

THE EFFECT OF ENUMERATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF FICTIONAL PROSE HELEN FIELDING: BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON

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Abstract

This article deals with the effect of a chosen syntactical stylistic device – enumeration and its influence on the overall perceiving of the language of a selected fictional prose. Stylistic devices used by an author in a source book form an inseparable part of the language the book is written in. Not only the content but also the language made the book successful and perceived by critics positively. In this short study we have focused on enumeration which represents a syntactical device presented in this literary piece in a frequent occurrence. This study provides the most representative examples of enumeration with our interpretation and findings concerning the role and the effect of this particular syntactical stylistic device in perceiving the literary piece and the main protagonist. The analytic approach of the study contributes to the research of the language and proves how the form in which the selected literary piece is written can accent its quality.

KEYWORDS: Stylistics, Syntactical Expressive Means and Stylistic Devices, Enumeration.

1 Introduction

Readers read texts because of many reasons – they need to find some information, to study the procedure in manuals or and this is a very spread reason to read just to enjoy texts and get an aesthetic experience. But there is a question how it comes that readers like the texts? What is it that makes the particular texts interesting and popular among the readers? It means that the readers evaluate them and they like them or, on the contrary, they do not accept them at all and they will never get back again to them. This study explores how it is that the chosen literary work affected so many readers in a positive way (in 2000 it was a bestseller in the UK and the USA) and so popular that also the film has been made according to it.

Success of such a literary piece consists not only in a content of the text. There must be something more that makes the book attractive. Not only the content but also the “coat” – term used by Short (1996) of the text makes it moving and enjoyable. The coat is a metaphor for the language – how the sentences are constructed, what expressive means and stylistic devices are used by an author. There is a harmony of both parts that contributes to an overall impression – highly positive in this case. Of course, the readers can understand and perceive the text in a very individual way which is only natural as we have different life experiences, different education, different upbringing and this all can prompt us to have different associations for particular words.

2 Stylistics

The field which we have focused our study on is stylistics. To define stylistics we use the definition by Galperin who states the following: “Stylistics, sometimes called linguo-stylistics, is a branch of general linguistics. It has now been more or less definitely outlined.” (1977:9) However, the content and the orientation of this linguistic discipline is not clearly stated according to other linguists or stylisticians. We offer Skrebnev's definition for the illustration which is as follows: “No one knows for sure what it is. The scope of problems stylistics is to solve, its very object and its tasks are open to discussion up to the present day, regardless of the fact that it goes back to ancient rhetoric and poetics.” (2003:6).

2.1 Stylistic Analysis

The tool of stylistics is stylistic analysis. It is stylistic analysis thanks to which we can understand the peculiarities of the text and explore most of the places in the text that make it individual. Working out a quality complete stylistic analysis of a whole literary piece could take us a lifetime and, of course, it is highly individual matter as we can only guess what the author meant or intended by using an onomatopoeia or metaphor or a different expressive means or stylistic device in a concrete text passage. The ideal way would be to ask the author himself or herself. We have tried to work out a stylistic analysis focused on syntactical expressive means and stylistic devices and particularly on enumeration of the above named book.

2.2 Expressive Means and Stylistic Devices

“The expressive means of a language are those phonetic, morphological, word-building, lexical, phraseological and syntactical forms which exist in language-as-a-system for the purpose of logical and/or emotional intensification of the utterance.

Stylistic Device is a conscious and intentional intensification of some typical structural and/or semantic property of a language unit (neutral or expressive) promoted to a generalized status and thus becoming a generative model.” (Galperin, 1977:27;29)

There exist a various categorizing of expressive means and stylistic devices (EM and SD) following the different viewpoints. However, this is not the task of this paper. In our study we have taken into consideration Galperin's division of EM and SD and within syntactical EM and SD we focus exclusively on enumeration.

2.2.1 Syntactical Expressive Means and Stylistic Devices

According to Galperin (1977:191) syntax is defined as the branch of language science the study object of which are the types of relations between established certain definite types between words, word combinations, sentences and also between larger spans of utterances. It 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.

2.2.1.1 Enumeration

“Enumeration is a stylistic device by means of which homogeneous parts of an utterance are made heterogeneous from the semantic point of view.” (Missikova, 2003:77)

3 Analysis

In this part we are providing practical analysis consisting of the identification of enumeration as a stylistic device and our own interpretation stressing the effect that it has in a particular place in the text.

Bridget's mother comes into the café where Bridget is sitting at the table and she wants to order a coffee. The waitress who is apparently surly and disgusted is listing all the kinds of coffee that they have in offer.

The waitress seems not to enjoy her job and Bridget's mother, however she is trying to be friendly to her, gives her an impression of an importunate woman.

'Espresso? Filter? Latte? Cap: half fat or de-caf?' snapped the waitress, sweeping all the plates off the table next to her and looking at me accusingly as if Mum was my fault. (p. 6)

In this conversation, Bridget's mother is explaining to her daughter why she needs to leave to Africa. She misses something and she is enumerating the things that she longs for. She justifies her decision why to travel again away.

We all need friends, darling. I mean even in the best of marriages one person just isn't enough: friends of all ages, races, creeds and tribes. (p. 8)

Bridget is sitting with her friends in 192 and when Magda is entering the restaurant, she enumerates all the negative things that are around to happen. Enumeration in this case has a humorous effect on the reader and it expresses hopelessness of the situation.

Just then, Magda walked in, which was all very unfortunate as (a) had still not got round to warning the girls and (b) got shock of life as had only seen Magda once since the birth of her third baby and her stomach had not gone down yet. (p. 39)

Bridget is invited to the pre-law society dinner and she wants to look beautiful and irresistible. However, she is not satisfied with her at all, with her look and especially her weight. She knows that she has to act quickly to reach the goal to lose the weight. The following is the manual how to progress.

9.15 a.m. *Right, am going to be positive about this. Am going to be marvelous: elegant, vivacious, beautifully dressed. Oh, though. Do not have long dress. Maybe Jude or Magda will lend me one.*

Right:

Pre-Law Society Dinner Countdown

Day 1. (today)

Projected food intake:

- 1. Breakfast: fruit shake, comprising oranges, banana, pears, melons or other fruit in season. (NB pre-breakfast cappucino and chocolate croissant already consumed.)*
- 2. Snack: fruit but not too near lunch as takes one hour to get enzymes down.*
- 3. Lunch: salad with protein.*
- 4. Snack: celery or broccoli. Will go to gym after work.*
- 5. After-gym snack: celery.*
- 6. Dinner: grilled chicken and steamed vegetables.* (p. 48)

Mark is at lunch with Bridget and they are having a small talk between his colleagues. It is a light kind of entertainment and the lawyers are overtaking in presenting themselves who is more entertaining and witty. Mark presents his opinions publicly to interest the colleagues with his typical graceful and intelligent way.

'I think you're absolutely right, Louise. If I'm going to vote Tory again I want to know my views are being (a) researched and (b) represented.' (p. 56)

Every record in Bridget's diary starts with the enumeration of some facts, summarizing minor offences of the previous day. All these records sound amusing for the reader and also underlines features of the character of the main protagonist. Every record is a parallel construction to the previous or following record.

9 st 3, alcohol units 6 (but mixed with tomato juice, v. nutritious), cigarettes 400 (entirely understandable), rabbits, deer, pheasants or other wildlife found in bed 0 (massive improvement on

yesterday), boyfriends 0, boyfriends of ex-boyfriend 1, no. of normal potential boyfriends remaining in world 0. (p. 67)

Mark Darcy is in Bridget's flat looking at shelves full of her books. Bridget owns plenty of books the topic of which is dating and how to behave to the opposite sex. Using the enumeration in this case accentuates Bridget's character and life period when she is *snowed under the books* thinking that these *manuals* will help her to direct at solving the question concerning love and dating.

'What are all these books?' he said, getting up and looking at them. 'How to date Young Women: A Guide For Men Over Thirty-Five? If the Buddha Dated? Going For It by Victor Kyam?'

'They're my self-help books!' I said protectively.

'What Men Want? Beyond Co-dependency With a Man Who Can't Commit? How to Love Your Separated Man Without Losing Your Mind? You do realize you're building up the largest body of theoretical knowledge about the behaviour of the opposite sex in the known universe' (p. 75)

Mark Darcy is leaving for business trip to New York for two weeks. She calls Bridget to announce her this fact. Bridget immediately works out a substitutive *emergency* plan while Mark is away. Bridget is trying to be organized person but again later we will see that she fails. Setting aims is one of the characteristic features of the main protagonist, she wants to be disciplined, however, she turns out to be a rather chaotic person thanks to various circumstances.

Plan For When Mark is Away

1. *Go to gym every day.*
2. *Have lots of lovely evenings with Jude and Shazzer.*
3. *Do continuing good work sorting out flat.*
4. *Spend time with Dad when Mum is away.*
5. *Really work hard at work to improve position.*

Oh, Lose half stone, also, obviously. (p. 79)

Bridget is invited together with Mark for the party to Rebecca whom she cannot stand. First she refuses the invitation in her mind resolutely but later after the call with Magda she assures herself that it is not such a bad idea to go. She enumerates all the behaviour qualities she is going to have while she is at the party. The protagonist does not feel self-confident in the contact with Rebecca and she plucks up courage by saying the following ideas.

She's right. Am going to be assured, receptive, responsive woman of substance and have a lovely time emanating aura. (p. 98)

After a small misunderstanding of yesterday Bridget is angry with Mark and is alone again. She invites her friends to her flat not to feel so miserable. Jude and Shaz are trying to encourage her and make her happy and Jude puts on a video recorder a film and books of the following titles. The enumeration in this example has the humorous effect and the reader can feel how decisive and brave the protagonists are.

'Yup,' said Jude, putting the Pride and Prejudice tape on top of the video, together with Through Love and Loss to Self-Esteem, The Five Stages of Dating Workbook, and How to Heal the Hurt by Hating. (p. 111)

Mark is calling Bridget to explain her what happened yesterday with Rebecca. Bridget is angry and does not want to listen to him. She gives him her opinion about not staying in the relationship with someone only because of a duty. She advocates her status of a happy, independent woman thanks to her friends. While enumerating all their positive features she persuades her about well chosen way.

*'I don't need anyone in my life because they owe it to me,' I went on determinedly. 'I have got **the best, most loyal, wise, witty, caring, supportive** friends in the world.'* (p. 134)

Bridget is invited by her mother for the dinner. She is not happy with the invitation and she is listing all the pros and cons to be present there. The reader can imagine how unhappy the protagonist is when she has to go to such an obligatory event and on the other hand the reader can imagine her character as a witty person who tries to be self-disciplined and organized, but often fails in her resolution.

11.30 a.m. Fuck, oh fuck. She asked me for lunch on Friday night and was too weak to argue, then too pissed to remember. I can't not go again. Can I? Right. The thing to do is stay calm and eat fruit because the enzymes clear the toxicity and it will be fine. I'll just eat a tiny bit and try not to vomit and then I'll ring Mum back when I've emerged from Land of Indecision.

Pros of Going

Will be able to check that Wellington is being treated in a manner that would not offend Commission for Racial Equality.

Will be able to talk to Dad.

Will be good daughter.

Will not have to take on Mum.

Cons of Going

Will have to face torture and torment over Mark/Rebecca incident.

May be sick on the table. (p. 141)

Bridget is having a nice evening together with her friends, drinking wine and talking about love, relationships, dating. They are coming to agree that there exist several types of people who are included in so called *pashminism*. The whole book is about dating and about the relationships and three stages of *pashminism* represent the scale in the relationship between men and women according to Bridget's homo friend Tom.

At this, Sharon burst into tears, which took twenty minutes to sort out with another bottle of Chardonnay and packet of fags until we could come up with a list of further definitions, as follows:

Pashmincer *A friend who you really fancy who's actually gay. ('Me, me, me,' Tom said.)*

Pashmarried *A friend who you used to go out with and is now married with children who likes having you around as memory of old life but makes you feel like mad barren pod-womb imagining vicar is in love with self.*

Ex-pashpurt *An ex-partner who wants to get back with you but pretends just to want to be friends then keeps making passes and getting cross. (p. 192)*

In this scene Bridget is at work meeting and while having a brainstorming about next reportages Bridget comes with the following rules of dating. It sounds absurd on one hand and on the other hand listing such rules is amusing.

I cleared my throat and began:

'Code of Dating Practice

- 1) *If citizens know they do not want to go out with someone else they must not egg them on in the first place.*
- 2) *When a man and woman decide they would like to sleep together, if either party knows they just want a "fling" this should be clearly stated beforehand.*
- 3) *If citizens snog or shag other citizens they must not pretend nothing is going on.*
- 4) *Citizens must not go out with other citizens for years and years but keep on saying they don't want to get too serious.*
- 5) *After sexual relations it is definitely bad manners not to stay the night.'* (p. 197)

Again in this illustration Bridget is listing other suggestions, this time for promoting the marriage to encourage young people to get married. Her proposals seem nonsensical and cheerful.

'Also, if governments are going to go on about family values then they have to do something more positive for Singletons than slagging them off.' I paused, shuffling my papers pleasantly. *'Here are my proposals:*

Smug Marriage Promotional Suggestions

- 1) *Teach Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus in schools so both sides of opposing armies understand each other.*
- 2) *Teach all boy children that sharing the housework does not mean twiddling one fork under the tap.*
- 3) *Form giant Government Matchmaking Agency for Singletons, with strict Code of Dating Practice, Mate-Seekers Allowance for drinks, phone calls, cosmetics etc., penalties for Emotional Fuckwittage and rule that you have to go on at least 12 government-arranged dates before you can declare yourself a Singleton; and only then if have reasonable grounds for rejecting all 12.*
- 4) *If grounds are deemed unreasonable, then you have to declare yourself a Fuckwit.'*(p. 198)

Jude is going to get married and she is in a pre-wedding rush. The reader can imagine the place, the room where the scene is taking place. The room is full of diverse things determined for wedding. Chaos in a physical and also spiritual point of view is felt – the bride is full of confusion. She is looking forward to the wedding and is excited and at the same time she is lost in all the magazines and wedding preparations. Enumeration here emphasizes the atmosphere full of commotion.

*Jude has gone completely mad. Just went round to her house to find entire place strewn with **bridal magazines, lace swatches, gold-sprayed raspberries, tureen and grapefruit-knife brochures, terracotta pots with weeds in and bits of straw.*** (p. 230)

Bridget is going to throw out the books she has in her library. She is listing all the books she is about to throw. The enumeration underlines the character of the main protagonist and that she is learning how to

behave in the relationship with a man, she is inexperienced in dating and she relies on literature to help her. However, now she stands before a resolution to start a new life without the support of literature. She feels mature enough.

8 a.m. *In turmoil. Surely it cannot be that reading self-help books to improve my relationship has destroyed the whole relationship? Feel like entire life's work has been a failure. But if is one thing have learned from self-help books is how to let go of the past and move on.*

About to be thrown out:

What Men Want

How Men Think and What They Feel

Why Men Feel They Want What They Think They Want

The Rules

Ignoring the Rules

Not Now, Honey, I'm Watching the Game

How to Seek and Find the Love You Want

How to Find the Love You Want Without Seeking It

How to Find the Love You Want Without Seeking It

How to Find You Want the Love You Didn't Seek

Happy to be Single

How not to be Single

If Budha Dated

If Mohammed Dated

If Jesus Dated Aphrodite

The Famished Road by Ben Okri (not strictly self-help book, as far as know, but will never read the bloody thing anyway) (p. 264)

Bridget is summarizing all the problems she has to fight with. It is a summary of her recent events and her negative status at the moment. This is a typical feature of the main protagonist to analyse the state and to start to live in a new way.

Problems

Hole in wall of flat.

Finances in negative position owing to second mortgage for hole in wall of flat.

Boyfriend going out with Other Woman.

Not speaking to joint best friend as is going on holiday with boyfriend and Other Woman.

Work crap but necessary owing to second mortgage for hole in wall of flat.

Badly need holiday owing to boyfriend/friends/hole in wall of flat/professional and financial crises but no one to go on holiday with. Tom is going back to San Francisco.

Magda and Jeremy are going to Tuscany with Mark and fucking Rebecca and probably Jude and Vile Richard too for all I know. Shazzer being evasive presumably waiting to see if Simon will agree to go somewhere with her if sleep in twin beds (not under five foot), hoping he will get into hers.

Also no money to go on holiday owing to financial crisis owing to hole in wall of flat. (p. 265)

Bridget has thrown away all the books she had in her flat. She enumerates every information she has gained from the books. Again the author describes the main protagonist as a character who is trying to be systematic and organized. The enumeration supports it.

8.30 a.m. *Flat is purged of all self-help books. Feel empty and spiritually at sea. But surely some of information will have stayed in head?*

Spiritual principles have garnered from self-help book study (non-dating based):

1. *Importance of positive thought cf.: Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Confidence, The Road Less Travelled, How to Rid Your Thighs of Cellulite in 30 Days, Gospel according to St Luke, Ch. 13.*
2. *Importance of forgiveness.*
3. *Importance of going with flow and instincts rather than trying to squeeze everything into shape and organize everything.*
4. *Importance of confidence in self.*
5. *Importance of honesty.*
6. *Importance of enjoying present moment and not fantasizing or regretting things.*
7. *Importance of not being obsessed with self-help books.*

So solution is to:

1. *Think what a nice time am having writing lists of problems and spiritual solutions instead of planning ahead and ... (p. 265)*

Bridget is flying on holiday and while sitting next to an unpleasant man she is thinking about her holiday aims. She wants to manage a lot of things that she has ordered into the list called Holiday Aims. Enumeration is again employed in the role of supporting the character of the main protagonist – a chaotic woman trying to be disciplined in order to have everything under control.

Sharon and I are going to be travellers rather than tourists i.e. not stay in hermetically sealed tourist enclaves but really experience the religion and culture.

Holiday Aims:

1. *Be hippy-style traveller.*
2. *Lose weight through mild, ideally not life-threatening dysentery.*
3. *Get subtle biscuit-style suntan – not bright orange in manner of Sheryl Gascoigne, or melanoma- or wrinkle-inducing.*
4. *Have nice time.*
5. *Find self, also sunglasses. (Hopefully are in suitcase.)*
6. *Swim and sunbathe (sure only rains in short tropical bursts).*
7. *See temples (not too many, though, hope).*
8. *Have spiritual epiphany. (p. 292)*

The main protagonist is imprisoned in Thailand by mistake. She is awaiting the British Ambassador, but only the Assistant to the Consul is coming. She is disappointed and he seems not to be involved in the whole matter. Bridget is listing the possible things why he is behaving like if he did not understand what had really happened to her.

'Yar, yar. Oh, Christ, how frightful,' as if I were telling him a polo anecdote. Started to panic as (a) did not seem quite to grasp the gravity of the situation, (b) did not seem – not to be snobbish or anything – exactly brain of Britain and (c) did not seem nearly as certain as I would have liked that this was all a mistake and I was about to be released any second. (p. 306)

After all, Bridget is transported home from the prison in Thailand by a special plane. When she is at home, she is summarizing what everything she has gained by being imprisoned. She is trying to summarize the positive points and analyse it.

10 a.m. Just been to sleep. Really excited about return. Have actually had spiritual epiphany. Everything is going to be different now.

New post-spiritual epiphany life resolutions:

- 1. Not start smoking or drinking again as have not had drink for eleven days and only two cigarettes (do not want to go into what had to do to get them). Though may just have small bottle of wine now. As obviously need to celebrate. Yes.*
- 2. Not rely on men but on self. (Unless Mark Darcy wants to go back out with me. Oh God, hope so. Hope he realizes still love him. Hope it was him who got me out. Hope he is there at airport.)*
- 3. Not bother about stupid things e.g. weight, mad hair, who Jude invited to wedding.*
- 4. Not discard advice of self-help books, poems etc. but limit it to key things e.g. optimism, not freaking out, forgiving (though maybe not Fucking Jed as shall now be known).*
- 5. Be more careful about men as are plainly – if evidence of Fucking Jed not to mention Daniel anything to go by – dangerous.*
- 6. Not take shit from people i.e. Richard Finch, but have confidence in self-reliance.*
- 7. Be more spiritual and stick to spiritual principles. (p. 320)*

Bridget is staying at Shaz in her flat where also Jude is staying this time. The author uses enumeration for illustrating the atmosphere and general description of the flat. The reader can feel the chaos, disorder and mishmash of a typical girl's world.

*Wish Shaz would come back. Am all disorientated. Shazzer's flat is tiny, and messy at the best of times, especially as all open-plan, but with two of them here the floor and every surface seems completely covered with **Agent Provocateur bras, leopardskin ankle boots, Gucci carrier bags, faux Prada handbags, tiny Voyage cardigans and odd strappy shoes**. V. confused. Maybe will find space somewhere and lie down. (p. 364)*

4 Conclusion

The article studies a chosen syntactical stylistic device – enumeration in the language of fictional prose. For the stylistic analysis we have decided for the book written by a popular English author Helen Fielding and a sequel of her very successful Bridget Jones's Diary – Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason.

The book was and still is popular (over two million copies were sold worldwide in 2006). It was not only the content, the plot that it made it so favourite but also the form, the language the book was written in. The author richly used expressive means and stylistic devices of various kind. It is not possible to provide in such restricted space all EM and SD, however, we have concentrated on syntactical SD and concretely on enumeration. Enumeration occurs in the literary piece very frequently and it has its purpose. The novel is

written in a form of personal diary that prompts us we will be immersed in the main protagonist's thoughts and her inner world. The main protagonist, Bridget Jones, is a very ambitious something thirty years old woman that has her own ambitions and makes resolutions very often, however, they often stay just hidden deeply inside of her mind. What is worth to appreciate is at least her effort to want. Reevaluation of all her principles so far or steps how to progress represent the ability of sudden adaptation to new conditions in her life. When a new situation or problem appears Bridget is able to react immediately and elaborate a new list of duties that must be fulfilled. A "side effect", which is without doubts highly positive in this case, of enumeration employed in this role is that it brings humour and relaxed atmosphere into the whole reading.

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