

EDULEARN¹³

5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON EDUCATION AND NEW LEARNING
TECHNOLOGIES

BARCELONA (SPAIN)
JULY 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD, 2013

**CONFERENCE
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SYNTACTIC-STYLISTIC ASPECT OF TEACHING ENGLISH NARRATIVE TEXTS AT HIGHER SCHOOLS

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Abstract

One of the linguistic peculiarities of the genre-stylistic typicality of English literary narrative texts, which turns their teaching into a problematic task, is the abundant use of so called “absolute constructions” that makes the narration expressive and emotional. Besides this, the analysis of empirical data has shown that these constructions are of paramount importance in textbuilding, since, due to their specific sign nature, they can be used successfully in a sequential order within the structure of one sentence which results in converting this sentence into a microtext, marked stylistically by syntactic parallelism.

However, in linguistic literature the study of absolute constructions has been limited so far to determining their grammatical (syntactic) functions in a sentence. As a result, a number of interesting problems have been left beyond the interest scopes of scholars. For instance, the linguistic status of absolute constructions has not been defined yet as, because of their specific structure, some linguists consider them as word combinations, others treat them as subordinate clauses embeded in a complex sentence, and there are only very few scholars who regard these constructions as independent verbless sentences.

The critical review of linguistic literature and the application of interparadigmatic analysis of empirical data have enabled us to determine the linguistic status of absolute constructions and define them as language-in-use constructs created by the act of nominalization. As a result, the predicate in absolute constructions loses modal and temporal characteristics of the finite verb-form that brings about the loss of communicative autonomy (i.e., the ability of transmitting information independently), though the constructions retain the binary structure of semantic predication that of the proposition with appropriate intonation contour, reflecting in its structure the core semantic relations of target situation or event. Therefore, we consider absolute constructions as complex adverbial members of the syntactic structure of a sentence with the help of which the author either qualifies one of the components of the target situation reflected in the subject-predicate kernel of the sentence or expands the target situation itself, making it more precise by building a panoramic background of events and situations against which the plot of the story develops.

Another aspect that calls for immediate attention is the syntactic stylistics of absolute constructions which we analyse via anthropocentric-communicative paradigm as a means of expressing an author’s communicative strategy and subjective modality. The research has shown that in narrative texts absolute constructions function mainly in two ways: a) as an independent sentence with the help of which the author emphatically singles out and directs the readers’ attention to the events and situations of reality that are fixed in the narration like film shots as the life details of particular emotional significance; b) as complex adverbial members with the help of which syntactically simple sentence is converted into a microtext in which the parallel arrangement of the nominalized structures creates syntactically and intonationally marked rhythm of the text thus making the narration emotional and expressive.

Keywords: genre-stylistic typicality of narrative texts, absolute constructions, nominalization, language-in-use constructs, syntactic parallelism, communicative strategy, syntactic stylistics.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the problematic tasks of teaching English literary narrative texts at higher schools is their syntactic stylistics created by the abundant use of so called “absolute constructions” that makes the narration emotional and expressive. Besides this, the analysis of empirical data shows that these constructions are of paramount importance in textbuilding, since, due to their specific sign nature, they can be used successfully in a sequential order within the structure of one sentence which results in converting this sentence into a microtext, marked stylistically by syntactic parallelism. To substantiate