

An Analysis of Types and Functions of Parallelism in Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

E. S. Kendenan^{1*}, M.R. Nababan², Sri Marmanto³, and Dyah Ayu Nila Khrisna⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Linguistic Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Science, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: eskendenan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at describing and analyzing the types and functions of parallelism used by Matthew Henry in his bible commentary. Parallelism is defined as the correspondence of one verse or line with another. Thus, parallelism in this sense is not limited to the parallel form of grammatical construction but covers also the parallel sense or idea of an expression. By referring to Lowth's types of parallelism, this study classifies the types of parallelism into synthetic, antithetic, and synonymous. In writing his bible commentary, Matthew Henry frequently made use of rhetorical devices and parallelism is one of them. The data of this study were collected from the commentary of the Gospel of Matthew that has been translated into Indonesian. The researchers will identify all parallel forms in the commentary of the Gospel of Matthew and classify them based on their types and functions. Each type and function of parallelism will be analyzed in terms of its construction and/or its meaning.

Keywords: Parallelism, Synthetic, Antithetic, Synonymous, Functions

1. INTRODUCTION

Matthew Henry (1662-1714), the writer of Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible [1], was a minister from England who had started writing the bible commentary at the age of 21. He had finished and published his first commentary about the Genesis in 1708. The commentary of the forth gospel was published in 1710, four years before he died. Matthew Henry's commentary has been revised and reprinted several times. It also has been translated into many languages, including Indonesian language. The Indonesian translation was firstly published in 2014 and can be accessed online nowadays in pdf format or by installing it on the PC or android.

The style of writing in Renaissance or the post-reformation period was characterized by the raise of the classic literature. The use of rhetorical style by making use some rhetorical devices had become one feature of writing in that time. The style had also appeared in Matthew Henry's commentary that according to Philip Alexander [2] is typical because:

You will find him to be glittering with metaphors, rich in analogies, overflowing with illustrations, superabundant in reflections. He delights in apposition and alliteration; he is usually plain, quaint, and full of pith; he sees right thought a text directly; apparently he is not critical, but he quietly gives the result of an accurate critical knowledge of the original fully up to the best critics of his time.

Although the rhetorical style of writing has been left behind for years, in the last three decades of the 20th century it has drawn people attention to study it in terms of language, literature, philosophy, and classical works. The background has encouraged/inspired this study, especially in the use of parallelism as one type of rhetorical devices that can be found frequently in Matthew Henry's commentary. Therefore, the purposes of this study are: 1) to identify and classify the types of parallelism found in the Matthew Henry's bible commentary, especially about the Gospel of Matthew, and 2) to identify and analyze the functions of parallelism used by Matthew Henry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part provides a short definitions, types, and functions of parallelism based on several previous studies.

2.1. What is parallelism

Parallelism has been defined by many scholars from various points of view. Nevertheless, most of them rooted from Robert Lowth's definition of parallelism who distinguished between parallel lines and parallel terms. Parallel lines is the parallelism of conjoined verses, while parallel terms is the words or phrases answering to one another in the corresponding lines [3].

The use of parallelism in religious texts has been analyzed by Lowth [3] especially in the translation of Isaiah, so that he is recognized as "the father of the 'poetical' analysis of the Bible". Nevertheless, by studying some parts

of the New Testament and the book of Psalms, Thomas Boys finally found that “the parallelism is not only found in the so called 'poetical' books but also in the prose” [4].

In some cases, parallelism and repetition are sometimes similar due to the repetitive element inherent in the meaning of parallelism. It can be seen from the definition of parallelism made by Kiefer [in 5] as:

a repetition of words, phrases, or clauses that occupy the same function in the same grammatical or parallel form; the parallelism can also be in the form of a subordinate clause which depends on the same main clause or it can be a sentence structure with a similar work orders or sentence function with a similar meaning.

In line with that, He [6] defines parallelism as “the arrangement in a series (often three or more) of phrases or sentences similar in structure, closely relevant in meaning and consistent in mood.” Based on this explanation, it can simply be said that parallelism is part of repetition but at the same time repetition is also part of parallelism. Therefore, in this study repetition and parallelism in a certain sense can be considered as two same concepts although they both differ in that parallelism involves both identification and differentiation, while repetition only involves identification [7].

2.2. Types of parallelism

Several previous studies [7], [8], [9], [10], [11] have suggested that parallelism can be divided into three types, or species according to Lowth's term, with reference to the division made by Robert Lowth [12], namely synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, and synthetic parallelism. The three types of parallelism are briefly explained as follows:

- **Synonymous**
Synonymous parallelism “occurs when the same sentiment is repeated in different, but equivalent terms” [12].
- **Antithetical**
Antithetic parallelism “occurs when a thing is illustrated by its contrary being opposed to it” [12].

In a slightly different way, antithesis can also be defined as “a literary device which uses words to convey ideas in different ways from the common words and expressions of daily life” [13].

Meanwhile, the antithesis is defined by Reynolds (1995) and Ben-Ari (1998) [in 5] as “a repetition of the same structure with conflicting ideas using opposite words, or phrases”. If for Ben-Ari, words or phrases are opposite, for He [6] it is the intention which is opposite one another even though the structure can be the same.

- **Synthetic**
Synthetic parallelism or *Constructive parallelism* “occurs in which the sentences answer to each other not by the iteration of the same image or sentiment, or

the opposition of their contraries, but merely by the form of construction” [12].

2.3. Functions of parallelism

Each type of parallelism serves different functions in the text.

- **Synonymous**
Synonymous parallelism functions to beautify, to emphasize, to do repetition, to clarify, and to intensify / warm up the words, phrases, clauses, or statements that have been previously mentioned [14].
- **Antithetic**
Antithetic parallelism serves to emphasize the reverse side of the thought previously mentioned, to convey the same ideas by reconciling positive and negative statements, and to create clear and systematic relationships between ideas [14].
- **Synthetic**
Synthetic parallelism serves to add and complement the thoughts that have been conveyed previously in the first line [14].

Based on studies from several sources, Kazim & Mahayyif [14] summarize some of the functions of parallelism as follows:

1. Parallelism as a cohesive device, to connect the elements of a text in order to create a complete meaning.
2. The function of formal characteristics, to draw attention to the shape so that it is easy to remember the message conveyed
3. Parallelism with cultural value, to be a means of conveying cultural values in the text.

Sa [15] who studied the syntactic and semantic features of parallelism used in English and Vietnamese songs also added that parallelism can function “to help highlighting images, which makes folk songs easy to memorize”.

Parallelism functions vary according to text type and user or usage. Frog [16] in a similar way said that the function of parallelism varies considerably according to genres and contexts of use.

Mendoza [17] has identified various functions of semantic parallelism from different authors. Some of them are: to highlight and give importance to certain elements in the discourse (Fox 1971, 1977, 1988), to establish interpersonal relationships between interlocutors (Rodriguez Cuevas 2013; Tannen 1987). Semantic Parallelism is also intrinsically related to memory, both long-term and short-term (Fabb 2017), and it is related to the culture and society of the speakers and/or language in question (Mannheim 1986). Mendoza [17] himself defines semantic parallelism as “the semirepetition (or variation) of

a pairs of lines, the base line and the goal line, in which a number of semantically related linguistic elements alternate”.

To simplify the wide range of parallelism functions, the writers classify three functions of parallelism as to enrich, to emphasize, and to beautify the sentiment or idea. The meaning of each function is defined by referring to CALD [18]. First, to enrich in this study is defined as “to improve the quality of something by adding something else”. Second, to emphasize means “to show or state that something is very important or worth giving attention to” or “to make something more obvious”. Third, to beautify is defined as “to improve the appearance of someone or something”.

To connect thoughts, ideas, and expressions in the construction of parallelism, conjunctions are needed. Oshima & Hogue [19] make two general classification of coordinating conjunction that can be used in parallel sentences, namely:

1. Coordinating conjunction: and, or, but, nor
2. Correlative (paired) conjunction: both ... and, either ... or, neither ... nor, dan not only ... but also.

However, there are many other parallel conjunctions which are not listed here definitely.

3. METHOD

This study was conducted by applying a descriptively qualitative method. The data source of this study was the Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew [2]. The data were collected by doing a Content Analysis (CA) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The CA was done in prior to the FGD by reading, highlighting, and collecting all parallelisms found in the commentary. FGD was done subsequently to evaluate, select, and determine the validity of the data.

The analysis of data was done by: 1) identifying the parallelism in the commentary; 2) analyzing the use of parallelism in the commentary; and 3) classifying the types of parallelism and their functions in the text.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study is briefly described in this following table.

Table 1. Types and Functions of Parallelism in Matthew Henry’s Commentary

Function	Types of Parallelism				Percentage			
	Synthetic	Antithetic	Synonymous	Total	Synthetic	Antithetic	Synonymous	Total
Enriching	153	0	5	158	96.8	0.0	3.2	48.9
Emphasizing	0	47	0	47	0.0	100.0	0.0	14.6
Enriching & Emphasizing	5	38	2	45	11.1	84.4	4.4	13.9
Enriching & Beautifying	37	1	6	44	84.1	2.3	13.6	13.6
Emphasizing & Beautifying	1	12	3	16	6.3	75.0	18.8	5.0
Enriching, Emphasizing, & Beautifying	5	6	2	13	38.5	46.2	15.4	4.0
	201	104	18	323	62.2	32.2	5.6	100.0

The table 1 shows that 62.2% of the parallelism is in the form of synthetic, 32.2% in the form of antithetic, and only 5.6% in the form of synonymous type of parallelism. It means that most of the data for this study are in the form of synthetic parallelism. The data of antithetic parallelism are fewer than the synthetic one but they are also significant in number. Meanwhile, the synonymous parallelism is very few in comparison with synthetic and antithetic parallelisms.

For the functions of parallelism in the commentary, it is found that 48.9% of the parallelism functions to enrich the idea or sentiment in the phrase or clause, especially for synthetic and syonymous parallelisms. Emphasizing which

is at the second rank with 14.6% occurrences is found only in the form of antithetic parallelism. While, enriching & emphasizing functions with 13.9% occurrences are mostly found in antithetic parallelism, enriching & beautifying functions with 13.6% occurrences mostly in the form of synthetic parallelism. The number of parallelism data which functions to emphasize & beautify as well as to enrich, emphasize, and beautify idea or sentiment are less significant in number, i.e. 5.0% and 4.0%.

4.1. Synthetic Parallelism and Its Functions

As shown in the table 1, the synthetic parallelism mostly functions to enrich as well as to enrich and beautify

the author's sentiment. This section is going to discuss some examples of synthetic parallelisms and their two most frequent functions found in this study.

Excerpt 1:

David, the king, was anointed (1 Sam. xvi. 13);
so was Aaron, the priest (Lev. viii. 12);
and Elisha, the prophet (1 Kings xix. 16),
and Isaiah, the prophet (Isa. lxi. 1). (031)

The author used a parallel form in excerpt 1 above to show that King David was like Priest Harun anointed by God in carrying out his duties. To clarify his point and enrich his idea, the author adds other examples of people who were also anointed, namely the Prophet Elisha and the Prophet Isaiah. In this synthetic parallelism, the author first uses the conjunction "so" then "and" twice. The author uses a semicolon to connect the main clause with the second clause as the first subordinate clause. Meanwhile, a comma is used to connect the first subordinate clause with the second, and the second with the third.

Excerpt 2:

Thus, therefore, the evangelist undertakes to make out, that he is
not only a son of David, but that son of David on whose shoulders the government was to be;
not only a son of Abraham, but that son of Abraham who was to be *the father of many nations*.(013)

The identity of Jesus in excerpt 2 is described quite completely by the author of this commentary in the form of synthetic parallelism that consists of two clauses. In the first clause, Jesus is described not only as a son or descendant of David, but also at the same time explaining the power and greatness that David had during his reign. The second clause provides additional information about Jesus as the descendant of Abraham who is known as the father of many nations. These two clauses do not use a conjunction but are connected and/or separated by a semicolon.

Excerpt 3:

The Gentiles know the time of his birth by a star;
the Jews know the place of it by the scriptures;
and so they are capable of informing one another. (121)

The statement in the excerpt 3 above describes the birth of Christ in the form of a synthetic parallelism of two complementary clauses. The first clause explains that the Gentiles, namely the wise men, knew the time of Christ's birth through the stars. On the other hand, the Jews, in the second clause, know the place of Christ's birth through the Bible. Thus, the idea or sentiment in both clauses are enriching one to another. The two clauses do not use a

conjunction but are connected and separated by a semicolon to indicate the unity of both ideas.

Excerpt 4:

Israel was led by a pillar of fire to the promised land,
the wise men by a star to the promised Seed,
who is himself *the bright and morning Star*, Rev. xxii. 16. (132)

Both the Israelites and the wise (the magi) are depicted by the statement in the above synthetic parallelism leading to or directing their steps to something that was promised beforehand. To get to the promised land, the Israelites were led by a pillar of fire. Meanwhile, to arrive at the promised offspring or seed, the Magi were led by a star. The first and second clauses complement each other to explain God's guidance to something that God Himself promised beforehand. The two clauses in the excerpt 4 are connected and separated by semicolons without using a conjunction.

Excerpt 5:

God's people follow his direction
whithersoever he leads them,
wherever he lodges them. (193)

The author uses two different vocabularies with the same meaning as well as the same grammatical structure at the beginning of the two clauses, i.e. "whithersoever" and "wherever". The use of these different words seems to be intended to give the expression an aesthetic function without repetition. However, the message to be conveyed is not identical because the two clauses provide complementary information. The two clauses do not use a conjunction, but a comma to connect and separate the two clauses.

Excerpt 6:

We have receipts of mercy from God,
we make returns of duty to God,
and all by Jesus Christ, who is the ladder that had its foot on earth and its top in heaven,
by whom alone it is that we have any comfortable correspondence with God, or
any hope of getting to heaven at last. (306)

The number of words forming each clause in the synthetic parallelism underlined in the excerpt 6 above is the same, namely 7 words each. With the same number of words and almost mostly similar sounds or pronunciations, not only the end-rhyme but also the internal rhyme is formed which creates an aesthetic effect on this parallelism. Although there are many similar sounds of words that function parallel in sentences or each clause, they are contrasting meaningfully, such as "have" and "make", "receipts" and "returns", "mercy" and "duty", and "from" and "to". Therefore, the ideas conveyed in the two

clauses are complementary to each other. The author does not use a conjunction to connect the two clauses, but uses a comma which can both connect and separate the two clauses at the same time.

Excerpt 7:

Christ is our Joshua;
both the Captain of our salvation,
and the High Priest of our profession,
and, in both, our Saviour—a Joshua who comes in the stead of Moses, and does that for us which the law could not do, in that it was weak. (072)

The conjunction "both ... and ..." with a comma in the excerpt 7 above connects two parallel phrases, namely "the Captain of our salvation" and "the High Priest of our profession". Grammatically, the two phrases are parallel though the meanings contained in the two phrases are not the same but complement each other. The use of the same grammatical structure in both clauses which also forms the end-rhyme shows the aesthetic effect of this synthetic parallelism.

4.2. Antithetic Parallelism and Its Functions

These are some examples of antithetic parallelism and their functions found in the data of this study.

Excerpt 8:

Out of Christ, God is a consuming Fire, but,
in Christ, a reconciled Father. (323)

Two very contradictory characters of God the Father are described by the author in the two clauses in excerpt 8 above. On the one hand, God the Father is depicted as a consuming fire, but on the other hand, it is the Father who is reconciled. By placing the prepositional phrase "out of Christ" at the beginning of the first clause and "in Christ" at the beginning of the second clause which looks like a comparison of the two and the use of the conjunction "but" between the two clauses, it is clear that the second clause is the emphasis of the message that the author wants to convey. The author uses a comma between the two parallel clauses of the antithesis to connect and/or separate the two clauses.

Excerpt 9:

to purchase for them,
not a liberty to sin,
but a liberty from sins,

The antithetic parallelism in the two phrases in excerpt 9 above serves not only to enrich ideas or information but also to emphasize and beautify the sentence at the same time. By using the conjunctions "not" and "but" the emphasis on the reverse side of the idea in the first phrase becomes clear. Likewise, the repetition of the words "liberty" and "sin" in the two phrases creates an

aesthetic effect which in turn can give the reader a memorable impression. To connect and/or separate the two phrases, the author uses a comma.

Excerpt 10:

John Baptist was a priest of the order of Aaron, yet
we find him preaching in a wilderness, and never
officiating in the temple; but
Christ, who was not a son of Aaron, is yet often
found in the temple, and sitting there as one having
authority;
so it was foretold, Mal. iii. 1. (211)

The statement in excerpt 10 above compares two great figures, namely John the Baptist and Christ. John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron, so naturally he preached or taught in the temple. Meanwhile, Jesus did not come from the lineage of Aaron. However, this parallel clause shows the opposite, namely John the Baptist taught and preached in the desert and never in the temple, while Christ sat in the temple as a person with authority. The first part of this sentence, which consists of two clauses, has shown the contradiction between one clause and another, as well as in the second part. The author uses the conjunction "yet" to contradict the ideas mentioned in the first and second clauses of each part. Meanwhile, to contrast the ideas in the first part with the second part, the writer uses the conjunction "but" at the same time to emphasize the intention of the author of this commentary. The author uses a comma to connect and/or separate the ideas in the first and second clauses in each part, and use a semicolon to connect and/or separate the ideas in the first part and the second part.

Excerpt 11:

Some observe that,
as Samson's mother must drink no strong drink, yet
he was designed to be a strong man; (226)

The birth and life of Samson are described by the author of this commentary using the antithetical parallelism that functions to enrich and to emphasize the author's idea. According to the author, Samson, who was designed by God from the beginning to be a strong person, was actually kept away from the strong drink even when he was still in his mother's womb. The author uses the conjunction "yet" to enrich and emphasize the clause mentioned after the "yet" conjunction. The author uses a comma to connect and/or separate the two clauses in excerpt 11.

4.3. Synonymous Parallelism and Its Functions

The examples of synonymous parallelism and its functions can be seen in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 12:

...; thus the subjection of the kings of Sheba to Christ is spoken of (Ps. lxxii. 10),

They shall bring presents, and offer gifts. See Isa. lx. 6. (146)

The subject of the two clauses in the excerpt 12 above is “they” but they are left out in the second clause. The two clauses that form a synonymous parallelism above basically convey the same idea using different terms or words. The words “bring” and “offer” according to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary [18] have the same meaning in terms of an activity of bringing something to someone. The difference between the two lies in the element of worship or offerings brought to God which is contained more specifically in the word “offer”. Meanwhile, the words “present” and “gift” as something carried in this context basically have the same meaning. With the same grammatical structure, the two complementary clauses show an aesthetic element, especially in the final “s” sound as a plural marker in the two nouns in both clauses. The author uses the conjunction “and” and a comma to connect and/or separate the two clauses.

Excerpt 13:

It was promised
to Abraham that Christ should descend from him
(Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18), and
to David that he should descend from him (2 Sam.
vii. 12; Ps. lxxxix. 3, &c.; cxxxii. 11);...

The first and second clauses of the sentence in excerpt 13 above express basically the same idea, namely that the birth of Christ was prophesied or promised to Abraham and David long before. In other words, the ideas in the two clauses in ST are complementary because the first clause enriches the idea in the second clause and vice versa. The conjunction “and” and comma are used by the author to connect and/or separate the two clauses.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion of the data found in this study, it can be concluded that: First, synthetic parallelism is the most frequent type of parallelism used by Matthew Henry in the Gospel of Matthew commentary. Second, Matthew Henry used the parallelism, especially for synthetic and synonymous for the purpose of enriching the sentiment or idea in the parallel phrases or clauses. The author used not only conjunctions but also punctuation to connect and/or separate ideas or sentiment between phrases or clauses.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible Volume V (Matthew to John), Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classic Ethereal Library, 2000.
- [2] P. Alexander, “A Prince among Preachers: Matthew Henry and the Interpretation of Holy Scripture”, A

Guide to the Exhibition held in Chester Cathedral Library 2014 to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of the Great Bible Commentator, Matthew Henry of Chester, Text of the Guide © Chester Cathedral Library, MMXIV, p.3.

- [3] R. Lowth, *Isaiah: A New Translation; with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory*, Thomas Tegg & Son, Cheapside, London, 1778.
- [4] R. Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric*, Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., England, 1998.
- [5] Rosyidah, I. Suyitno, H. Suwignyo, and P. Wijayati, “Translation of Syntactic Repetitions as Formal-Aesthetic Marker in ‘Das Brot’”, *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 5(1), 2017, pp. 33-41.
- [6] Q. He, “Translation of Repetition in Text: A Systemic Functional Approach,” *International Journal of English Linguistics: Vol. 4, No.5, 2014*, pp. 81-88.
- [7] J.J. Fox, *Exploration in Semantic Parallelism*, The Australian National University Press, Canberra, 2014.
- [8] H.E. Mendez, “Canticles in Translation: The Treatment of Poetic Language in the Greek, Gothic, Classical Armenian, and Old Church Slavonic Gospels,” *Dissertation, Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 2013*.
- [9] J. Krašovec, “Semantic Field of God’s Righteousness in Original and in Aramaic, Greek and Latin Translations of the Book of Isaiah”, *Bogoslovni Vestnik* 78 (2018) 2, 2018, pp. 483-495,
- [10] M. Sarv, “Towards a Typology of Parallelism in Estonian Poetic Folklore”, <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol67/sarv.pdf>, 2017, pp. 65-92.
- [11] P.M. Biays, *Parallelism in Romans*, Fort Hays Studies Series. 26. https://scholars.fhsu.edu/fort_hays_studies_series/26, 1967.
- [12] R. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry*, G. Gregory (Transl.), Joseph T. Buckingham, Winter-Street, Boston, 1815.
- [13] D.T.N. Bich, “A Study of the Translation of ‘The Tale of Kieu’ by Mac Phi Hong via the Use of Antithesis in ‘Truyen Kieu’ by Nguyen Du”, *Master Thesis, Danang: The University of Danang, 2018*.
- [14] R.T. Kazim, and R.N. Mahayyif, “Linguistic Features of Parallelism”, *Journal of Human Sciences (Majallah al-ulum-al-insaniyyah) مجلة العلوم الانسانية*. Volume: 1 Issue: 26, Publisher: Babylon University جامعة بابل 2019, pp. 1- 23, ISSN: 25239899/19922876.
- [15] V.T.C. Sa, “Syntactic and Semantic Features of Parallelism in English and Vietnamese Songs,” *Theses, University of Danang, 2011*.
- [16] Frog, Leslie, Helen F. & Hopkins, Joseph S. (Eds). *The Retrospective Methods Network (RMN) Newsletter*. May. No. 8. Helsinki: Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland. 2014, pp. 70-72.

- [17] A.P. Mendoza, “Semantic Parallelism in Traditional Kakataibo Chants”, *Open Linguistics*, 5, published by De Gruyter, 2019, pp. 383–404.
- [18] *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- [19] A. Oshima & A. Hogue, *Introduction to Academic Writing*, Second Edition, Longman, New York, 1997, pp. 179-183.