STYLISTICS
LECTURE 4
SYNTACTIC STYLISTIC DEVICES

The sentence, as a unit of a certain level, is a sequence of relatively independent lexical and phrasal units (words or word combinations), and what differentiates a sentence from a word is the fact that the sentence structure is changeable; it does have any constant length: it can be shortened or extended, complete or incomplete, simple, compound or complex. Besides, its constituents, length, word-order, as well as communicative type (assertion, negation, interrogation, exhortation) are variable.

So, to analyze the sentence stylistically on the syntactic level, we will admit that most common and currently used are two-member sentences containing subject and predicate and perhaps, some secondary elements, having normal word order and the function.

Syntactic expressive means and stylistic devices of the English language:

- based on reduction of the initial sentence model: ellipsis, aposiopesis, nominative sentences, asyndeton;
- based on extension of the initial sentence model: repetition, enumeration, tautology, polysyndeton, *"it is (was) he, who..."*, the emphatic verb *"to do"*, parenthetic sentences;
- based on change of word-order: inversion, detachment;
- based on interaction of syntactic structures in context: parallel constructions;
- based on transposition of meaning and connection of constituent parts: rhetoric questions, parceling.

ELLIPSIS

An elliptical sentence is such a syntactic structure in which there is no subject, or predicate, or both. The main parts of elliptical sentences are omitted by the speaker intentionally in cases when they are semantically redundant. For example:

- Hullo! Who are you?

- The staff.

Communicative functions. Ellipsis saves the speaker from needless ef-fort, spares his time, reduces redundancy of speech. Elliptical structures may also reveal such speakers' emotions as excitement, impatience, delight, etc. As a stylistic device, ellipsis is an effective means of protagonists' portrayal.

## NOMINATIVE (NOMINAL) SENTENCES

A nominative sentence is a variant of one-member structures: it has neither subject nor predicate. It is called nominative or nominal because its basic (head) component is a noun or a noun-like element (gerund, numeral). For example:

Morning. April. Problems.

Communicative functions. A sequence of nominative sentences makes for dynamic description of events. Sets of nominative sentences are used to expressively depict the time of the action, the place of the action, the atten-dant circumstances of the action, the participants of the action.

## APOSIOPESIS (BREAK-IN-THE-NARRATIVE)

Like ellipsis, aposiopesis is also realized through incompleteness of sentence structure, though this incompleteness is of different structural and semantic nature: it appears when the speaker is unwilling to proceed and breaks off his narration

abruptly:

If you go on like this...


## ASYNDETON

It is deliberate omission of structurally significant conjunctions and connectives. For example:

John couldn 't have done such a silly thing, he is enough clever for that. Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins. Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,...

Communicative functions. Asyndeton makes speech dynamic and ex-pressive. Sometimes it implies the speaker's haste, nervousness and impatience.


## REPETITION

Stylistic repetition of language units in speech (separate words, word-combinations or sentences) is one of the most frequent and potent stylis-tic devices.

For example:

Never take the rifle again. Put it back! put it back! Put it back!

There are several structural types of repetition:
ANAPHORA. The repeated word or word-combination is at the beginning of each consecutive syntactic structure.

For example:

Victory is what we need. Victory is what we expect.

EPIPHORA. The repeated unit is placed at the end of each consecutive syntactic structure.

For example:

It is natural to be scared in a case like that. You are sure to be petrified in a case like that.

FRAMING. The initial part of a language unit is repeated at the end of this unit.

For example:

Poor Mary. How much Jack loved her! What will he do now? I wish it hadn't happened. Poor Mary.

CHIASMUS (reversed parallel construction). In such syntactic structures there is a cross order of repeated language units.

For example:

The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail.

Communicative functions. The device of repetition aims at emphasizing a certain component of the utterance. Being repeated, a language unit obtains additional stylistic information. Consecutive contact repetition is capable of rendering scores of modal meanings and human emotions.

POLYSYNDETON

It is stylistically motivated redundant repetition of conjunctions or prepositions:

The dog barked and pulled Jack, and growled, and raged.

Communicative functions. Polysyndeton is a means of rhythmical organization of the utterance. Due to this quality it is widely used in poetry. It also makes for underlining the most important part of information.

## PARALLEL CONSTRUCTIONS

Parallelism is a stylistic device of producing two or more syntactic structures according to the same syntactic pattern:

Mary cooked dinner, John watched TV, Pete played tennis.
Communicative functions. Syntactic parallelism is polyfunctional. It creates rhythm and is typical of poetry. It makes speech persuasive and is a feature of the publicistic and oratory styles. It underlines important informa-tion and is widely used in everyday speech.

## INVERSION

Inversion is the syntactic phenomenon of intentional changing word-order of the initial sentence model:
To her family Martha gives all her time

## RHETORIC QUESTIONS
These are not questions but affirmative or negative statements put into the interrogative shape. A rhetoric question needs no answer, because the answer to it is quite obvious:

Me a liar?

Communicative functions. A rhetoric question enhances the expressiveness of speech. Used in oratory style, rhetoric questions aim at catching the attention of the audience, making the sequential sentences sound persuasive and significant.