

# Synonymic Row as a Device for Conveying Expressiveness of Prose Rhythm (Based on the Material of Georgian and English Rhythmic Prose)

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*“Only in dictionaries do words stand alone”*  
David L. Brown

## Abstract

Among other lexical devices, synonyms possess a remarkably big potential as expressive means of rhythmic prose. With the help of synonyms one and the same notion may be expressed in two or more ways. In the article, we tried to show that in the research material in both Georgian and English there is almost complete coincidence in terms of meaning and function of synonyms as a rhythm forming device.

The target readers of the article will be linguists and the researchers who study rhythm of prose.

**Keywords:** Expressive means, lexical devices, rhythm of prose, synonyms, synonymic row

## Introduction

The aim of the article is to outline the common linguistic features of synonyms and synonymic rows that are employed for conveying rhythmic prose expressiveness based on contrastive study of prose writings that are markedly rhythmic in the Georgian and English languages. Our research will be all the more interesting and rewarding as the languages in question belong to different language families.

Repetition of the similar linguistic units is the cornerstone the rhythm of prose is based on. And on the lexical level, employment of synonyms is one of the major devices. To a great extent, it proceeds from their most essential function: “Synonyms lend more expressiveness and sparkle to a language” (Ghlonti, 1988, p. 59).

The paradigmatic row of synonyms is united and linked through „the same denotation, or the same denotative component, but differing in connotations, or in connotative components (Tevdoradze, 2010). The same author stresses the dualistic nature of synonyms that enhances the expressiveness conveyed by them: through the context the more different may appear to be more similar and the more

similar ones may appear to be more different in meaning (Tevdoradze, 2010).

## Contrastive Study of the Research Material of Rhythmic Prose

From the point of prose rhythm, we are most interested in stylistic synonyms as they convey more connotation since “a huge expressive-emotive aspect of semantic side of the language is left beyond denotative meaning (...) Connotation implies different kind of subjective layers, i.e. expressiveness and intensification of certain content, grammatical imagery (using metaphors), emotional effect and so on (Nizharadze, 2005, p.191).

Contrastive study of the research material of rhythmic prose yielded the following:

a) Nouns, adjectives, verbs and participles are most frequently presented in synonymic pairs or rows. The expressiveness of rhythmicity further increases if synonyms are linked without a conjunction:

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დუქნები. ფარდულები ...უთვალავი ქსოვილი. ფარჩეული. აბრეშუმეული. ქაშემირი. ... ჭიქები. თასები. დოქები. თუნგები. ...ნოხები...ხალები. ... ფარდაგები. ფლასები. ჭილობები [duqnebi, pardulebi...utvalavi qsovili, parcheuli, abreshemeuli, cashemiri...chicqebi, tasebi, doqebi, tungebi...noxebi...khalebi...pardagebi. plasebi]

Inns, stalls...numerous fabrics. Brocade, silk, cashmere...cups, bowls, jugs, pitchers...carpets, rugs, mats, covers (Robaqidze, 1989, p.13).

სასთუმალი, საბანი, საგები ყველაფერი ცხელია [sas-tumali, sabani, sagebi yvelaperi tskhelia]

The pillow, the blanket, the sheet, everything is hot (Gamsakhurdia, 1959, p. 13);

ჭექა, ქუხილი, ელვა, მეხი ერთმანეთში ირეოდა [cheqa, qukhili, elva, mekhi ertmanetshi ireoda]

Thunder, storm, lightning, bolts were all sounding at once (Lortkipanidze, 1958, p. 223);

სასვენებელი ლტოლვილთა და გადახვეწილთა და მუდამ მავალთა [sasvenebeli ltolvilta da gadakhvetsilta da mudam mavalta]

The sanctuary of refugees and fugitives and eternal wanderers (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 120);

ხომალდი იდგა მორთული და მოკაზმული პირად-პირადად [khomaldi idga mortuli da mokazmulu piradpiradad]

The ship stood trim and decorated colourfully (Barnovi, 1943, p. 265);

დიდი მოძრაობა იყო ახალ სასახლეში: ლაშქრის სარდალნი, თემთ თუ ხალხთა წინამძღოლები, ვარსკვლავთ მრიცხველნი, მომავალი ზედის მკითხველნი, მღვდელნი, კურუმნი [didi modzraoba iyo akhal sasakhleshi: lashqris sardalni, temt tu khalkhta tsinamdzgolebi, varskvlavt mritskhvelni, momavali bedis mkitkhvelni, mghvdelni, qurumni]

There was a great stir and bustle at the new palace. All were there: heads of the armies, leaders of communities, stargazers, fortunetellers, vicars, priests (Barnovi, 1943, p. 265). We think that here there are three synonymous pairs: heads= leaders, stargazers=fortunetellers, vicars=priests.

გამომრა მიწა, გახმა, დაიშაშრა, დასქდა [gamoshra mit-sa, gakhma, daishashra, dasqda];

The ground grew dry, barren, it became parched, cracked (Barnovi, 1943, p. 342).

English examples:

She washed her comb and brush (Salinger, 1982, p.27);

He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed (Joyce, 1982, p. 122);

Buttons of all shapes and sizes (Beckett, 1985, p. 1);

He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones (Joyce, 1982, p. 218);

The threadbare phrases, the inane expressions of sympathy, the cautious words of a reporter won over to conceal the details of a commonplace vulgar death attacked his stomach (Joyce, 1982, p. 128).

b) Sometimes the whole sentences consist of nothing else but synonyms or consecutive sentences are synonymic sets themselves.

არეულია. ამრეზილი. აღრენილი [areulia, amrezili, aghrenili]

(He is) upset. Displeased. Irritable (Robaqidze, 1989, p.18);

ლხინობენ . მღერაიან . ლაღობენ [lkhinoben, mgherian, laghoben]

(They are) feasting, singing, having fun (Robaqidze, 1989, p.70);

დროსტარება და ქეიფი [drostareba da qeipi]

Reveling and feasting (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 20);

მიტოვებული. გარიყული. დაგდებული [mitovebul . garikuli. dagdebuli]

Abandoned. Outcast. Deserted (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 153);

We could not find the similar cases in our English research material.

c) Rhythmicality of the synonymic pair is more stressed and heightened when they have a common modifier which makes the synonyms semantically more identical:

რამდენი ცეცხლი და რამდენი წვა და რამდენი ლხინი. ეხლა მარტო ფერფლია და უდაბნო [ramdeni tsetskhli da ramdeni tsva da ramdeni lkhini, ekhla marto perplia da udabno]

So much fire and so much burning and so much feasting. And now, there are only ashes and a desert inside him (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 214);

რა მშვენიერი, რა დიდებული არის ზღვა! [ra mshven-ieri, ra didebuli aris zghva!]

What a beautiful, what a majestic thing is the sea (Lortkipanidze, 1992, p. 123);

ბეხან აღარ ბღავის. ბეხან აღარ ღმუის. ბეხან არც ტირის [bekhan aghar bghavis. bekhan aghar ghmuis. bekhan arts tiris]

Bekhan is not bellowing any more. Bekhan is not howling any more. Bekhan is not even crying (Robaqidze, 1989p.132); Here we have got a very interesting example: first, it is the common subject (Bekhan, a camel); then, all the three predicates are accompanied by the negative particle and finally, here is descending gradation of meanings in the synonymic row: bellowing- howling-crying. Yet, we have got an ascending gradation from the other perspective: "Crying", which is the most neutral semantically

among them, is the most expressive in relation to an animal.

ქმნიდა ახალ ცხოვრებას, ახალ წესწყობილებას [ qm-nida akhal tskhovrebas, qmnida akhal tsestskobilebas]

(It was) forming a new life, a new order (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.14); Here, in our opinion, life and order are synonymous as they can interchange each other and this interchangeability is “ a very important feature since it embraces the essence of the synonymy” (Nizharadze, 2005, p.191).

ჩვენს დარდას და ჩვენს გულის ჭირს.; ჩვენს ღიმილსა და ჩვენს ცრემლებს ; ყველაფერს, ყველაფერს თან წაიღებენ საათები...[chvens dardsa da chvens gulis chirs, chvens ghimilsa da chvens cremlebs, kvelapers, kvelapers tan tsaigenen saatebi...]

Our grief and our heartache, our smiles and our tears, all, all of them will be taken by the watches... (Gamsakhurdia, 1959, p. 7);

English examples:

Why had he **withheld life from her**? Why had he **sentenced her to death**? (Joyce, 1982, p.129);

He realised that she **was dead**, that **she had ceased to exist**, that **she had become a memory** (Joyce, 1982, p.129); In this sentence, besides the synonymic sentences (she was dead =she had ceased to exist = she had become a memory), the rhythmicality benefits from the verbs put in the same tense form, from the usage of the same pronoun and the same interrogative word.

**The threadbare phrases, the inane expressions of sympathy, the cautious words** of a reporter won over to conceal the details of a commonplace vulgar death attacked his stomach (Joyce,1982, p. 128); Here the same modifier for the synonyms is the definite article repeated with all the three pairs of synonyms: **threadbare =inane =cautious and phrases=expressions of sympathy= words**.

d) The common prefixes or suffixes also enhance the rhythmical expressiveness created by synonyms:

ასე მოგზაურობდნენ ძველად ჰებრაელთა ტომები: ხალხი: **უსახლო-უკარო-ულოგინო** [ase mogzaurobdnen dzvelad hebraelta tomebi: khalkhi: **usakhlo-ukaro-ulogino**]

This was the way how the tribes of Jews used to travel in old days, the people who were **homeless, hearthless, comfortless** (Robaqidze, 1989, p.119); For more expressiveness the author chose three similarly derived lexemes, with the same prefixes and suffixes that correspond to English un and -less. The rhythm is heightened semantically as well since the three words can be considered as contextual synonyms.

**არნახული** და **არგაგონილი** კარნავალები მუშათა ახალგაზრდობის [arnakhuli da argagonili karnavalebi]

**Unseen** and **unheard** carnivals (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.11);

გახარებული ხალხის დენა, **უსაზღვრო** და **უნაპირო** [gakharebuli khalkhis dena, **usazhgvro** da **unapiro**]

The flow of the rejoicing people, **boundless** and **limitless** (Kotetishvili, 2012, p. 11);

გოგო მიჰყვება: **აწითლული** და **ალეწილი** [gogo mi-kveba: **atsituli** da **aletsili**]

The girl is following him: **afame** and **afire** (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 243).

The analogical examples from the English part are the following:

...he halted and looked along the river towards Dublin, the lights of which burned redly and **hospitably** in the cold night (Joyce, 1982, p. 128);

... the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was **dissolving** and **dwindling** (Joyce, 1982, p. 219);

I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those **gleaming, dazzling** parties of his were with me so vividly (Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 129);

e) Rhythm of prose is conveyed not only through seemingly complete synonyms but also through partial synonyms. They enable to make the utterance rhythmically stressed and accentuated since „synonyms always possess non-identical components either in material-logical meaning or in connotations. Thus, synonymic repetition makes it possible to study, examine, inspect and describe an object” (Arnold,1973. p. 129).

Examples:

ნაპრალში **შხუის**, **სჩქეფს** და **ხტის** მდინარე [napralshi **shkhuis**, **schqeps** da **khtis** mdinare]

The river is rushing, splashing and leaping in the crevice (Lortkipanidze,1958, p. 212) rushing=splashing=leaping, the three verbs have the same logical component, the subject.

In the following examples the words in bold are so close semantically that we can easily regard them as synonyms proper. For instance:

უყურებს **სადი**, **ძლიერი**, **ჯანმრთელი** მწყემსი ჩამავალ მზეს; ისმენს ჟღურტულს ჩიტებისას; შეხარის **გამადარს**, **დასვენებულ** ფარას და ნელ-ნელა ემზადება გაიშლართოს **ღრმა**, **შშვიდი** ძილისთვის [ukurebs **saghi**, **dzlieri**, **janmrteli** mtskemsis chamaval mzes; ismens zhghurtuls chitebisas; shekharis **gamadzghars**, **dasvenebul** paras da nel-nela emzadeba gaishxlartos ghrma, mshvidi dzilisatvis]

The **sane, strong, healthy** shepherd is staring at the setting sun; he is listening to the birds chirruping; feeling happy, he is looking proudly at his **nourished, contented** flock and slowly he is getting ready to sprawl for a sound, peaceful sleep (Lortkipanidze,1958, p. 212); sane=strong=healthy can be considered as contextual synonyms.

**შლიდა** და **ანგრევდა** კაცს შიგნიდან [shlida da **angrevda** kats shignidan]

(It) was **destructing** and **destroying** the man inside

(Kotetishvili, 2012, p.16);

მაგრამ შხამი კი, მაგრამ მალამო კი უცვლელად, შეუსუტებლად დარჩება [magram shkhami ki, magram malamo ki **ucvlelad, sheusustebblad** darcheba]

Yet the poison, yet the relief will remain **changeless, undiminished** (Lortkipanidze, 1992, p.110);

მიყრილ-მოყრილი პაპიროსის ნამწეები და ფერფლი [mikril-mokrili papirosis **namtsvebi da perpli**]

Cigarette stubs and ashes scattered here and there (Lortkipanidze, 1992, p. 118);

მერე მოისმის ფეხის ხმა, გამხმარი შტოების მტვრევა და ტკრციალი [mere moismis pekhis khma, gamkhmari shtoebis **mtvrevva da tkrtsialii**]

Then one can hear the foot sound, of **smashing and crashing** of dry twigs (Gamsakhurdia, 1959, p.11);

წყალი ანკარაა და გრილი [tskali **ankaraa da grili**]

The water is **clear and cool** (Robaqidze, 1989, p.139);

რასსა შეურვეელი და ხალასი [rassa **sheureveli da khalasi**]

The race, **non-adulterated and pure** (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 214);

ყოველი ქვა ტაძარის ქალწულია თვითონ: ნელი-ლბილი-ნაზი-თვინიერი [kveli qva tadzris qaltsulia tviton: **neli-lbili-nazi-tvinieri**]

Each stone of the temple is like a virgin: **unhurried-soft-tender-loyal** (Robaqidze, 1989. p. 214);

ეხლა მარტო ფერფლია და უდაბნო [ekhla narto **perplia da udabno**]

Now he is only **ashes and a desert** (Robaqidze, 1989, p. 214);

იგი ყვავილის ყელივით ნაზია და სიფრიფანა [igi kvavilis kelivit **nazia da sipripana**]

It is **delicate and slim** like a flower stem (Gamsakhurdia, 1959, p. 27);

კარგად დაღალულმა და გაოფლიანებულმა მიიბრინა გოჩმანამ სიონთან [kargad **daghalulma da gaoplianebulma** miirbina gochmanam siontan]

Quite **tired and sweating**, Gochmana came running to Sioni Cathedral (Kotetishvili, 2012, p. 9);

ასე დადონებული და მოშხამული შევიდა თავის სახლში [ase **daghonebuli da moshkhamuli** shevida tavis sakhlishi]

Thus **saddened and embittered** he entered his house (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.10);

ყველაფერი სუსტი, ბებერი და უნიათო დაიმსხვრა ამ ბრუნვაში [kvelaperi **susti, beberi da uniato** daimskhvra am brunvashi]

Everything that was **frail, old and lifeless** could not survive this turmoil (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.11);

Examples from the English sources:

...he halted and looked along the river towards Dublin, the lights of which burned **redly and hospitably** in the cold night (Joyce, 1982, p.128);

The blinds would be drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, **crying and blowing** her nose and telling him how Julia had died (Joyce, 1982, p. 218);

He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only **lame and useless** ones (Joyce, 1982, p. 218);

They have been put in barrels and shipped to the cities where they will be eaten in apartments that are filled with **books, magazines, furniture, and people** (Anderson,1981, p. 34);

...Gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a **fresh, green** breast of the new world (Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 129);

...later I realized that behind much of the entertainment that the city poured into the nation there were only a lot of rather **lost and lonely** people (Fitzgerald,1965, p. 25);

I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a **sullen, overhanging sky** and a lustreless moon (Fitzgerald,1984, p. 126);

My own happiness in the past often approached such an ecstasy that I could not share it even with the person dearest to me but had to walk it away in quiet **streets and lanes** (Fitzgerald,1965, p. 55);

He did not know that it was already **behind him, somewhere back** in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night (Fitzgerald,1984, p.129);

Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most **swollen** aware of its superiority to the **bored, sprawling, swollen** towns beyond the Ohio (Fitzgerald,1984, p. 126).

f ) It is noteworthy to mention that "a writer, in order to produce an impressive narrative, often presents combined synonyms that are formed through composing" (Geldiashvili, 2010). Such occasions bring remarkably great expressiveness of rhythmicality into the text since often these synonyms are rhymed and it also works favorably for expressing rhythm.

მამ რისთვის არის მოწყენილ-გაჩუმებული ყოფილი ენა-ტკბილ მოუბარი, მომღერალ-მოცეკვავე? [mash ristvis aris **motskenil-gachumebuli yopili ena-tkibil moubari, momgeral-mocekvave?**]

And then why is this usually silver-tongued, ever **singing and dancing** now **sad and quiet**? (Lortkipanidze.1958.p.95); This is a very interesting example with two pairs of synonyms: silver-tongued=singing=dancing, sad=quiet;

ძველნი ეტრატნი; ფირფიტებზედ ნაწერ-ნახატნი [dzvelni etratni; pirtibezed naver-naxatni]

Ancient papyruses; writings and paintings on the plates (Barnovi, 1943, p. 340);

დაბდაბთ, ნალარათ გრიალ-ტკრციალი [dabdabt, nagharat grial-tkrtsiali]

Clattering and rattling of drums (Barnovi, 1943, p. 347);

მწვანით მოსილი მთა-გორაკები [mtsvanit mosili mta-gorakebi]

**Mountains** and **hills** adorned in green (Lortkipanidze, 1958, p. 212).

We could not find the corresponding cases in English research material.

g) The expressiveness of rhythmicity is also intense if/when at least one of the synonymic pair has an emotive meaning since "broadly speaking, ordinary lexemes and figures of speech can be synonymous to each other, e.g. very cheaply and for a song (Gamkrelidze, Kiknadze, Shaduri & Shengelaia, 2008, p. 368). There may emerge a bigger emotional charge in a pair that has stylistically distanced parts and thus above-mentioned rising or falling gradation may take a place:

ოჰ, ეს თვალები! მოხოვნელნი სიცოცხლის- პატარა სიცოცხლის-ერთი პეშვი სიცოცხლის [oh, es tvalebi! mkhovnelni sitsotskhlis-patara sitsotskhlis-erti peshvi sitsotskhlis;

Oh, these eyes! Begging for life- **for just a little bit more life- just a handful of life** (Robaqidze, 1989, p.132);

აღარ მესმოდა თხელი, ბუმბულივით მსუბუქი ჩაის სერვისის ნაზი წკრიალი [aghar mesmoda tkheli, bumbulivit msubuqi chais servizis nazi tskriali]

I could no longer hear the **gentle** tinkling of the **thin**, feather-light tea set (Gamsakhurdia, 1959, p. 27);

... ეს ორმაგი კვნესა კი რალაცნაირად აბრაზებდა გაბორტებულ და ცოფმოდებულ სმენას [es ormagi kvnesa ki raghats sxvanairad abrazebda gaborotebul da tsopmodebul smenas]

This double moaning was irritating the **embittered** and **furious** ear in a peculiar way (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.15);

ლიღინებდნენ დუდუკები, ნალვლიანად არხევდნენ ბგერებს, ზმუოდნენ, კვნესოდნენ, ჭირვეულობდნენ [ghighinebdnen dudukebi, naghvlianad arkhevdnen bgerebs, zmuodnen, kvnesodnen, chirveulobdnen]

The duduks **were singing softly, emitting sorrowful sounds they were moaning, groaning, complaining** (Kotetishvili, 2012, p. 8);

მიწამდის დადაბლება და მიწაში ჩახედება დაბერებულ და ნაპერწკლებჩამკრალი თვალებით [mitsamdis dada-bleba da mitsashi chaxedeba daberebul da naperwklebchamqrali tvalebit]

To take a deep bow to the **ground** and **stare** into the ground with **aged** and **lackluster** eyes (Kotetishvili, 2012, p.12).

English examples:

Better pass boldly into that other world, **in the full glory of some passion**, than fade and wither dimly with age (Joyce, 1982, p. 219);

He had sentenced her to **ignominy, a death of shame** (Joyce, 1982, p.129);

Now that she was gone he understood how **lonely her life must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room** (Joyce, 1982, p.128);

He realised that **she was dead, that she had ceased to exist**, that she **had become a memory** (Joyce, 1982, p.129).

## Conclusion

The above study allows us to conclude that on the level of lexis the prose rhythm is created by repeating the words with identical or near meaning. As for the expressiveness of rhythmicity it is intensified by means of synonyms as one and the same notion can be conveyed in two or more different ways semantically. As it has been proved, synonymy can be considered as a very effective device for conveying expressiveness of prose rhythm in both Georgian and English. We may say that there is almost complete coincidence both meaning- and function-wise of synonyms in these languages.

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