STYLE IN RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BEATITUDES

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ABSTRACT: *This study uses the linguistic stylistic theory to examine the use of language in the Beatitudes. This is carried out in order to demonstrate to readers that a speaker can deploy language to achieve stylistic effects. The study uses stylistic and content analysis to analyse the linguistic choices used by the speaker in the Beatitudes. The study reveals that each of the Beatitudes is a brief meaningful proverb-like proclamation of blessings. Each line of the Beatitudes has three parts: an ascription of blessedness, a description of the person's character and a statement of the reason for the blessedness. The first eight sentences comprise two main clauses joined by a coordinator 'for', making them compound sentences. Line nine of the Beatitudes deviates from the rest of the lines. It has a single ascription with three conditions which are requirements for the blessedness. The verb to be form 'are', is the main form used in the first clauses of the Beatitudes and 'Blessed' is the 'Subject' throughout the text. The analysis identified three types of parallelism used in the beatitudes namely whole text parallelism, inter-sentential parallelism and intra-sentential parallelism. The use of these types of parallelism improves writing style, readability and comprehension of the text. It was also found that parallelism carried the idea of semantic equality of sentences and clauses within the Beatitudes, performed an emotive function on the reader, and created a satisfying rhythm in the language used by the speaker. The paper found out that each of the linguistic choices has identifiable function that is performed in the Beatitudes. It is concluded that these linguistic elements contribute meaningfully to the thrust of the overall message of the Beatitudes which assures people of high religious virtues to serve faithfully in order to receive blessing in the near future, and that the manipulation of words by a writer creates a distinct style through which he/she reaches out to the audience.*

KEYWORDS: Christianity, Jesus, Beatitudes, Style, Stylistic Analysis, Parallelism

INTRODUCTION

Life would be very difficult if we were not receiving information or giving information. Communication is very crucial because human existence can be said to depend on the receiving and giving of information. Language as a medium of all human interactions has many functions. It is used to send information or to tell other people one's thoughts and to communicate the inner states and emotions of the speaker, among others.

Over the years, there has been an increased interest in studying the use of language in all fields of human endeavour. Usually, the communication in these fields are done through verbal interaction and involves speaker(s), addressee(s) and sometimes hearer(s) who may not necessarily be the one(s) spoken to. More often than not, the interlocutors use certain linguistic strategies to perform plethora of functions. In order to understand these functions, language users often analyse what other language users intend to convey. They do so by first looking at the accurate representation of the forms and structures used in a speaker's language. Beside this, they make strenuous effort to uncover the meanings conveyed in the linguistic forms

identified, by carefully subjecting each linguistic item to interpretation within a given context. This enables the language user to better understand the intention of the speaker.

Schiffrin (1997) defines discourse as utterances which are units of language production (whether spoken or written) that are inherently contextualised. This means that the unit of language is made meaningful when it is seen in a social context. The contextualisation of language structures is therefore very vital in all discourse analysis in the creation of meaning. Discourse analysts do not only study language use beyond the sentence boundary, but also prefer to analyse naturally occurring language in context. Generally, discourse analysis deals with the investigation of how language-users make sense of what they read in texts, understand what speakers mean despite what they say, recognise connected as opposed to jumbled or incoherent discourse (Yule, 2007). Our ability to interpret and how we accomplish it are essential elements in the study of discourse. Yule (ibid) opines that "to arrive at interpretation, and to make our messages interpretable, we certainly rely on what we know about linguistic form and structure." The description of the linguistic forms and how they are used in a given context largely determine the accurate representation and style of the forms used in the language.

Religious discourse analysis investigates the art of linguistic spin in religious speeches to determine the association between linguistic form and function, and language manipulation. The purpose for which the language is used determines the style to be adopted. In the religious circles, speakers manipulate language for purposes such as convincing, persuading, entertaining, educating, informing, etc. In their attempt to performing this plethora of functions, speakers introduce a number of stylistic and rhetorical devices in the articulation of their speeches. These devices are primarily meant to persuade the audience to act. The norms and strategies that a speaker applies result from his/her own beliefs, intentions and goals, but at the same time are controlled by the social and cultural values respected by a certain community.

In Christianity, the Beatitudes are the set of teachings by Jesus that begin with "Blessed are ..." which appear in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Beatitudes are the most famous part of the Sermon on the Mount and probably one of the most well-known parts of the New Testament. The Beatitudes come from the Latin word *beatus* which means *blessed*, *happy*, *fortunate* or *blissful*. The structure and composition of the Beatitudes are incredibly sophisticated and present a lot of textual properties for stylistic analysis. The Beatitudes abounds in linguistic and textual elements and this paper cannot in anyway exhaust their exploration. There are more stylistic elements yet to be explored, and, this paper, is but a fraction of a whole stylistic analysis.

Statement of the problem

As a field for scholarly exploration, religious discourse is one that has also attracted a heightened and an intense amount of academic attention, with an interrelation between other disciplines including anthropology (Saler 2008), history (Morris 2003), sociology (Davie 2000, 2006; Coleman, Ivani-Challian and Robinson 2004; Crockett and Voas 2006), philosophy (Macdonald 2005; Habermas 2006), psychology (Green and Rubin 1991; Barrett 2000; Boyer 2003; Rossano 2006); and political science (Keddie 1998; Kotler-Berkowitz 2001; Philpott 2007). In-depth and extensive analysis of speeches, sermons, interviews, and texts from the clergy and founders of religions are carried out in an attempt to discover the internal architecture of the language used in the discourse and to determine the focus of the

argumentation. In recent times, there has also been some debate over the role of religion in the world today. Much of the research in the ambit of religion focuses on religious matters such as doctrinal differences in terms of faith, beliefs and practices; however the import of the discourses that are deployed by religious actors in their efforts to gain, exert, and legitimise public influence remain an area that has seen little research. Public discourse of religion, for instance, has been grossed over as a topic of study, and this has greatly impeded understanding of the internal dynamics occurring between religion and politics, and other interdisciplinary fields in the world today.

Though religious discourse is very significant because it contains great linguistic import for analysis, this area has not been given the needed attention in Ghana in terms of research. Though there are some studies in this field of study, the area still remains problematic, often focusing on inherent theological issues and on promoting the role of faith in the public. This paper therefore is an attempt to address this linguistic deficit by stylistically uncovering the meanings embedded in the shades of stylistically significant features in the Beatitudes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is two-fold: to identify the stylistically significant linguistic features and devices used in the Beatitudes, and to determine their linguistic significance in the text in relation with other words.

Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on the theoretical framework of linguistic stylistics. It was Haliday, who, in order to dissociate the term 'stylistics' from intuitive perceptions of the literary critic and the traditional style study, qualified 'stylistics' with 'linguistic' and talked of 'linguistics'. Halliday (1971) (cited in Fowler, 1971, p.38) notes: "In talking, therefore, of 'the linguistic study' of literary texts, we mean, of course, not 'the study of the language', but 'the study of the language by the theories and methods of linguistics''. Halliday's (1971) work was further expanded by Simpson (2004). Simpson (ibid) who looks at stylistics as a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language, further explains that, 'to do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language' (Simpson, 2004, p.3) and this thereby enriches our ways of thinking about language, and, exploring language offers a substantial meaning on our understanding of texts. Simpson (ibid) further views stylistics as the study of style in any given text. As a study of style, we examine the text from stylistic perspective in order to see "the individualism and creative use of language resources, as permitted by the user's period, genre and purpose" (Spencer, 1971). Stylistics, therefore, studies text interpretation from a linguistic point of view, linking literary criticism and linguistics. In modern literary stylistics, analysts draw much on the analytical approach of stylistics for linguistic analysis, description and interpretation. It tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. This is in line with both Halliday's (1971) and Simpson's (2004) models which undertake linguistic description and/ or comparison of literary texts using the categories of the language as a whole and by using the linguistic tools and techniques. This analytical approach involves careful observation, and detailed and consistent description of the language phenomenon. Specifically, the approach first identifies linguistic forms in a given text, finds out the patterns they form, describes and interprets them. So in essence, the approach deals with the identification, description and interpretation of stylistically significant linguistic forms that are present in a given text in a given context. As a general classification of features

of style as a tool of analysis which can be applied to any text, Simpson's approach devises a checklist of stylistic categories which is, though not exhaustive, likely to yield stylistically relevant information, enabling us to collect data on a fairly systematic basis.

In this study, it is believed that stylistics is a mode of textual interpretation in which the primacy of place is assigned to language. The various forms, patterns and levels that constitute the linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text. Based on the analytical approaches of stylistics, this paper will identify the linguistic features present in the Beatitudes and describe them and interpret the stylistic features to bring out their communicative implications.

METHODOLOGY

Materials and sources

The text under study was obtained from the Holy Bible (*New Living Translation (Gift & Awards Ed) 1997*).

Analysis procedure

The analysis progresses from the identification and description of linguistic forms to the textual interpretation given to these forms. By reading the text repeatedly, the researchers single out the stylistically significant features and analyse them by employing the techniques of linguistic description. This description is then followed by a discussion of the stylistic significance of these features, by relating them to the content of the text and its social and extra-textual context. Thus, in stylistic analysis, description and interpretation are inextricably linked.

In this analytical framework, the study essentially goes beyond what the text means, to explain how and why it means what it does; that is, how language functions to orient readers towards particular/possible meanings of the text (Halliday 1994). Short (1996) explains that the linguistic features of a text do not constitute an objective meaning of it per se, but the pattern they form prompts readers toward reasonable meanings that the text engenders.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis was categorised into sections as follows:

Structural Analysis of The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes describe nine blessings in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5:3-12. The study structurally divides the Beatitudes into nine parts with sub-headings for easy analysis as shown below:

Poor in spirit – 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. **Mourning – 5:4**

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

2. Meek – 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

3. Hunger and thirst – 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

4. Merciful – 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

5. Pure in heart – 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

6. Peacemakers – 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

7. Persecuted – 5:10

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

8. For my sake – 5:11-12

Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It can be observed that each verse of the Beatitudes is a proclamation that is precise and full of meaning, and introduces a topic that forms a major biblical theme. With the exception of line 9, each line consists of two main clauses. The first clause indicates a condition and the second, a result. The Beatitudes are nine in number and they follow a simple pattern. It can be seen from the structures that Jesus names a group of people normally seen as portraying virtuous character (meek, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, etc), and pronounces them "Blessed". This is in conformity to the realm of Christianity. Outside Christianity however, and in real life situations, that is, in worldly thinking, these people (meek, peacemakers, merciful, etc), will be seen as the unfortunate or the under privileged. This is because, they are the people usually taken for granted because they often run away from trouble as it were. Thus, Jesus assures them that though the world may disregarded them, in His kingdom, they are indeed the ones that are blessed.

Stylistically, each line contains three parts. The first part is the ascription of blessedness, the second being a description of the person's character or condition and the third, a statement of the reason for the blessedness. The table below further illustrates this point.

ASCRIPTION OF BLESSEDNESS	DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON'S CONDITION/CHARACTER	A STATEMENT OF THE REASON FOR THE BLESSEDNESS
Blessed are	the poor in spirit	for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
Blessed are	those who mourn	for they will be comforted
Blessed are	the meek	for they will inherit the earth
Blessed are	those who hunger and thirst after righteousness	for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are	the merciful	for they will receive mercy
Blessed are	the pure in heart	for they will see God.
Blessed are	the peacemakers	for they will be called the children of God.
Blessed are	those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake	for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are	you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.	….for great is your reward in Heaven

Analysis of Sentences and Sentence Patterns

In the Beatitudes, the study identifies nine declarative sentences. Declarative sentences are sentences in which the subject is present and generally precedes the verb. Sekyi-Baidoo (2003) opines that the declarative sentence makes a statement about the speaker/writer's thoughts, knowledge or feeling. From the Beatitudes, we realise that the entire text consists of declarative sentences. The choice of the declarative sentences in the Beatitudes has some discoursal functions. Basically, they are used to convey information or make statements. The abundance of declaratives in the Beatitudes therefore suggests that the text basically gives information to listeners, and Jesus, being the speaker of the text, proclaims blessings upon different people with different religious virtues by means of open pronouncements.

The first eight declarative sentences consist of two main clauses connected by the coordinator 'for'. The first clause in each sentence is seen as a conditional clause while the second is seen as a clause of result. The two clauses in each sentence of the first eight Beatitudes together constitute a compound sentence. There are eight compound sentences. This is so because the connector 'for' is used as a coordinator and therefore cannot undergo the process of shuffling unlike other subordinators. Any attempt to place *for* in the initial position for thematic prominence will render the sentence semantically incorrect. The use of *for* in the Beatitudes as a coordinator serves as a potential point of expansion and projection of the preceding clauses. Its use also tend to introduce the reason for the preceding clauses and to add a bit of weightiness to the complex ideas expressed by the speaker. The use of *for* is also significant as it provides explanation on the circumstances of the preceding clauses. This is achieved by expanding the

primary clauses by embellishing around it in order to accentuate meaning. Stylistically, *for* is used in the Beatitudes to show the semantic relationship between sentences, and this enables the language analyst to see what kind of information it adds, what is the core information and how other information are added and the various discoursal stance of the information. The essence of this is to identify the semantic relationships that exist between the complex ideas used by the speaker.

A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences joined together by a co-ordinating conjunction. Two ideas are put together and equal weight is put on the two ideas. We realise that 'for' has been used as a co-ordinating conjunction to link the two equally important ideas. The meaning of the first clause is, however, obtained from the second clause in the sentence and vice versa. The idea is that the condition in the second clause prevails because that of the first clause prevails. That, there will be no, for instance, *inheritance of the earth* if *meekness* is not displayed by people (Christians); There will be no *comforting* if people do not *mourn*; no *seeing of God* if *purity of heart* is not displayed, etc. In other words, there is inheritance of the earth, comforting, etc because people are meek, people mourn, etc respectively. This implies that in the packaging of ideas in the Beatitudes, though the speaker (Jesus) puts equal importance on two different clauses in one sentence to show grammatical balance, each clause in each sentence complements each other, and Jesus uses the compound sentences as a means of conveying more than a single idea in a stretch of language.

The average sentence length is 14.1 words per sentence which seem to suggest that they are all medium sentences. It must be noted that the range of sentences is 8-31 with a high number of sentences having 10 words to a line. We can infer that the speaker does not want to use short sentences because readers may be put off by the breaks in the message. Again he avoids very lengthy sentences perhaps, because such long sentences may confuse listeners with too much detail. In writing medium sentences, the writer is able to not only ensure that there is continuity in the message but also maintain the relatedness between the various sentences in the text.

In structural terms, two of the three basic sentence types are used in the presentation of the message. These are the compound and the compound –complex sentences. The use of compound sentences in this text enables the speaker to put more detail in his message. Compound sentences allow us to indicate that two ideas are closer in meaning to each other than they are to the other sentences in the same paragraph; in stylistic terms, they're a convenient way of varying sentence structure and prose rhythm while still using a straightforward subject verb structure. Compound sentences are used in the Beatitudes to create a rhythmic effect. The compound sentences here are also used to provide rationale and make the simple sentences in them more persuasive.

Clearly, the study observes that each of the Beatitudes has "Blessed are ...." as its point of departure. Beyond this, we also see a ***call*** and ***response*** pattern in the text; the first clause being the call, and the second clause, the response, as in:

 "Blessed are the merciful" (Call)

"For they will receive mercy" (Response)

The two clauses that reside in each of the Beatitudes are separated by a comma. Each of the Beatitudes ends with a full stop, and this shows the speaker's fullness of thought in each pronouncement. The text makes use of the third person pronouns "theirs" and "they" from

Beatitude one (1) to eight (8). "Theirs" and "they" are the objective and subjective forms of the third person plural pronoun "they". 'Theirs' is used in only Beatitudes one and eight while 'they' is used in the rest of the Beatitudes, with the exception of Beatitude nine. Jesus sounds indirect with regard to his address to the audience in His use of *theirs* and *they* in the second clauses of each sentence. The actual addressee seems to be far away, but, the distance between the speaker and His listeners seems not to be wide. This is because, Jesus appears to be talking to some people gathered, yet, His pronouncements seem to be directed to others not present at the venue of the talk. Thus, His use of "they" and "theirs" as His referents. The style of the talk, and its implication are, perhaps, to make us aware that it is not only the people who follow or gather around Jesus to listen to Him that are blessed, but rather those who actually practice and live by the Christian principles. Again, it is worth considering that 'theirs' goes with possessing "the Kingdom of Heaven" as reflected in Beatitudes one and eight. Hence, in talking about the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus says "... theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". On the other hand, 'those' and 'they' are used when we are talking about God's general providence for mankind on earth.

Instead of using the usual third person plural pronoun *they*, the speaker uses the second person plural pronoun *you* in Beatitude nine. This pro-nominal deviation in the context of the Beatitudes, has some rich stylistic significance. It is realised that the speaker sounds more direct, personal and definite in his address because the addressees appear to be close and listening directly to him. The *you* probably refers specifically to Jesus' disciples and other christians who would have to endure multiplicity of tribulations before they get their great rewards in Heaven. This multiplicity of tribulations is seen in how ideas that denote different unpleasant experiences are packed together in the last Beatitude thus; *Blessed are **you** when men shall revile **you**, and persecute **you**, and shall say all manner of evil against **you** falsely,...., for great is **your** reward....* In just a single line, we see christians being *reviled*, *persecuted*, *accused*, unlike the other lines. This line happens to be the final line in the Beatitudes. Being the last line and packed with a number of experiences that are not pleasant also indicates that the Christian journey is not an easy one, and that, for one to fully walk through Christianity to earn rewards of Heaven, one must go through and endure tribulations one after the other.

Furthermore, there are some deviations in the sentence structures of the Beatitudes. In Beatitudes one (1) to eight (8), we see the 'condition' and 'result' sentence types which are characterised by a description of one's condition / character. However, we see a departure from this trend in verse nine (9). Beatitude nine has a single ascription with three conditions, and the statement of the reason for the blessedness is packaged in a separate sentence. Unlike Beatitudes 1-8 where the condition and the result are represented with single clauses, that of Beatitude nine (9) has three successive clauses representing the conditions one must prepare to go through to be blessed. Because people would have to satisfy one condition as in Beatitudes 1-8 to receive a single reward or blessing in a way, those in Beatitude nine (9) would have immeasurable and limitless reward because they have to satisfy three conditions. Inversely, Beatitude nine (9) can be seen as a summary of all the other eight Beatitudes, because in Christianity it is believed that 'No Cross, No Crown'. This may imply that if the followers of Jesus suffer immensely on earth by way of tribulations, they will rejoice in multiple folds in heaven some day.

Tense Usage

A closer examination of the text shows that the verb 'are' is used as main verb in all the conditional clauses in the Beatitudes as in "Blessed are....". 'Blessed' is the subject in each of

the Beatitudes whereas *the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake, the merciful, the pure in heart, etc* are the subject complements to the verb 'are'. In the second clauses of each of the Beatitudes, it is observed that Beatitudes 1,8, and 9 use *is* as the main verb to link the subject and the complement in each clause, as in: *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (1 & 8)* and *for great is your reward in Heaven (9).*

It is realised that apart from having *is* as their lexical verb showing the state of the blessedness, it is also used as a lexical verb by the speaker to express a general truth of unchanging reward for the "blessed" people. The speaker is therefore certain about the rewards that those who live virtuous lives will get in the end.

Similarly, in Beatitudes 2, 3,4,5,6 and 7, the speaker uses the future marker *will* to describe future rewards that the virtuous followers of Jesus are hopeful of receiving. The speaker gives assurance and promises them comfort, inheritance, and satisfaction among others. Another assurance to his followers at the time is that they **will see God** and that those people **will be called the children of God**. These future rewards are not visible and tangible and could probably mean spiritual blessings which the early disciples are assured of rather than physical or material rewards that present day Christians crave for instantaneously just after serving their creator for a while.

There is also a remarkable discrepancy between Beatitudes 1, 8 and 9 on one hand, and the rest of the Beatitudes on the other. When Jesus talks about the rewards of the 'poor in spirit' (1), 'the persecuted' (8) and 'those reviled, persecuted and falsely accused you for my sake' (9), He does not express it in future time (shall/will be) but in the present tense using *is*. He, however, uses 'shall/will be' to express a potential blessing in future in terms of God's general providence for man on earth in Beatitudes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This implies that the speaker is certain and definite about the assurance to those who are persecuted for his, and righteousness sake, and, those who are poor in spirit. The speaker is, however, not specific with time with which the promises to the other third person addressees will be fulfilled. It must be added that the second clauses of the first and the last Beatitudes open and end with the present tense 'is' respectively. This implies that the speaker does not have any shred of doubt in the assurance he is giving to the audience for, the assurance is concrete, specific and time bound.

Parallel Structures in the Beatitudes

'The Beatitudes', an example of Hebrew poetry, does not use rhyming words but rhyming ideas. The use of Hebraic poetic parallelism can be seen in the Beatitudes. The principle of parallel construction requires that expressions of similar content and function should be outwardly similar. Sekyi-Baidoo (2003:496-7) explains parallelism as "an instance of pairing up or sequencing forms which are similar in structure or form, and also in focus". This means that items in parallelism must be of the same word class, and must perform the same function. Therefore, when form sequencing and instances flout this rule, faulty parallelism is produced. This means that when two or more sentence elements have the same logical office they are seen as grammatically parallel. Proper parallelism helps to establish balance and flow in a well-constructed sentence; the alignment of related ideas supports readability and clarity. Lack of parallel structures can disrupt the rhythm of a sentence or text, leaving them grammatically unbalanced. In the Beatitudes, three types of parallelism are identified, namely whole text parallelism, inter-sentential parallelism and intra-sentential parallelism.

The study reveals that all the nine sentences that constitute the Beatitudes have one common beginning **Blessed are ...** It is these parallel structures that distinguish the Beatitudes from the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. It is an example of anaphoric parallelism. This is because the same phrase repeatedly occurs at the beginning of each sentence of the Beatitudes. In essence, the whole Beatitudes are phrased in parallel structures. Aside the whole text parallelism, it is observed that some of the sentences in the Beatitudes have some similar and peculiar features in terms of parallelism. For instance, there are parallel structures in the first parts of the sentences in Beatitudes 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7. These begin with "Blessed are the ...." respectively, whereas lines 2, 4 and 8 also have the parallel structures "Blessed are those ...". Beatitudes 1 and 8 also have an example of cataphoric parallelism, **For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven**, which occurs at the end of Beatitudes 1 and 8. The study identifies intra-sentential parallelism in the Beatitudes in the last line. The last line (9) of the Beatitudes shows some intra-parallel structures within the same sentence. The three parallel structures are seen in Jesus' use of **...when men** *revile you, persecute you, say all kinds of evil falsely against you".* These three italicised structures fetch their beginning from the same source *Blessed are you when men .....* and the ending *... for my sake*. We realise that *insult, persecute* and *say* are in the same lexical category and therefore satisfy the condition for being parallel structures. In the third structure, there is an expansion but that does not disturb the total value of parallelism in the sentence. The expansion is meant to show the urgency, necessity and rapidity with which Jesus addresses the audience. It shows the seriousness with which he talks to the disciples and the speed with which the disciples will be persecuted because of his sake. The repetition of the modal *shall* implies that Jesus knows and is certain that his followers will face inevitable persecution which is part of the processes being rewarded in Heaven.

The use of parallelism in the beatitudes has enormous stylistic significance. In the first place, it serves as a useful device for instruction, and Jesus uses it to express his thoughts to his audience. Due to the use of the parallel structures, we (readers) are able to concentrate on the message and immediately make meaning out of it. It acts as an aide memoir, in that the idea, when spoken twice, is doubly memorable and like poetry or song, it is easier to remember than mere prose or narrative.

Essentially, it can be observed that in the Beatitudes, parallelism has been used to ensure complementarity and contrast of ideas, choices and values. Between Beatitudes 1-8 in the Sermon, Jesus sounds impersonal with the use of 'they' and 'those'. However, it could be seen that in Beatitude 9, Jesus switches from the impersonal 'the poor, the meek, those' etc to the more personal and concrete 'you' to climax the Beatitudes. Jesus' focus on the unseen addressee changes to the visible addressee. That is to say that Jesus moves his sermon from the distanced audience to the immediate audience. This is an internal deviation from generality to specificity.

Additionally, as the composer of the Beatitudes deliberately uses parallel structures to ensure balance of ideas and clarity of arguments, he also establishes a sense of harmony by giving the lines in the Beatitudes roughly the same length but with varied meanings. The varied sentence structures help to maintain the interest of readers. Closely linked ideas expressed in series of parallel structures as in the case of the Beatitudes create clarity and heighten interest. From the sermon, Jesus makes use of this balance to ensure that He puts equal weight on the three parallel structures in the last Beatitude. This is illustrated in His use of *"when men ... revile you, persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake"*. This further shows that each of the structures plays a complementary role in the understanding of the other.

Parallelism has thus enhanced the reading and understanding of the Beatitudes. It has also made it interesting, pleasing to the ear, and even more persuasive.

Rhythm is another important stylistic significance expressed with the use of parallel structures in the Beatitudes. Rhythm is stylistically employed to ensure that Jesus highlights a vital point in his sermon delivery thereby compelling His audience to sit up to listen whilst their interests are being addressed. In the sermon, Jesus makes use of some rhythmic movements to drum in His message to the listeners. It can be observed at a glance that Jesus' use of 'the' and 'those' creates a rhythm of "the-those-the –those-the-the-the-those-you". This rhythm indicates a "low, high, low, high, low, low, low, high, higher" pattern. The higher pattern is seen in the direct addresses at the end of the Beatitudes.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the use of parallelism has granted the Beatitudes a semi-autonomous unity within the rest of the Sermon. Like an anaphora, it is used as rhetorical device to grant the whole text a definite pattern by giving two parts of the sentences a similar form. This adds insights which are useful for translation through word equivalence, and interpretation of difficult phrases by comparison with easier- to -understand parallel phrases as (Potter cited in Hodges & Whitten, 1972) puts it "Balanced sentences satisfy a profound human desire for equipoise and symmetry".

Lastly, the use of parallel structures also helps us to answer the question "Was Jesus referring to eight groups of people, or eight characteristics of a single group? The closing blessing "for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" mirrors the opening, poetically suggesting unity between the groups. This means that the totality of God's blessing for mankind is in variegated segments and that same group of audience receive different blessings from God at different times. The essence of parallelism in sentence construction helps to create economy, rhythm, emphasis, and clarity in the message of the speaker. Parallel structures add both clout and clarity to the message being presented and this increases the readability and understanding of the message. This is done by creating word patterns which readers can follow easily, and this Jesus did in the Beatitudes.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the Beatitudes came out with a lot of stylistic information based on the linguistic elements present in the text. It was found that each of the Beatitudes is a proverb-like proclamation, precise and full of meaning. The Beatitudes are nine in number and they all follow a simple pattern. Eight of the nine Beatitudes consist of two main clauses each, with the first clause indicating a condition and the second clause, a result. The analysis found out three types of parallelism used in the beatitudes namely whole text parallelism, inter-sentential parallelism and intra-sentential parallelism. The use of these types of parallelism improves writing style, readability and comprehension of the text. It was also found that parallelism carried the idea of semantic equality of sentences and clauses within the Beatitudes, performed an emotive function on the reader, and created a satisfying rhythm in the language used by the composer. The study concludes that the different stylistic devices used in the beatitudes convey meaningful messages and aid clarity of expression, and the composer of the Beatitudes uses these meaning-making devices and strategies to drum home his message. Analysing the text stylistically highlights how the internal structures of the linguistic choices in the text come together to ensure that our interpretation of the text is explicit, holistic and grounded. The

application of linguistic stylistic theory is therefore one of the effective ways of explaining a given text using systematic and analytical procedures.

Further studies on the Beatitudes may be carried out using other linguistic models such as the transitivity, modality, theme-rheme, clause-complexing etc all under Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. It can also be studied under the lens of discourse and genre analyses.

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