Nataliya Zhorniak,
Lviv Polytechnic National University

THE STYLISTIC ROLE OF SYNTACTIC PARALLEL CONSTRUCTIONS IN ARTISTIC PROSE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF SINCLAIR LEWIS'S «BABBIT»)

The paper considers the issue of syntactic parallel constructions as stylistic means in artistic prose. Different approaches to the term «style» are dwelt upon. Syntactical stylistics is the main conductor of emotions in the written type of language, so, correspondingly, any change of form will inevitably cause a slight modification of meaning. Sinclair Lewis's novel «Babbit» was chosen to illustrate how syntactic parallel construction performs its stylistic role in prose. The results of the novel's text analysis showed that parallel constructions of all types are favoured by the author in the descriptive paragraphs. In Sinclair Lewis's «Babbitt» parallel constructions are used on all levels – syntactical wholes, paragraphs and sentences. On the level of paragraphs parallelism is used mostly in descriptive comparisons. In the sentences it is used in extended similies. One more peculiarity of the author's style is a repeated key-word on the macro-level, usually put in capital letter which expresses the general idea of the syntactical whole the same way the key sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph. There are two layers of the narration in each chapter – the background and Babbitt's life itself. All the syntactical wholes on their micro level are arranged by means of parallelism.
Key words: style, syntax, artistic prose, parallel construction, paragraph, stylistics, stylistic device.

СТИЛІСТИЧНА РОЛЬ СИНТАКСИЧНИХ ПАРАЛЕЛЬНИХ КОНСТРУКЦІЙ У ХУДОЖНІЙ ПРОЗІ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ РОМАНУ СИНКЛЕРА ЛЬЮІСА «БЕББІТ»)
У статті розглядаються аспекти синтаксичних паралельних конструкцій як стилістичних засобів художньої прози. Проаналізовано різні підходи до терміну «стиль». Для ілюстрації прикладів того, як синтаксис виконує свою стилістичну роль в прозі був обраний роман Сінклера Льюїса «Беббіт». Результати аналізу тексту роману показали, що паралельні конструкції всіх типів використовуються автором в описових абзацах. Паралельні конструкції використовуються на всіх рівнях – синтаксичних цілих, абзацах і реченнях. На рівні абзаців паралелізм використову-

---

[28] Ibidem, p. 210.
[29] Olszewski E., op. cit., p. 94.

ється в основному в описових порівняннях. У реченнях він використовується в розширених порівняннях. Всі синтак-сичні цілі на мікрорівні побудовані за допомогою паралельності.

Ключові слова: стиль, синтаксис, художня проза, паралельна конструкція, абзац, стилістика, стилістичний прийом.

СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ РОЛЬ СИНТАКСИЧЕСКИХ ПАРАЛЛЕЛЬНЫХ КОНСТРУКЦИЙ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕН-НОЙ ПРОЗЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ РОМАНА СИНКЛЕРА ЛЬЮИСА «БЭББИТ»)

В статье рассматривается вопрос о синтаксических параллельных конструкциях в качестве стилистических средств художественной прозы. Проанализированы различные подходы к термину «стиль». Для иллюстрации при-меров того, как синтаксис выполняет свою стилистическую роль в прозе был выбран роман Синклера Льюиса «Бэб-бит». Результаты анализа текста романа, показали, что параллельные конструкции всех типов используются ав-тором в описательных абзацах. Параллельные конструкции используются на всех уровнях – синтаксических целых, абзацев и предложениях. На уровне абзацев параллелизм используется в основном в описательных сравнениях. В предложениях он используется в расширенных сравнениях. Все синтаксические целые на микроуровне построены с помощью параллельности.

Ключевые слова: стиль, синтаксис, художественная проза, параллельная конструкция, абзац, стилистика, сти-листический прием.

Although not so obvious as lexical devices, syntax is considered to be one of the most powerful means of making an utterance meaningful and expressive. It is generally believed that syntax deals not only with word-combinations, clauses and sentences (the so-called micro-level of syntax) but also with larger units of utterance, such as syntactical wholes and paragraphs, so it is worth-while dwelling on them.

To illustrate how syntactic parallel construction performs its stylistic role in prose Sinclair Lewis's novel «Babbitt» was cho-sen. Sinclair Lewis is the representative of satirical tradition in American realistic prose. As was the case with so many American writers of his generations, his fiction grew directly out of his journalism, and retained to the end something of the style of the newspaperman. «Babbitt» is considered to be his most characteristic work.

Syntax is a major determinant of literary style: while simple English sentences usually have the structure «Subject–Verb–Ob-ject», poets often distort this syntax through inversion, while prose writers can exploit elaborate syntactic structures such as the periodic sentence [3, p. 127].

What concerns the style itself, in its most general interpretation, it has a fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context by a given person for a given purpose. In the broadest sense, style can be applied to both spoken and written, both literary and everyday varieties of language; but by tradition, it is particularly associated with written literary texts, and this is the sense of the term which will concern us.

Style has different meanings for different people. Carter believes that style is generally depends on linguistic levels [2, p. 27]. Due to these levels every text and writing is different from the other, hence every genre is different. Haines is of the view that the study of style is the study of distinctions: looking at what was said against what might have been said [4, p. 43]. Style is also called a variety. It is referred to as the manner of expression which is different in various contexts. Style, being a versatile field, is defined depending on one's field of study.

The concept of style has variety of meanings in and outside the literary text. It is commonly an issue that we use the term style without knowing its meaning. According to Geoffrey Leech, style is the way in which something is spoken, written or performed [6, p.113]. It refers to use of words, sentence structures and speaking style. Broadly, style is related to the personality of the person. Style reflects the thoughts of person's mind. It describes the way of person's speaking and writing. It is derived from the Latin word «elocution» which means «style» and means «lexis» in Greek. Elocutio refers to the oral and written style of the language. Leech is of the view that the word «style» has an uncontroversial meaning. It is a way in which language is being used in a given context for a given purpose [6, p. 121]. David Birch believes that both language and style cannot move beyond a limit on the supremacy of words [5, p. 96]. He strongly believes that these words contain specific meanings which differs it from the ordinary language. Leech also claims that it is the selection of the words from a grand linguistic vocabulary [6, p. 123].

Style is involved in both, spoken and written, literary and nonliterary types of language but it is particularly associated with written form of the literary texts. Leech further elaborates that style is the dress of thoughts [6, p. 134]. It is the way of the writer to convey the message to the readers. It is upon the writer and the way he makes his text understandable that the meanings are conveyed. Style or stylistic variations may also be analyzed in linguistic terms for example sentence types, phonological devices, lexical varieties, morphological varieties, rhetorical terms, semantic terms, and even semiotic terms and utterance.

Correspondingly, stylistics, simply defined as the linguistic study of style, is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language. We normally study style because we want to explain something, and in gen-eral, literary stylistics has, implicitly or explicitly, the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function. The motivating questions are not so much *what* as *why* and *how*.

The building material of a literary work is a word which in different combinations creates the author's imaginative system. The rules of these combinations are the domain of syntax. It is the main conductor of emotions in the written type of language. Any change of form will inevitably cause a slight modification of meaning.

It is well known that syntactical stylistic devices are based on the syntactical arrangement of the elements of a sentence or of a larger unit, on the peculiar use of the lexical meanings of stylistic patterns, and on the particular ways of combining parts of the utterance [1, p. 14].

Stylistics takes as the object of its analysis the expressive means and stylistic devices of the language which are based on some significant structural point in an utterance, whether it consists of one sentence or a string of sentences. In grammar certain types of utterances have already been patterned, thus for example, we have all kinds of simple, compound or complex sentences, even a long paragraph, that may be regarded as neutral or non-stylistic patterns.

At the same time, the peculiarities of the structural design of utterances which bear some particular emotional colouring, that is, which are stylistic and therefore non-neutral, may also be patterned and presented as a special system which might be called, according to I. Galperin «stylistic patterns» [3, p. 111]. Stylistic patterns should not be regarded as violations of the literary norms of standard English. On the contrary, these patterns help us to establish the norm of syntactical usage, inasmuch as their study reveals the invariant of the form together with the variants and what is more, reveals the borders beyond which the variants must not be extended [3, p. 112].

Parallel syntactical constructions refer to compositional patterns of syntactical arrangement. The structural syntactical aspect is sometimes regarded as the crucial issue in stylistic analysis, although the peculiarities of syntactical arrangement are not so conspicuous as the lexical and phraseological properties of the utterance. Syntax is figuratively called the «sinews of style» [8, p. 78].

The problem of syntactical stylistic devices appears to be closely linked not only with what makes an utterance more emphatic but also with the more general problem of predication. As is known, the English affirmative sentence is regarded as neutral if it maintains the regular word order, i.e., subject – predicate – object (or other secondary members of the sentence, as they are called). Any other order of the parts of the sentence may also carry the necessary information, but the impact on the reader will be different. Even a slight change in the word order of a sentence or in the order of the sentences in a more complicated syntactical unit will inevitably cause a definite modification of the meaning of the whole. An almost imperceptible rhythmical design introduced into a prose sentence, or a sudden break in the sequence of the parts of the sentence, or any other change will add something to the volume of information contained in the original sentence. It follows that the very concept of inversion has appeared as a counterpart to the regular word order, the latter being a relatively unemotional, unemphatic, neutral mode of expression [3, p. 165].

Parallel construction is a device which may be encountered not so much in the sentence as in the macro-structures dealt with earlier, viz. the syntactical whole and the paragraph. The necessary condition in parallel construction is identical, or similar, syntactical structure in two or more sentences or parts of a sentence, as in:

«Where a surgeon is a specialist on every vein and mysterious cell of the human body, and the engineer upon electricity in all its phases, or every bolt of some great bridge majestically arching o'er a mighty flood, the realtor must know his city, inch by inch, and all its faults and virtues» [7, p. 99].

Parallel constructions are often backed up by repetition of words (lexical repetition), conjunctions and prepositions (polysyndeton). Pure parallel construction, however, does not depend on any other kind of repetition but the repetition of the syntactical design of the sentence [3, p. 171].

Parallel constructions may be partial or complete. Partial parallel arrangement is the repetition of some parts of successive sentences or clauses as in:

«It was a room as superior in comfort to the «parlor» of Babbit's boyhood as his motor was superior to his father's buggy. Though there was nothing in the room that was interesting, there was nothing that was offensive. It was as neat, and as negative, as a block of artificial ice» [7, p. 75].

All three sentences from the given above example have similar structure, they are built on the principle of similarization. These sentences have the same non-finite beginning «it/there was» in which the auxiliary verb «to be» is in the same tense form. The verbs however are followed either by attribute or pronoun. The first and the third sentences are more alike in their structure.

Complete parallel arrangement, also called balance, maintains the principle of identical structures throughout the corresponding sentences. Balance is especially peculiar to poetry.

Parallel construction is most frequently used in enumeration, antithesis and in climax, thus consolidating the general effect achieved by these stylistic devices.

For example:

«He answered telephone calls, he read the four o'clock mail, he signed his morning's letters, he talked to a tenant about repairs, he fought with Stanley Graff» [7, p. 123] (enumeration).

There are two main functions of parallel construction: semantic and structural. On the one hand a parallel arrangement suggests equal semantic significance of the component parts, on the other hand, it gives a rhythmical design to these component parts, which makes them most keenly felt in balanced constructions.

Parallel construction is used in different styles of writing with slightly different functions. When used in the matter-of-fact styles it carries, in the main, the idea of semantic equality of the parts, as in scientific prose, where the logical principle of arranging ideas predominates. In the belles-lettres style parallel construction carries an emotive function. That is why it is mainly used as a technical means in building up other stylistic devices, in particular antithesis and cIimax.

For example:

«In matrimonial geography the distance between the first mute recognition of a break and the admission thereof is as great as the distance between the first naive faith and the first doubting» [7, p, 376].

It is natural that parallel construction should very frequently be used in poetical structures. Alternation of similar units being the basic principle of verse, similarity in longer units – i.e. in the stanza, is to be expected.

As it was stated by U. M. Skrebnev, parallelism contributes to rhythmic and melodic unification of adjacent sentences [8, p. 114]. But it is not only about that. As everywhere in language, semantics is the predominant factor. It is only with regard to lexical meaning that the constructive function of parallelism can be defined. It serves either to emphasize the repeated element or to create a contrast, or else underline the semantic connection between sentences.

In Sinclair Lewis's «Babbitt» parallel constructions are used on all levels – syntactical wholes, paragraphs and sentences. There are two layers of the narration in each chapter – the background and Babbitt's life itself. All the syntactical wholes on their micro level are arranged by means of parallelism. For example, Zenith awakens – Babbitt gets up; Babbitt falls asleep and immediately we are shown the sight of Zenith at night; there has been a strike and there has been a rebellion in Babbitt's life; Myra underwent the operation and Babbitt stopped his «antisocial» behaviour.

On the level of paragraphs parallelism is used mostly in descriptive comparisons. In the sentences it is used in extended similies.

With its rich vocabulary, keen observation, unfailing humour and alert, modern atmosphere, Babbitt remains a model of colloquial, idiomatic prose writing. It preserves for all time the speech of a class, a generation, a definite stage in the evolution of American culture.

The results of the novel's text analysis showed that, first of all, syntactical wholes mostly do not coincide with the paragraphs on the macro-level. One more peculiarity of the author's style is a key-word on the macro-level, usually put in capital letter which expresses the general idea of the syntactical whole the same way the key sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph. The most widely used syntactic stylistic means are parallel constructions of all types. They are most favoured by the author in the descriptive paragraphs. Thus we may conclude that the expressiveness of syntax to a great extent underlies some peculiarities of the author's style. Moreover, syntactical organization of the text often proves to be one of the main means of artistic expressiveness.

References:

1. Куровская Е. В. Синтаксис и стилистика. Автореферат дисс. на соиск. учен. степ. канд. филол. наук / Е. В. Куровская. – К., 1982. – 25 с.

2. Carter R. Language and Creativity : The Art of Common Talk / Ronald Carter. – London : Routledge, 2004. – 255 p.
3. Galperin I. R. Stylistics / I. R. Galperin. – M. : Higher school, 1977. – 376 p.
4. Heines J. Introducing Stylistics / John Heines. – London : Routledge, 1992. – 288 p.
5. Language, Literature and Critical Practice : Ways of Analyzing Text / ed. by David Birch. – London : Routledge, 2005. – 284 p.
6. Leech G. Language in Literatue : Style and Foregrounding / Geoffrey Leech. – London : Pearson Education, 2008. – 222 p.
7. Lewis S. Babbitt / Sinclair Lewis. – M. : Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962. – 456 p.
8. Skrebnev Y. M. Stylistics of the English Language / Y. M. Skrebnev. – M. : 1986. – 224 p.