

A linguistic Perspective of Syndeton, Asyndeton and Polysyndeton in Mark Twain's Literary Works

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Abstract

In this study, aspects of syndetic coordinations, asyndetic coordinations, and polysyndeton have been investigated in Mark Twain literary works : A short story entitled 'A dog's Tale '(1904) , and a short novel which is A Horse's Tale (1907). The present study tackles these aspects in order to show whether they are extensively utilized in the literary works of Mark Twain and the reasons behind their utilizations. Results of the analysis show that polysyndeton is everywhere in these works i.e., in A dog's tale and A horse's tale. Polysyndeton is the most oft-used way of constructing a sentence with multiple clauses, and it works well because it aids clarity. However, writers might use them to create a sense of overwhelm. In this case, the pace would be moderated as the reader is pulled into the mire of the narrative.

The speaker utilizes 'and' to link items in series, rather than split them up with commas (asyndetic coordinations). In doing so, every one of the items is emphasized individually. Model of analysis is Dupriez (1991) since it covers the whole terms employed in this study .

Key words: asyndeton, syndeton, polysyndeton.

الناحية اللغوية للتركيب الربطي، غير الربطي والوصل البلاغي في اعمال ادبية لـ مارك تون

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الملخص

في هذا البحث يتم تناول التراكيب الربطية وغير الربطية وللوصل البلاغي في روايات مارك تون القصيره قصة حكاية الكلب (1904) وحكاية الحصان (1907) تتناول الدراسة الحالية هذه الخصائص اللغوية لكي نتحقق هل تم توظيفها بصورة كبيره في الاعمال الادبية لمارك تون وماهو السبب وراء الاستعمال لها نتائج الدراسة ان الوصل البلاغي تم استعماله بكثرة لانه يعطي توضيح للجمل لوصف الاحداث .

1-Introduction

Literary style can be defined as how a writer decides to express whatever he wants to say; his choice of words, the sentence structure, syntax, language (figurative or metaphorical). Writing is more than telling a story or coming up with an interesting plot; for the writer, it is an essential part of the writing process to select the words and language carefully and to develop his own personal style.

Mark Twain fills his novels with affective humor and literary excellence. In this respect, the present **study** aims at investigating the use of syndeton, asyndeton and polysyndeton in Mark Twain literary works to show whether these devices are extensively used in his works and why. Two literary works are studied in this **study**, one is a novel which is A Horse's Tale (1907): A short novel /novella told partly from the point of view of a horse, partly from the viewpoints of other characters via letters they write. It is set mainly in an army fort in the Rocky Mountain area of American in the mid-19th century, although moves briefly to Spain near the end of the story, and the other is a short story which is : A Dog's Tale (1904) The story is told from the perspective of a dog and narrates the journey of a dog's life. These two stories are fiction .

2-Theoretical Background

2.1 Syndeton and Asyndeton

An asyndeton is a stylistic device, which implies an ellipsis that consists of "coordinated clauses or phrases without explicit conjunctions or connectives." (Wales, 2001: 33).

Researchers and linguists have taken different views in distinguishing asyndeton and coordinated structure.

The name asyndeton is derived from the Greek word asyndetos, which means unbound or unconnected. Furthermore, it is considered a rhetorical device and a stylistic figure. The most famous example of asyndeton was given by President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address when he proclaimed that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." According to a study of clause linkage in contemporary English, the use of

asyndeta would mainly be restricted to the genre of literature and it would not appear in press or academic texts (Rossette, 2003)

Van Gorp (2005: 50) says that asyndeton may: Reinforce emotions. It also produces intensity in the emotive portrayal of characters. This comes from the fact that when a conjunction is omitted, an utterance is made to stand out since the attention is moved away from the form in which something is presented to the message that is expressed. Moreover, the stylistic device could also give the impression of an “overwhelming activity” or a “strong dramatic tension” in accordance to Van Gorp (2005: 50). This occurs when the omission of a conjunction raises the suspense and accelerates the narration. Asyndeta can evoke the perception of an overwhelming rush of action and contribute to the expression of agitated activity as a result.

Accordingly , Cuddon (2013:64) maintains :

The figure of asyndeton is used to create speed and economy and that parataxis in the sense of coordination of clauses without conjunctions results in terseness and compression The effect of speed could be partially connected to the idea of economy and related to the earlier mentioned observation that asyndeton can affect the rhythm of a text and its fluency”

As Rossette (2009) points out, in English, to certain kinds of text types and genres, the use of asyndeton is rather rare and restricted. Therefore, dropping linking words may seem rather an unconventional feature, which may draw the reader’s attention to the fact that something is not right or missing. Asyndeton invests the qualities of spoken language in narrative passages as conjunctions are less frequently used in speech, which makes them appear closer and more familiar to the reader. “This omission of linking words may also establish a tone which gives the impression that the messages has been shaped in the speaker’s mind at the very moment of speaking, as opposed to an utterance the speaker has prepared or reflected upon” (Ibid.) This is in agreement with the statement that asyndeton would also be able to render a text more oral or add drama to it.

Quirk et al. (1985:918) point out that syndeton refers to linked coordination .This means that the coordination is marked by overt signals of coordination (and, but, and or). On the contrary, asyndeton means coordination, which is not marked by overt signals. “They say that connectives can assist text producers as well during the organization and preservation of a textual word. Syndetic coordination is a more usual form of coordination in which sentences or words are joined by overt coordinators such as (and, but, or)”. See the following examples:

- 1- Slowly and stealthily, he crept towards his victim. (Syndetic coordination)
- 2- Slowly, stealthily, he crept towards his victim. (Asyndetic coordination) (Quirk et al.,1985).

In fact, syndetic coordination is **form that is more usual**. Asyndetic coordination is usually stylistically marked. It is suggested as an open –ended list and used for dramatic intensification as follows:

3- Mrs. Mary sold sweet, chocolate, toffee, apples, anything a child desire.

Crystal (2003:450) believes that:

Syndeton as a term originally from Greek rhetorical traditions, which refers to the use of conjunctions to link parts in the syntactic structure, whereas asyndeton refers to the omission of conjunction; it is used for achieving economical and dramatic form of expression.

2.2 The Concept of Polysyndeton

Deriving from Greek, the term polysyndeton refers to “many” (poly), “together” (syn), and “link, bind” (det). Polysyndeton is used to join the words in a list together so as to highlight the extension of the list when a writer or speaker employs many conjunctions. (Sebesta and Haynes 2010)

Polysyndeton is a tool of reiteration (the use of conjunctions such as and, nor, or) in a series of words, phrases or clauses as in this example:

4- The dinner was so good; I ate the chicken, and the salad, and the turkey, and the wild rice, and the bread, and the mashed potatoes, and the cranberry sauce. Duke (2004) and Wales (2011)

In this sentence, the recurrence of “and” is not essential and could be deleted. Polysyndeton in this example gives a sense of the astonishing abundance of the dinner. Moreover, the speaker could not give up having or depicting all of these dishes.

According to Farnsworth (2010: 128 - 129)

Polysyndeton can create the idea that the speaker makes up the meaning as the utterance goes along.

A normal list of items with commas between most of them and an and merely before the last one demands the speaker to realize when the list closes off, because just before the end is the one and only position where the and goes.

In this respect, to indicate a sign that the speaker has limited control of his/ her grammar polysyndeton is employed here, (Pons-Sanz, 2014). See the following example:

5- I got up, and I got dressed and I had breakfast. (Harmon 2012)

6- Can you believe she wanted us to bring yams and butter and bread and eggs and jelly and hotdogs and ice-cream.

Here, in the example (6) above, the speaker reiterates the conjunction ‘and’ in order to emphasize how very many items are being put on the list.

Hence, polysyndeton in the example (6) is used in the exaggeration of a particularly long list of items.

In order to alter **either the rhythm of the text, either faster or slower**, and can suggest a sense of gravity or excitement, the speaker frequently uses polysyndeton. “It can also be employed to deliberately overwhelm the reader, giving them very little space for mentally or visually breathing with the absence of commas for clarification” (Pons-Sanz, 2014). as in:

7- “the dog barked and pulled Jack, and growled, and raged” (Yefimov and Yasinetskaya ,2011:13).

3-Data analysis:

The study employs Dupriez (1991) as a model of analysis since it is enough to justify the utilization of (syndeton , asyndeton , and polysyndeton) as rhetorical devices. These devices are best comprised in literary works as short stories to create a sense of accelerated or slowed rhythm, emotional distress or excitement, or emphasis on certain ideas . The utilization of these devices would also compel the writing rules when it comes to conjunctions.

The followings are the analysis of ‘A dog’s tale (1904)’ and a ‘Horse’s tale (1907)’ in terms of Syndeton, Asyndeton, and Polysyndeton.

Table (3.1) Syndeton , Asyndeton and Polysyndeton in ‘A dog’s Tale (1904)’

Syndeton	Asyndeton	Polysyndeton
She said men who did like this would have a noble and beautiful reward by and by in another world.	It went all about, everywhere, down there: along the halls, through all the rooms, in both stories	a fine great house, with pictures, and delicate decorations, and rich furniture, and no gloom anywhere.
By and by came my little puppy, and then my cup was full, my happiness was perfect.	Then—well, then the calling began again! All my sorrows came back. I said to myself.	And I was the same as a member of the family; and they loved me, and petted me, and did not give me a new name..
But at last it did, hours and hours after the vague twilight of the garret had long...	and if your heart is old and tired, give it into her keeping; she will make it young again, she will refresh it, she will make it sing	and the baby was a year old, and plump and dimpled, and fond of me, and never could get enough of hauling on my tail, and hugging me, and laughing out its innocent happiness ...
They disputed and disputed .	I think—was, “In memory of me, when there is a time of danger to another do not think of yourself, think of your mother,	the laboratory is quite different, and is filled with jars, and bottles, and electrics, and wires, and strange machines.
-... and if your heart is old and tired	she gently using me for a foot-stool, knowing it pleased me, for it was a caress	and one very handsome and courteous and graceful one, a curly-haired Irish setter...
		It was the dearest little waddling thing, and so smooth and soft and velvety, and had such cunning little awkward paws, and such affectionate eyes, and such a sweet and innocent face.

One may see by this that she had a wise and thoughtful head, for all there was so much lightness and vanity in it		For half an hour there was a commotion downstairs, and shoutings, and rushing footsteps, and then there was quiet again.
... but my mother would know how to use it and get effects.		They discussed and experimented, and then suddenly the puppy shrieked, and they set him on the floor, and he went staggering around, with his head all bloody, and the master clapped his hands and shouted...
She would know how to depress a rat-terrier with it and make a lap-dog look sorry he came		...and its little velvet nose rested upon the floor, and it was still, and did not move any more.
I romped and raced through the grounds and the garden		I saw that; I must stay where I was; stay, and wait, and take what might come—it ...
The nursery's on fire!" and the master rushed away in that direction, and my other bones were saved		Mr. Gray was thirty-eight, and tall and slender and handsome...
I had done to make him so bitter and so unforgiving,		I reached my head through the flames and dragged the baby out by the waist-band, and tugged it along, and we fell to the floor together in a cloud of smoke
She was broken-hearted, and so was I,...		I snatched a new hold, and dragged the screaming little creature along and out at the door and around the bend of the hall, and was still tugging away, all excited and happy and proud, when the master's voice shouted...
other times I romped and raced through the grounds and the garden with Sadie till we were tired out,		, for I ran at once to my little darling, and snuggled close to it where it lay, and licked the blood, and it put its head against mine, whimpering softly, and I knew in my heart it was a comfort to it in its pain and trouble to feel its mother's touch, though it could not see me
so we got along quite happily and counted the days and		Soon the master stopped discussing a moment, and rang

waited for the family		in the footman, and said, "Bury it in the far corner of the garden," and then went on with the discussion, and I trotted after the footman, very happy and grateful, for I knew the puppy was out of its pain
I like cultured society, and I shall cultivate your acquaintance		where the children and the nurse and the puppy and I used to play in the summer in the shade of a great elm, and there the footman dug a hole, and I saw he was going to plant the puppy, and I was glad, because it would grow and come up a fine handsome dog, like Robin Adair, and be a beautiful surprise for the family when they came home;
I remember my mother pulling it on a kennel once, and explaining it in that way,		for I ran at once to my little darling, and snuggled close to it where it lay, and licked the blood, and it put its head against mine, whimpering softly, and I knew in my heart it was a comfort to it in its ...
		We went far down the garden to the farthest end, where the children and the nurse and the puppy and I used to play in the summer in the shade of a great elm, and there the footman dug a hole, and I saw he was going to plant the puppy, and I was glad, because it would grow and come up a fine handsome dog, like Robin Adair, and be a beautiful surprise for the family when they came home
		The laboratory was not a book, or a picture, or a place to wash your hands in
		Mrs. Gray was thirty, and so sweet and so lovely, you cannot imagine it .

Table (3.2) Syndeton , Asyndeton , Polysyndeton in A 'Horse's Tale (1907)'

Syndeton	Asyndeton	Polysyndeton
both my poor sister and her husband, when they found they could not recover...	He is over six feet, is young, hasn't an ounce of waste flesh, is straight, graceful, springy in his motions,	quick as a cat, and has a handsome face, and black hair dangling down on his shoulders, and is beautiful to look at ...
one needs to be of good family and possess an education much above the common to be worthy of the place	He did it gradually, systematically, little by little, a step at a time .	She played with his long hair, and admired his big hands and his clothes and his carbine, and asked question after question,...
I know the art of searching for a trail, and I know the stale track from the fresh	I am still his property, but he has lent me, for a time, to the most noble, the most gracious, the most excellent ...	such grand plains, stretching such miles and miles and miles.
So that makes me part blue grass and part fossi...	And truly a wonder; knowing everything, capable of everything; speaking all the languages, master of all sciences, a mind without horizons, a heart of gold, the glory of her race! On whom be peace!"	and so rugged and craggy and lofty, with cloud-shawls wrapped around their shoulders, and looking so solemn and awful and satisfied
She is a dear and sweet little lady	I will tell a plain tale, calmly, without excitement, without eloquence	..., the way they do me, and they are the fattest, and brownest, and sweetest little things, and never cry, and wouldn't if they had pins sticking in them
He understands all the languages, and talks them all, too.	And doesn't she train those little people! Ask the Indians, ask the traders, ask the soldiers ...	and the horses and mules and cattle and dogs—
	sometimes near by, sometimes in the distance, all just like a state ball, you know...	He hasn't any faults much, and is charming and sweet, like Buffalo Bill, and Thunder-Bird, and Mammy Dorcas, and Soldier Boy, and Shekels, and Potter, and Sour-Mash, and—well, they're all that, just
	Ask the Indians, ask the traders, ask the soldiers; they'll tell you	-..., full of Indian lodges and dogs and squaws and everything that is interesting, and a brook of the clearest...
	... tights ,trunks, sword, doublet with slashed sleeves, short cape, cap with just one feather in it; I've...	and young Indians and girls romping and laughing and carrying on, around the spring and the pool, and not much clothes on except the girls, and dogs fighting, and the squaws

		busy at work, and the bucks busy resting, and the old men sitting in a bunch smoking, and passing the pipe not to the left
	they think there is no other child like theirs, no other child so wonderful, none that is so...	Seventh Cavalry, and the dragoons, and officers, and families, and horses, in the first few days, and some more in the next few and the next few and the next few, and now I know more soldiers and horses
	Buffalo Bill taught me the most of what I know, my mother taught me much	
	I can tell you; she was of the best blood of Kentucky, the bluest Blue-grass aristocracy, very proud and acrimonious	Well, the Injun boy had the raven tied up, and was all the time plaguing it and starving it, and she pitied the po' thing, and tried to buy it from the boy, and the tears was in her eyes.
	She took the Fort—took it the first day! Took me, too; took the colonels, the captains, the women, the children, and the dumb brutes	Why, she untied the raven and confiscated him by force and fetched him home, and left the doughnuts...
	Three girls, fourteen boys—good riders all.	Sometimes her English is daintily prim and bookish and captivating.
		and it is all red and blue and white silks and satins and velvets; tights, trunks, sword, doublet with slashed sleeves, short cape, cap with just one feather in it ...
		, It is just wings, and wings, and wings, till you are weary: turkeys, and geese, and bats, and butterflies, and angels, and grasshoppers, and flying-fish, and—well, there is really no end to the tribe; it gives
		She has her mother's charm and grace and good heart and sense of justice, and she has her father's vivacity and cheerfulness and pluck and spirit of enterprise ...
		Half-way down, it was kind of neck and neck, and anybody's race and nobody's...

		she was always talking of Spain to the child, and tending and nourishing the love of Spain in the ...
		stretching such miles and miles and miles
		which means there's been a row in the camp and they are settling it if they can, and children playing just the same as any other children, and little boys shooting at a mark with bows, and I cuffed one of them because he hit a dog with a club that wasn't doing anything, and he resented it but before long he wished he hadn't
		She set to work and organized the Sixteen, and called it the First Battalion Rocky Mountain Rangers, U.S.A., and she wanted to be bugler
		why, she drove the spurs home and soared over that cow like a bird! and on she went, and cleared the last hurdle solitary and alone, the army letting loose the grand yell, and she skipped from the horse the same as if he had been standing still, and made her bow, and everybody crowded around to congratulate, and they gave her the bugle, and she put it to her lips and blew 'boots and saddles' to see how it would go, and BB was as proud as you can't think! And he said, 'Take Soldier Boy, and don't pass him back till I ask for him!' and I can tell you he wouldn't have said that to any other person on this planet.
		During as much as two minutes there was a most unnatural and heavenly quiet and repose
		She picked up the remains and laid them upon her palm, and said: ...
		...and pours out her prodigal

		love upon every creature that will take it, high or low, Christian or pagan, feathered or furred
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4- Results and discussions

1- Results of the analysis of the short story 'a dog's tale' show that syndetic coordination has recorded 16 instances out of 41 with a percentages of 39.024 % .As for the asyndetic coordination , results show that they record 5 only from the total number of 41 coordination with a percentage of 12.195%. On the other hand, polysyndetic coordination reveal 20 instances and with a percentage of 48.781 % which is the highest occurrences from the total occurrences of coordination.

2- Conjunctive coordination (and) are the outstanding ones as they constitute 97.561% , **whereas** the disjunctives (or) are unnoticeable in this story and they constitute 2.439%. See the following table :

Table (4.1): The occurrence of syndeton, asyndeton and polysyndeton in A Dog's Tale (1904)

Coordinating conjunction	Occurrence	%
syndeton	16	39.024
asyndeton	5	12.195
polysyndeton	20	48.781
Total	41	100

3- As for the novel 'a horse's tale', results of the analysis show that the total number of coordination conjunctions is 45. Syndeton shows the least occurrence of coordination with a number of 6 only and a percentage of 13.333% comparing it with asyndeton and polysyndeton. **Asyndeton** coordinations show 14 instances with a percentage of 31.111% , whereas polysyndeton reveals 25 instances from the total number which is 45 with a percentage of 55.556%.

4- Conjunction coordinations of the type(and) has recorded 44 instances from the total number 45 with a percentage of (97.777%) , whereas disjunctive conjunction of the type(or , and nor) has recorded 2 instances from the total number 45 with a percentage of (2.223 %). See the following table :

Table (4.2): The Occurrence of Syndeton, Asyndeton and Polysyndeton in A

Horse's Tale (1907)

Coordinating conjunction	Occurrence	%
syndeton	6	13.333
asyndeton	14	31.111
polysyndeton	25	55.556
Total	45	100

Concluding Remarks :

1- From the results of the analysis and to give the items equal power rhythm , breathlessness and even enthusiasm , Mark Twain extensively used **polysyndeton** in his writings (in both of A dog's tale and A horse's tale) under analysis rather than syndetic coordinations and a asyndetic ones. .

2- In order to provide a deliberate style choice and to place emphasis on each listed word or phrase, the repetition of the conjunction 'and' — in close succession is employed. The effect is often an excited or serious mood. This is clear in the literary works under analysis of Mark Twain.

When a writer uses asyndeton, he / she removes from considerations conjunctions like "and" or "but." This rhetorical device works to make a speech more dramatic and effective by speeding up its pace and rhythm.

However, there is no intention from Mark Twain to create a sense of accelerated or slowed rhythm in writing.

3- It is clear from the analysis of the stories that Mark Twain is rarely utilized conjunctive coordination of the type 'or'. On the contrary, the type 'and' conjunctive is widely used. This reflects his preference to join two statements of equal rank rather than to express a choice between two alternatives.

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