Stylistic peculiarities of expressive syntax of modern epistolary discourse

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Abstract. The article deals with the stylistic peculiarities of expressive syntax in modern epistolary discourse. In order to get objective results, modern epistolary novels have been analyzed. The novels are written as a series of traditional letters and e-mails. The expressive syntax in the novels is presented with the help of ellipsis, rhetorical questions and aposiopesis in abundance. The combination of these stylistic figures helps an epistolary discourse to convey certain mood of narration, imparting only the key events in letters.

Keywords: epistolary discourse, expressive syntax, ellipsis, aposiopesis, rhetorical question.

Introduction. Discourse approach in analyzing epistolary texts is considered to be the most productive one. The reason lies in the fact that epistolary texts are created in a result of communicants' cooperation. It reflects peculiarities of contact and interpersonal relationships between the author and the addressee. The first place here belongs to the author of the events, and not to the state of events [8, p. 10]. In Linguistics discourse area of focus when analyzing the epistolary has emerged recently. The reason is that a classical epistolary novel is a textual variant of realization of colloquial discourse in written form [3, p. 86]. Discourse approach in studying epistolary texts is still developing, that is why a lot of researchers do not reach consensus on parameters of epistolary discourse. O. Fesenko in terms of a cognitive-pragmatic approach determines epistolary discourse as a literary work that is created and functions with national, temporal epistolary tradition taken in consideration, it also has written form and is realized in the variety of its cognitive and communicative functions [8, p. 7]. A. Kurianovich points out a special role of a language personality. The epistolary discourse is a bunch of texts of a certain genre and style together with their linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects, which represent the same language personality. Typological characteristics of a modern epistolary discourse embraces mail correspondence (private and business letters, postcards, telegrams), communication by phone (fax correspondence, pager communication, SMS messages) and electronic mail (e-mails, all the texts that can be found in forums and chats) [3, p. 84].

Together with the fast developing world in terms of technology, a traditional epistolary discourse has gone through serious changes. The electronic mail communication competes the traditional mail due to its convenience, speed and simplicity of procedure. That is why, epistolary discourse also embraces epistolary novels written not only as a set of traditional letters, but as a set of e-mails as well. E-mail can be considered as means of representation of a new socio-culture. An e-mail represents a mixture of a formal and informal letter when certain etiquette formulae are applied. Borderlines of these formulae are often smothered and a form of the letter turns out to be free. A high speed of e-mail exchange influences the frequency of correspondence. As a result, truncating of the structure of an e-mail can often be observed. It includes omission of greeting, sign off line, reduction of repeated elements and etiquette formulae. However, unlike the chat dialogues, e-mail preserves its completeness and structure definition. It is obvious that a letter disguised in its electronic form

becomes completely different from the traditional one [3, p. 86].

Modern epistolary discourse resembles syntax of colloquial speech, especially in epistolary novels written as a set of e-mails. The epistolary novels, written as a set of e-mail, and novels, written as a set of traditional letters, have been chosen to analyze the peculiarities of the expressive syntax of epistolary discourse. Modern epistolary novels are characterized by a high tendency of copying colloquial speech on paper, that is why they can reflect all the language phenomena (means of expressive syntax in particular) typical for epistolary discourse. One of the most elaborate classification of means of expressive syntax was offered by A. Morokhovskyi and O. Vorobyovaya. It is based on reduction, expansion, change of basic model, change of word order. They consider a simple sentence to be a basic model [4, p. 138].

The **aim** of the article is to single out and explicate stylistic peculiarities of expressive syntax of modern epistolary discourse.

The **material** of the investigation includes the modern epistolary novels written as a set of e-mails and traditional letters (Matt Beaumont "E", David Llewellyn "Eleven", Rosie Rushton "P. S. He's mine!", Kate Cary "Bloodline"). The analysis was conducted with the help of the following **methods**: the method of continuous sampling, structural modelling and semantic-stylistic method.

Results and their discussions. Among the analyzed novels numerous examples of ellipsis in modern epistolary discourse have been found. Ellipsis is the omission of the element (part) of the statement/utterance that can be easily restored from the context [2, p. 525]. Elliptical sentences are frequently used in colloquial speech. As has already been mentioned, letters as the constituent parts of epistolary discourse also strive to disguise colloquial speech, especially in e-mails. In order to impart current state of events, the author of a letter employs the strategies of "everyday speech". The essence of ellipsis and its peculiarities are analyzed by linguists in different ways. Mainly there are two points of view. The first point of view belongs to the linguists who use the notion of ellipsis when talking about complete and incomplete sentences. Sometimes even one-member sentences are considered to be elliptical. When analyzing elliptical sentence the followers of the first group compare it to the (classical) complete sentence and they consider such sentence to be the structural variant of a complete sentence [7, p. 34]. The representatives of the first group of linguists believe that any deviation from the structure of a sentence is an

omission or ellipsis. They associate ellipsis with a syntactic construction of a complete and incomplete sentence, or even with the whole utterance.

The representatives of the second group consider an elliptical sentence to be an independent syntactic construction. They emphasize the fact that elliptical sentences, being independent structures, perform the same communicative function as the complete sentences do. They claim that elliptical sentences are certain typical forms of sentences of everyday speech, their types do not illustrate the violation of rules of a complete sentence. As it can be seen the second group of linguists believe the elliptical sentences to be independent syntactic structures [7, p. 36].

Elliptical sentences, as a rule, represent an already formed model, that exists in our conscience. We do not create this model on our own, we only reproduce it. We perceive this model as something inseparable. If some element of the model is omitted, it makes no difference to the general meaning of the model. In this case the meaning is transmitted to the remaining part of the model. Expressive potential of ellipsis lies in a deviation of standards, violation of social and language stereotypes. Any deviation of standard draws not only attention but also evokes emotions of the addressee. There is a belief that when starting a conversation, a speaker often makes a mistake in search for the word form, that accurately reflects the described situation. However, it doesn't prevent from gaining a full communicative effect.

Example:

"We lived in Romania with my parents until I was nine," I explained. "My father was a diplomat."

"We?"

*"**Myself and my sister, Lily**," I answered him* [10, p. 19].

The presented dialogue resembles the style of everyday speech. Ellipsis functions to show the speaker's interest, that is why he doesn't spare time to formulate the question *"We?"* according to the traditional grammatical rules. Nevertheless communicative effect was successful, because his partner understood the inquiry and gave his answer, again, applying ellipsis: *"Myself and my sister, Lily"* was his answer that supported the tempo of the conversation, resembling the question.

Among the analyzed means of expressive syntax, ellipsis of the pronoun has often been observed.

Example :

In the short time I'd been here, I'd witnessed the daily hardships they faced and been amazed by their resilience [10, p. 35]. *Hope that's okay with you* [11, p. 89]. *Told him we need a visual idea* [9, p. 11]. *I am sorry to split hairs, but I wouldn't have defined a client saying he not only hates Little and Large, but thinks them totally outdated for a technology-led brand as a "little thing"* [9, p. 29].

Often in complex sentences where homogeneous predicates have been used, the subject that has been used for the first time is further omitted, but the aimed information can be inferred. It does not prevent from the correct interpretation of the information. Second and third examples are taken from the epistolary novels that have been written as a set of e-mail. The e-mails are informal, they resemble the course of everyday speech, that is why the pronoun (1st person singular) has been omitted to express the carelessness of speech, stress out only important information.

Quite numerous are the elliptical sentences where the auxiliary verbs have been omitted. This mostly happens in questions : *"Seems he's more at home in the dark." "A creature of the night, eh?" I joked. "Something a bit unsettling about that, isn't there, Jenkins?"* [10, p. 15]. Except for the omission of the auxiliary verb 'to be' the presented example illustrates the omission of subjects *It/there* that facilitates the effect of carelessness of speech. The similar situation occurs in the following sentences :

"How have you settled in?" he asked me. "Enjoying life at the front?"

I was getting used to caustic trench humor now.

"Surviving so far, sir," I answered [10, p. 31].

Sometimes the omission of parts or members of a sentence causes the phenomenon of a nominal sentence. *"You want to be out there," finished Harker. "**In the thick of it**."* [10, p. 31] *"**First, a happy new Millennium to each and every one of you.**"* [9, p. 1]. As it can be observed, a predominant part of elliptical sentences in epistolary discourse presupposes the omission of auxiliary verbs, subjects and predicates. This phenomenon often adds up emotional coloring to the speech, showing its dynamics, carelessness, haste, leaving out the 'unimportant' information, imparting only the main idea of the message.

The cases of usage of aposiopesis have also been found in the examples of epistolary discourse. In order to understand the essence of aposiopesis let us analyze the main points of view in relation to aposiopesis.

Aposiopesis is a stylistic device manifested in intentional reduction of speech, break of narration, holding something back, accompanied with a special intonation (suspension marks in written form). It is a deliberate break of an already started statement and claims them to be a syntactic deviation. This stylistic device creates the feeling of incompleteness of a statement. N. Stolbovskaya when considering the linguistic essence of aposiopesis, mentions the notion of semantic-syntactic elimination. This notion is meant to use when talking about structural-semantic incompleteness of a message, when separate parts in the structure of a speech act do not obtain verbal expression. However, these parts exist in frame model of a socio cultural situation, that has been described in a text. That's why their absence in the structure of the statement under analysis can be characterized as a zero sign. Simultaneously the linguist stresses out that as a phenomenon of a semantic-syntactic elimination, aposiopesis belongs to syntactical reduction on the level of phrase and sentence [6, p. 9].

The linguistic essence of aposiopesis underlines the fact that it is simultaneously a syntactical and semantic phenomenon. Syntactic nature of aposiopesis is manifested in structural organization: aposiopesis is a syntactic unit with an abridged final part. Semantic nature is explicated by the fact that the abridged element turns out to be meaningful, and so it's the addressee's task to restore it. Aposiopesis is also characterized by a formalized (presence of syntagmatic model) character. It is manifested by the presence of suspension marks or dash instead of the abridged element.

In terms of expressiveness, aposiopesis performs sev-

eral functions: drawing the addressee's attention to a possible continuation of the statement. Very often to highlight the importance of the imparted information the narrator applies this method to focus addressee's attention.

Example:

"*He struggled to steady his shaking hands and prepared to squeeze the trigger –*

His rifle barrel suddenly fell away" [10, p. 50]. Here the dash stands for suspension marks. The first sentence is abridged, the author didn't use dot (dots) and started the next sentence. However this trick is aimed at drawing addressee's attention, creating the effect of nervousness, tension and unexpectedness. Similar situation can be observed in the following:

Example:

"*I feel confident he will recover, given time. And from what I've heard, your brother is lucky, considering...*

I Stared at him, wondering what luck he could see in poor John's condition" [10, p. 65]. "*Lily cried when she noticed my expression. "I am sorry," I protested quietly, "but propriety dictates –*" [10, p. 101]. "*Paps, Mammi told us about your gambling. Even if I had the money, which I don't, I would not...*" [12, p. 80].

An abridged sentence provides feeling of the continuation in prospective, however, it never happens. Aposiopesis can also illustrate the author's emotional state, thus performing emotive function. For example:

"*My mind feels frayed at the edges. I am beginning to shake. I must stop now. I cannot think anymore...*"[10, p. 57]. The exhaustion of the author is intensified by the last abridged sentence. From the next example a feeling of a nostalgia can be inferred: "*He furrowed his brow. "You have too," he ventured. "Your face. I remember –*" [10, p. 81], or "*Something drew me to him as soon as he arrived,*" *I explained.* "*And now he is himself, he shows such sweetness and charm...*" [10, p. 105]. This example reflects pondering of the author. The same as "*Harker...*" *Father repeated. "I once knew a man by the name of Harker – Johnathan Harker. A fine man...*" [10, p. 121]. A strong hesitation can be traced in the next example: "*Martin... You're a media type person, or at least you want to be. Sorry... does that sound a bit harsh? Anyway... My question is this... Are they allowed to show people jumping off a burning building, even on the news?*" [11, p. 83]. Another function of aposiopesis found in epistolary discourse is text-forming. It is manifested in expressing the implicit sense of the text, stimulating the closing of a sentence, adding completeness to the text fragment. Such sentences usually close the body of letters: "*Simon, it is honestly not my idea not to send you to the Coke work. David is adamant that he see everything first. I'm sorry, but I can't go against him on this. Of course I'll get everything to you as soon as he approves it...*" [9, p. 166].

The examples of aposiopesis evidence that its expressiveness is mainly gained when performing emotive, text forming function and a function of drawing addressee's attention to a possible continuation of the sentence. The author shows hesitation with the help of aposiopesis, he ponders over the possible course of events. Applying the text-forming function, the letter is often finished with aposiopesis.

Very often rhetorical questions in epistolary discourse

are observed. A rhetorical question does not presuppose an answer and is aimed at making the listener impart the speaker something unknown. The function of a rhetorical question is to draw attention, to reinforce the impression and emotional tone, to create buoyancy. The answer has already been prompted and rhetorical question only engages the reader in the argument or emotional stress, making him more active, as if trying to induce him making conclusions [1, p. 167]. Rhetorical questions, from the functional point of view, are pseudo-questions, because the speaker (writer) knows the answer to it, rhetorical questions do not account for an answer, but they are used to impart the information to the partner in conversation, to share the point of view, conviction [5, p. 98].

Syntactic meaning in a rhetorical question is very weak, because a leading role belongs to the appellative meaning. A strong stylistic effect is gained when there is a set of rhetorical questions in sequence: "*Things okay? Still pining after that girl that Lloyd was on about last week? What's her name? Biffy? Jiffy? Zippy? Bungle*" [11, p. 25]. A special ironic effect is present in this sequence of rhetorical questions. The first question is aimed at drawing the reader's attention, whilst the next question shows the author's actual interest. With the help of the sequence of girls' names the author underlines the addressee's fraility.

Often rhetorical questions create effect of contemplation, sometimes illustrate author's hesitation, inevitability, as in the following example: "*Oh, where is my darling Quincey? Why has he left me alone in this strange place?*" [10, p. 205] "*Had part of me reveled in the bloody reality of war? Had the gruesome dreams that haunted me described unfulfilled fantasies stirring in my heart?*" [10, p. 261]. It is worth mentioning that the contemplation is reinforced by the sequence of rhetorical questions showing the depth of author's feeling. This situation is more common in traditional correspondence. In e-mails the speech is more informal, and the rhetorical questions reflect the same tone. As usual, they can express author's claim, discontent: "*Did she remember the night in the little wood? How could she ever forget it?*"[12, p. 27]. "*As for your suggestion about talking to Jason – are you MAD?*" [12, p.135]. Capitalization in the last sentence is aimed at showing the author's mood and adds up expressiveness.

Conclusions. The accurate definition of the epistolary discourse is still developing. However, the examples of it follow a modern pace of life. Nowadays, it includes messages in forums, chats, e-mails, because of the fast developing internet communication. Language in modern epistolary discourse reflects the current language tradition. Nevertheless the language of traditional letters is more restrained and the e-mails are often informal. Expressive syntax in epistolary discourse is manifested with the help of ellipsis, aposiopesis and rhetorical questions in abundance. Inversion in modern epistolary discourse functions to emphasize the time, mode of action, to accentuate predicate. It draws reader's attention to the imparted information, placed at the beginning of a sentence. Ellipsis in epistolary discourse is presented by the omission of pronouns, auxiliary verbs. This phenomenon often reinforces the carelessness of speech, shows dynamics. Nevertheless, such omission does not prevent from gaining the

communicative effect of the communication. Aposiopesis in epistolary discourse functions to draw reader's attention to the possible continuation of the sentence. It performs emotive, text-forming function (the body of a letter ends in suspension marks), showing author's emotions. With the help of rhetorical questions the reader can infer author's hesitation, claim or discontent. The sequence of rhetorical questions adds up expressiveness, it illustrates author's contemplation. The perspective of the further investigation lies in the pragmatic analysis of the graphical expressive means in epistolary discourse.

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Стилистические особенности экспрессивного синтаксиса современного эпистолярного дискурса
З. Р. Батринчук

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются стилистические особенности экспрессивного синтаксиса в современном эпистолярном дискурсе. Для получения объективных результатов были проанализированные современные эпистолярные романы, написанные в форме традиционных и электронных писем. Экспрессивный синтаксис в этих романах представлен в значительном количестве при помощи эллипсиса, риторического вопроса и апосиопезы. Комбинация этих стилистических фигур помогает эпистолярию выразить определенный тон повествования, передавая лишь ключевые события в письмах.

Ключевые слова: эпистолярный дискурс, экспрессивный синтаксис, эллипсис, апосиопеза, риторический вопрос.