

TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF SYNTACTICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES: ELLIPSIS AND INVERSION

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Annotation: this is complete about types and functions of syntactical stylistic devices: ellipsis and inversion.

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Ellipsis is a typical phenomenon in conversation, arising out of the situation. We mentioned this peculiar feature of the spoken language when we characterized its essential qualities and properties. But this typical feature of the spoken language assumes a new quality when used in the written language. It becomes a stylistic device inasmuch as it supplies suprasegmental information. An elliptical sentence in direct intercourse is not a stylistic device. It is simply a norm of the spoken language.

Let us take a few examples.

—So Justice Oberwaltzer—solemnly and didactically from his high seat to the jury.¶
(Dreiser)

One feels very acutely the absence of the predicate in this sentence. Why was it omitted? Did the author pursue any special purpose in leaving out a primary member of the sentence? Or is it just due to carelessness? The answer is obvious: it is a deliberate device. This particular model of sentence suggests the author's personal state of mind, viz. His indignation at the shameless speech of the Justice. It is a common fact that any excited

state of mind will manifest itself in some kind of violation of the recognized literary sentence structure. Ellipsis, when used as a stylistic device, always imitates the common features of colloquial language, where the situation predetermines not the omission of certain members of the sentence, but their absence. It would perhaps be adequate to call sentences lacking certain members —incomplete sentences", leaving the term ellipsis to specify structures where we recognize a digression from the traditional literary sentence structure.

Likewise, such sentences as the following can hardly be called elliptical. —There's somebody wants to speak to you.‖

—There was no breeze came through the open window.‖ (Hemingway) ""There's many a man in this Borough would be glad to have the blood that runs in my veins.‖ (Cronin)

The relative pronouns who, which, who after somebody, breeze, a man in this Borough could not be regarded as —omitted‖—this is the norm of colloquial language, though now not in frequent use except, perhaps, with the there is (are) constructions as above. This is due, perhaps, to the standardizing power of the literary language. O. Jespersen, in his analysis of such structures, writes:

—If we speak here of omission or subaudition or ellipsis, the reader is apt to get the false impression that the fuller expression is the better one as being complete, and that the shorter expression is to some extent faulty or defective, or something that has come into existence in recent times out of slovenliness. This is wrong: the constructions are very old in the language and have not come into existence through the dropping of a previously necessary relative pronoun.‖ However, when the reader encounters such structures in literary texts, even though they aim at representing the lively norms of the spoken language, he is apt to regard them as bearing some definite stylistics function. This is due to a psychological effect produced by the relative rarity of the construction, on the one hand, and the non-expectancy of any strikingly colloquial expression in literary narrative. It must be repeated here that the most characteristic feature of the written variety of

language is amplification, which by its very nature is opposite to ellipsis. Amplification generally demands expansion of the ideas with as full and as exact relations between the parts of the utterance as possible. Ellipsis, on the contrary, being the property of colloquial language, does not express what can easily be supplied by the situation.

INVERSION

Inversion is change of natural or recognized order of words or phrases in a sentence. The traditional word order of the English sentence is subject - predicate - object - secondary parts of the sentence. This word order is generally neutral. However it may be altered in accordance with aims pursued by the speaker or writer. Such change of traditional word order of the English sentence gives additional emotional colouring to the utterance. It is called syntactic inversion. It is used for the purpose of placing the most important words in the most prominent places - the beginning and the end of the line.

Another variety of inversion is when the secondary part of a sentence are syntactically isolated from other members of a sentence with which there are logically connected. It is isolation.

"I want to go", he said, miserable.

I have to bed you for money. Daily!

Here the word is emphasized by breaking its customary connection with another word or words. The violation of the usual traditional connections between the members of the sentence creates a specific sentence pattern which is reflected in the intonation of the sentence. An intonational pause generally precedes or follows isolated members of the sentence thus giving them greater prominence. In written speech isolated members are separated from the main part of the sentence by graphic means - a comma, dash, brackets, fill stop. Isolated members usually serve the purpose to single out certain secondary members of a sentence and so attracting the reader's attention to certain details. A variant of detached constructions is parenthesis. Parenthesis is a qualifying, explanatory, appositive word, phrase or sentence which interrupts a syntactical construction.

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3. ^ Jump up to:^{a b} Toner, Anne (2015). *Ellipsis in English Literature: Signs of Omission*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. p. 151.. According to Toner it is difficult to establish when the "dot dot dot" phrase was first used. There is an early instance, which is perhaps the first in a piece of fiction, in Virginia Woolf's short story "An Unwritten Novel" (1920).
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