistic inquiry further by considering the relation of discourse to literature and by showing how pragmatic structures, especially speech acts and conversational strategies, are modified in poetic discourse to achieve aesthetic as well as rhetorical effects. Likewise, Culler (1975) advocated a semiotic approach to poetry on the ground of the assumption that literary conventions give rise to conventions of interpretation and literary competence. These essays remind us of the interpretive nature of stylistic analysis; of its connection between linguistic form and cultural meaning.

In the contemporary era, scholars have added theory of cognition, discourse and rhetoric to style. Freeman (1970) was among the first to try and apply transformational grammar to poetry and is responsible for an analysis of the relationship between syntax and poetic meaning. Toolan (1998) emphasized the role of stylistics in narrative and poetic discourse, illustrating the ways in which patterns in the text suggest a reader's expectations and responses. In style, Turner (1996) applied conceptual blending theory, which indicated that metaphors and poetic figures integrate multiple mental spaces to create new meanings. Arguing from

a relevance-theoretical standpoint, Pilkington (2000) has stated that poetic effects are the product of the inferential engagement of readers with regularities of style.

Other stylisticians, like Short (1996), pointed to the pedagogical usefulness of stylistic analysis in poetry and demonstrated that it provides readers with interpretive tools that make poetic language understandable and meaningful. Mukherjee (2010) extended the application of stylistics to Indian English poetry, proving that it is cross-cultural. More recently, Norgaard et al. (2010) have emphasised the interdisciplinary nature of stylistics, fusing multimodal and cognitive viewpoints to fluently understand poetic form in modern times. Thornborrow and Wareing (1998) also pointed out that stylistics gives an account of the interplay between ideology, discourses and poetic form, widening its purview from aesthetics to socio-political criticism.

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative descriptive research design under the paradigm of stylistic analysis. Since the central concern is to characterize linguistically the patterns of repetition and parallelism in the speech of Martin Luther King Jr. entitled "I Have a Dream," the analysis does not entail statistical testing but is based on systematic textual analysis. The research is informed by the principles of literary stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2014), which focuses on rhetorical and aesthetic effects that are produced by the choices of language.

The main data for this research is the speech entitled "I Have a Dream", delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. on August 28, 1963 during the March on Washington. The text of the speech has been transcribed from trusted published sources and was checked for accuracy. Only the official record is taken as a data, because it is the linguistic material that is exposed to stylistic analysis.

Data collection is done through close reading and extracting the text evidence of repetitions and repetitions in the speech. Repetition is defined on lexical, phrasal and clause levels; e.g. repeated words and catchphrases like "I have a dream", and parallelism is defined in structural patterns, e.g. syntactic symmetry of phrases and clauses. Each

instance is then coded and classified for further analysis.

The analysis is based on a stylistic system combining Foregrounding Theory (Mukarovsky, 1964, Leech, 2008), Jakobson's (1960) definition of the poetic function of language and discourse-stylistic approaches (Wales 2014, Simpson 2014). Foregrounding Theory is a way of describing how repetition and parallelism depart from normal discourse, and thus become prominent. Jakobson's framework is used to describe how these patterns contribute to the self-reflexive and rhythmic nature of the speech and discourse-stylistic perspectives are used to describe how the linguistic patterns contribute to meaning, emotional effect and rhetorical power.

The data are evaluated in two stages. The first is descriptive, and it aims at the identification and classification of phenomena of repetition (anaphora, epistrophe, lexical recurrence) and parallelism (syntactic, semantic and rhetorical parallelisms). The second stage is interpretive, looking at the stylistic and rhetorical functions of the patterns and at how they help rhythm, emphasis and thematic reinforcement. Findings are offered with textual evidence and underpinned with linguistic and stylistic theories, in order to demonstrate how repetition and parallelism lift the speech to the status of a persuasive political act as well as a literary text.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Repetition and Parallelism in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" Speech

Repetition and parallelism are some of the most prominent stylistic devices that Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech employs, in both rhetorical and aesthetic ways. They provide rhythm, thematic unity and emphasize the main concepts of justice, freedom and equality. This part investigates some important examples of these tendencies, using stylistic models like Foregrounding Theory (Mukarovsky, 1964; Leech, 2008) or Jakobson's (1960) poetic function of language.

Anaphora: "I have a dream"

Perhaps the most famous aspect of Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech is his frequent use of the anaphoric phrase "I have a dream." Anaphora, which refers to

the repetition of an initial word or phrase in a sequence of clauses and sentences, is a traditional rhetorical device that gives rhythm, emphasis and cohesion to the body of the text (Wales, 2014). In King's speech the phrase is used several times in the second half of his address until it reaches an octave of vision and hope:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: *'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'*"

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice." (King, 1963)

This repetition works both stylistically and rhetorically, and renders the speech a layered performance of the vision, rhythm, rhetoric and identity. Such a magnitude of repetition would normally be redundant in normal discourse, but in the context of Foregrounding Theory (Mukarovsky 1964; Leech 2008) conscious deviation from the linguistic rules maximises awareness and aesthetic effects. By repeating the phrase I have a dream, King is making his personal dream a collective dream to form the abstract concept of hope as the major theme of his speech. Collectively, their works show that not only is stylistic analysis central to an explanation of the craft of poetry but that stylistic analysis is also central to an explanation of the cultural, cognitive and communicative aspects of poetry.

This modern usage has been extended by modern theorists who have studied the role of the stylistic elements of a great diversity of poetical traditions. Even Fabb (2015) himself argued that the cognitive role of fixed patterns including rhyme and parallelism contributing to memorization and meaning should be incorporated into the analysis of poetic style. Moreover, Attridge (2013) once again points to the significance of rhythm and meter as resources of style that are dialogic in their relation to the semantic and cultural life of poetry. Poetry too,

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"Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California...

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi..." (King, 1963).

The refrain's strength comes from its cumulative and incantatory rhythm. Each line starts with the

imperative Let freedom ring, but the effect is enhanced by the variety of geographical locations, from North to South, East to West. This self-conscious enumeration of place performs inclusiveness, symbolically superimposing the ideals of freedom onto the American landscape as a whole. From the stylistic point of view, the repeated refrain is multi-functional. In terms of foregrounding and musicality, Jakobson's (1960) concept of the poetic function indicates that the repetition of Let freedom ring calls attention to the linguistic form itself, using musical cadences to elevate the speech into a sort of incantation. This foregrounded rhythm elevates prose into something closer to poetry, and memorability and emotional resonance are the result. Cohesion and amplification even further accentuate the effect: repetition, as Wales (2014) notes, gives textual cohesion, tying discrete clauses together into a cohesive whole. With each repetition, epistrophe complements and strengthens, depositing meaning and emotion. Finally, thematically, the refrain also emphasizes the universality of freedom. King's association of the word "freedom" with multiple topographical spaces expands the word's semantic territory, making it a universal and nationalized right that crosses regional, class, and racial boundaries.

To the persuasion is added the parallelism, which elevates the speech to the plane of literature and poetics. The combination of metaphor (mountain of despair / stone of hope; discords / symphony), parallelism, and public pronouns makes the passage, more than anything, sound like poetry, rather than political oratory.

Interpretive Commentary

Next to the persuasion, there is the parallelism, which gives the speech the level of literature and poetics. Metaphor (mountain of despair / stone of hope; discords / symphony) and parallelism, in addition to the use of public pronouns, make the excerpt, above all, sound like poetry, not political speech.

Evaluation of Repetition and Parallelism in Enhancing Rhetorical Effectiveness and Literary Quality

The speech by Martin Luther King Jr. I Have a Dream reveals how repetition and parallelism can elevate themselves over the application of simple stylistic ornamentation in order to achieve the substance of rhetorical power and literary form. These devices not only include a discourse, but also the force of persuasion and the influence of feeling.

The paradigmatic nature of such anaphoric pronoun use by King to prefix the word dream is that repetition can raise a political utterance to the status of collective vision:

"I have a dream one day every valley will be lifted high, every hill and mountain brought down, the rough places made smooth, the crooked places made straight..." (King, 1963)

In this case we have the refrain, as Leech (2008) calls the foregrounding, which gains more attention and causes the message to stick in the minds of the audience. This constant allusion to dream is a subversion of hope as the prevailing subject, and would render the argument all the more persuasive as it would entail the production of a feeling of fate and of moral necessity. As such, the stylistic device represents the abstruse concept of racial justice as an expression of visual concrete and emotional weight.

The literary technique of repetition and parallelism drives the speech out of political rhetoric into literature. The use of biblical rhythm and cadence as well as symbolism (e.g., mountain of despair vs. stone of hope) in the speech is consistent with what Simpson (2014) refers to as literary stylistics, when rhetorical constructions acquire aesthetic value. Not only is the address convincing, but it also is literary in character and therefore will persist through generations to come.

Interpretive Evaluation

The rhetorical power, the emotional value, and the literary originality of the message are enhanced by parallelism and repetition in the speech delivered by King simultaneously. Rhetorical power-wise, repetition makes the urgency and conviction of his message stronger and imprints central ideals-dreams, freedom, belief, and justice into the minds of the audience. At the emotional resonance level,

parallelistic patterns and rhythmic launches evoke the utterance of a sermon, wherein one can find an expression of affective reaction, depending on the culture and religion one shares with the listeners. Finally, these stylistic devices contribute to the improvement of the writing as a literary work, whose aesthetical composition gives the speech a lyrical beauty that cannot be found in the usual political speech, such that the speech can be read not only as an argumentative text, but as a poem.

These stylistic elements are used in accordance with the theory of foregrounding introduced by Mukarovsky (1964), which inscribes the text as something special, and Jakobson (1960) describes how the poetic role makes the maximal impact. The result is rhetoric and speech that are both effective rhetorically and literarily and whose effects are felt long after its historical moment.

CONCLUSION

The rhetorical examination of the speech of Martin Luther King Junior, *I Have a Dream*, suggests that parallelism and repetition are not the stylistic devices used to decorate its text but they are the key to its rhetorical power and literary sustenance. Due to the usage of anaphora, lexical repetition, syntactic parallelism and epistrophe, King composes his speech with metrical precision, thematic cohesion, and emotional appeal. Each pattern of recurrence contributes to the persuasion not only by inscribing ideals of justice, liberty and equality into the collective unconscious, but also by turning political rhetoric into a performance that appeals to cultural, religious and literary tradition.

The Foregrounding Theory (Mukarovsky 1964; Leech 2008) explains the emphasis King gives to his message by not speaking in an ordinary manner, doing so consciously; the poetic function of Jakobson (1960) explains how using rhythm, symmetry and balance to emphasize language, makes it easier to remember and to appreciate the beauty of the language. In this way, repetition and parallelism operate at three overlapping levels: creating cadence and musicality that helps keep people engaged; establishing cohesion and stress that supports underlying themes; and creating ideals that serve as a focus on shared vision.

After all, the skillful use of these tools of style by King leads to a speech that is simultaneously a successful appeal to political action in the present and a work of lasting literary artistry. Such a two-fold success goes far in understanding why *I Have a Dream* will remain not only one of the most remarkable moments in the history of civil rights but also one of the most feted examples of modern oratory and poetic rhetoric.

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