

Stylistic Use of Repetition in English Literature

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Annotation: *This article reveals stylistic functions of repetition in the English literature. The use of repetition in Ernest Hemingway's work "Cat in the rain" has been taken under analysis as an object in the work. We tried to point out stylistic functions of repetition in literary discourse.*

Key words: *Repetition, phenomenon, stylistic device, strong emotion, expressive means of language, hero, and violation of grammar rule, communicative function, extra meaning, "Cat in the rain".*

The study of different languages presents an interest in both theoretical and practical issues. So, in this article we are going to review the theoretical and practical statements about repetition as a stylistic device and its functions.

Repetition is a broad phenomenon. It is a comprehensive topic that interests phonologists, morphologists, syntacticians, psycholinguists, discourse analysts and pragmatists. Within the field of stylistics repetition is a major rhetorical strategy for producing emphasis, clarity, amplification, or emotional effect.

Generally speaking, repetition is something that happens again. Persson even suggests that the term repetition can be understood as self-explanatory¹.

Everything that appears more than once can be regarded as the repetition. As a result repetition is an essential element that appears in speeches, conversations,

¹ Persson, Gunnar. Repetition in English. Part 1. Sequential Repetition. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1974. 178 s. ISBN 91-554-0239-9. P-1

literary texts and other writings or oral processes. The recurrence of sounds, words or syntactic structures is used for rhetorical effects. It also serves as a unifying element in writing. Repetition appears at the syntactic as well as at the lexical level.

Galperin states, that "repetition is an expressive means of language used when the speaker is under the stress of strong emotion".²

In Mostkova's dictionary³ of literary terms the following statements are given to the repetition:

Repetition (L, *repetitio*) -repetition of the same word or phrase with the view of expressiveness; a syntactic stylistic device. E. g. the beginning of *Bleak House* by Dickens:

“**Fog** everywhere. **Fog** up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; **fog** down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. **Fog** on the Essex marshes, **fog** on the Kentish heights. **Fog** creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; **fog** lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; **fog** drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats.”

Repetition of all kinds is widely used in poetry and prose,

From the examples we can see that repetition in the context has communicative function which gives effectiveness to the utterance.

² I. R. Galperin. *Stylistics*. 2 ed, revised. Edited by L. R. Todd. Moscow “Higher School” 1977. P-211

³ Mostkova. *English literary terminology*. Publisher "Education" Leningrad. 1967.p-78

Below we are going to analyze the story “Cat in the rain” by E.Hemingway. There are many repetitions in the story. The word “rain” is repeated many times which gives the extra meaning to the whole content of the story:

*There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor **facing** the sea. It also **faced** the public garden and the war monument.*

In this passage the word “face” shows the price and the value of the hotel. Not to every pocket to have a rest in this hotel. But the unhappiness of the family is revealed by another repetition in the following example:

*There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an **artist** with his easel. **Artists** liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels **facing** the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the **rain**. It was **raining**. **The rain** dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the **rain** and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in **the rain**. The motor cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across the square in the doorway of the cafe a waiter stood looking out at the empty square. The **American wife** stood at the window looking out. Outside right **under** their window a **cat** was crouched, **under** one of the dripping green tables. The **cat** was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.*

*“I’m going down and get **that kitty**,” the **American wife** said.*

“I’ll do it,” her husband offered from the bed.



The repetition of the combination **American wife** stresses the family catastrophe and unhappiness of the woman. The word **wife** gives the rudeness of family relationship, as if the wife unwillingly is at a hotel. The repetition of the word “cat” is in the symbol of woman and child.

*“No, I’ll get it. **The poor kitty** out trying to keep dry under a table.”*

*The husband went on **reading**, lying with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.*

“Don’t get wet,” he said.

*The **wife** went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.*

“Il piove,” the wife said. She liked the hotelkeeper.

“Si, si, Signora, brutto tempo. It is very bad weather.”

In the next passage the repetition of the word “like” shows the woman’s need for her husband’s care and attention with great tenderness. Also the repetition of the combination “liking him” exaggerates the meaning, because, the verb “to like” belongs to a type of feeling and emotion. The violation of grammar rule and the use of “to like” in Participle I form strengthens the context:

*He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. **The wife liked** him. She **liked** the deadly serious way he received any complaints. **She liked** his dignity. **She liked** the way he wanted to serve her. **She liked** the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. **She liked** his old, heavy face and big hands. **Liking** him she opened the door and looked out. It was **raining** harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the cafe. **The cat** would be around to the right.*

Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

Now look at the next paragraphs and analyze repetition:

*“You must not get wet,” she smiled, speaking Italian. Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her. With the maid holding **the umbrella** over her, she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green **in the rain**, but **the cat** was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her. “Ha perduto qualche cosa, Signora?” “There was a cat,” said **the American girl**. “A cat?” “Si, il gatto.” “A cat?” the maid laughed. “A cat in **the rain**?” “Yes,” she said, “under the table.” Then, “Oh, **I wanted** it so much. **I wanted** a kitty.” When she talked English the maid’s face tightened. “Come, Signora,” she said. “We must get back inside. You will be wet.” “I suppose so,” said **the American girl**. They went back along the gravel path and passed in the door. The maid stayed outside to close **the umbrella**. As **the American girl** passed the office, the pardon bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The pardon made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, **reading**.*

The emotionality of the passage is that the author changes his attitude to the hero and begins to call her “American girl”. By this he expresses the hero’s freedom and dignity as a woman creature.

*“Did you get **the cat**?” he asked, putting the book down. “It was gone.” “Wonder where it went to,” he said, resting his eyes from reading. She sat down*

on the bed. ***"I wanted it so much,"*** she said. ***"I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty."***

*It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in **the rain.**"* George was **reading** again. She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing table looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck.

Another repetition of the word "reading" irritates the reader to imagine the husband. Also the author did not give names to heroes, which makes the reader think and hesitate the reason of it to be a family problem of any couple.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?" she asked, looking at her profile again. George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy's. ***"I like it the way it is."*** ***"I get so tired of it,"*** she said. ***"I get so tired of looking like a boy."*** George shifted his position in the bed. He hadn't looked away from her since she started to speak.

"You look pretty darn nice," he said. She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

"I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel," she said. ***"I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her."***

"Yeah?" George said from the bed. ***"And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes."***

"Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was **reading** again. His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still

raining in the palm trees. “Anyway, I want a cat,” she said, “I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can’t have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.”

In the above passage the repetition of the “I want” for several times hints at the woman nature who insists on getting everything she wants.

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square. Someone knocked at the door. “Avanti,” George said. He looked up from his book. The maid stood in the doorway. She held a big tortoise-shell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body. “Excuse me,” she said, “the pardon asked me to bring this for the Signora.”

The repetition of the word “cat” is like frame for every passage.

To sum up, repetition may also demonstrate the routine of a lifetime, and it can be seen in the story “A Cat in the Rain”.

As well, with the help of repetition can be shown the character's strong intention of doing something and the example is in the story.

The stylistic device of repetition may be applied to show the contrast between two people, for example, or to create an image of somebody to replace the character.

Sometimes repetition is used to frame the particular part of text. With the use of the stylistic device in this way the text becomes more memorable, and it appears to be one the most important function of repetition.

So, repetition plays a great role in texts, where the above mentioned factors need to be delivered to the reader.

References:

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3. Mostkova. English literary terminology. Publisher "Education" Leningrad. 1967