CLEFT SENTENCES AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING INTENSITY

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În articolul dat este reflectată abordarea şi confruntarea multilaterală a intensităţii în limba engleză, în scopul de a releva, în linii generale, mijloacele de exprimare specifice. Modalităţile lexico-gramaticale de exprimare a intensităţii în limba engleză sunt stabilite de interesul ştiinţific şi de evidenţierea elementelor relevante într-o propoziţie. Folosirea intensificatorilor solicită utilizarea mijloacelor lingvistice, care aparţin diferitelor compartimente ale limbii – fonetica, morfologia, lexicul şi sintaxa. Intensificarea este sesizată cu ajutorul folosirii unor elemente suplimentare, cele mai uzuale vor fi menţionate în articolul de faţă.

Every language develops modes not just to share information, but to convey thoughts and ideas more forcefully. The emphasis is usually on interpretation in the fundamental pattern or movement of the viewers' eye through the phrase, [2, p.36].

Intensifiers are function words, usually original and perhaps still also adverbs, used in this role to modify or intensify a statement. They amplify the effect of a verb by using an adverb that intensifies the meaning and particularly the emotional content.

People use the intensifier to subtly suggest to the other person what emotions they should feel.

e.g. *He's too awful. He is looking awfully attractive!* [2, p.41].

The word *awful* from the first example conveys special intensity to the meaning of the whole sentence. In the second sentence the emotional words *awfully attractive* contradict the meaning of the words they formally modify.

The basic intensifier is **very** and can be used with many verbs. Other intensifiers often have the same meaning as **very** but use different forms Intensifiers include: **very, really, extremely, remarkably, fantastically, actually, clearly, definitely, indeed, plainly, simply, literally, just, at all**. etc. [1, p.13].

Their role is to emphasize the truth of the communication, as in the next example:

e.g. *I really don't know what he wants* [2, p.113].

Understanding the meaning of the intensifiers, we realize that so many individuals use intensifiers, however so few know exactly what they are. But intensifiers are not limited to intensifying alone. They can also indicate a point on the intensity scale. Emphasizers more often have a scaling effect with gradable words that are adjectives and nouns. They are mainly only attributive being adjuncts as they could not appear initially in a sentence.

Intensifying structures give the speaker the opportunity- on the basis of his consciousness, interests and assessment of his audience's state of knowledge- to direct attention to topics which he emphasizes in accordance with the process of the discourse, in the desire to ensure that the hearer is aware of their significance within the larger text.

It should be noted that focusing structures are grammatically more complex than the corresponding non focusing combinations. Prominence has been seen by many linguists as one linguistic expression of general human perceptual strategies, according to which we do not perceive at any time the totality of the component parts of an object such as a picture, but direct our attention successively to individual details, leaving the other unobserved. Verdeber R. F., for example, makes the following analogy:

"The human mind is incapable of assigning equal importance to all the data it receives from its sensory sources, probably because it is incapable of paying equal attention to all the data at once. When we look at a picture, we never perceive all its details simultaneously. There are certain parts of the picture that we notice immediately, while the rest we do not. Always in human perception there are foreground and background, figure against ground, important and non-important." [6, p.56].

The quotations above could be illustrated through an example:

"In the middle of the vestry a young boy, who was then on a visit to the college, stood rocking himself rhythmically from the tips of his toes to his heels and back again" [1, p.49].

In this example certain elements and details captured readers' attention more than others. The front position of the words *in the middle of the vestry* conveys a special importance to the place where the action occurred.

The intensification is achieved in this case by stylistic inversion. As we can notice the subject of this sentence is placed after an object because the author wanted to give a note of prominence to the place. He managed to emphasize this element, placing the construction at the beginning of the statement.

The spoken variety of language is more emotional than the written one, due mainly to the advantage that the human voice supplies. The spoken language makes ample use of intensifying words. These are interjections, adverbs and words with strong emotive meaning as swear-words and adjectives which have lost their primary meaning and only serve the purpose of intensifying the emotional charge of the utterance.

e. g. *I'd sure like to speak about her way of being* [2, p.154].

The intensifying word *sure* lost its primary meaning in this utterance and is used to express the great desire to speak about someone's way of being, giving to the whole sentence an emotional charge. Generally, the spoken language by is nature is spontaneous, momentary, fleeting. It vanishes after communicating an idea, a thought, no whether it is trivial or really important. The oral language has a considerable advantage over the written, in that the human voice comes into play. This is a powerful way of modulating the utterance, as are all kinds of gestures and the intonation or significant pauses. The intonation conveys to the word-group a prominent stress. A sentence containing exactly the same words may take on different meanings according to which words are emphasized. When we speak we can give words extra-stress making them sound stronger by pronouncing them louder and with a higher intonation. We may also make the vowel longer and make a pause before a stressed word. The conclusion is that if we want to emphasize something in our speaking we should resort to these proceedings.

The written language bears a greater volume of responsibility than its spoken counterpart. It is inevitably more diffuse and explanatory, demanding logical coherence of the ideas expressed in a context. Emphasis is reflected in printing by using italics or bold type, and writing by using capital letters or by underlying.

e.g. *This is the last opportunity* [3, p.87].

The word *last* which is bold attracts the reader's attention, emphasizing the meaning of the sentence.

We can also assign to the intensity reflected in printing the punctuation marks which are used to achieve emphasis. Some punctuation marks prompt the reader to give a word or sentence more than usual emphasis. For example, a command with a period does not evoke the same emphatic response as the same command with an exclamatory mark.

e.g. *Lord forbid!* [1, p.86].

The exclamation mark conveys to this utterance special intensity. The sentence is uttered with a higher intonation that is why the whole meaning of the sentence achieves emphasis.

A dash or colon has more emphatic force than a comma. We use a dash to set off and emphasize supplemental information or parenthetical comments. A dash is like a colon in a hurry, less formal and closer to common conversation. We can also emphasize words in certain situations by means of quotation marks.

e.g. *Dorian's "freedom" is difficult for others to "comprehend"* [1, p.65].

In this sentence the writer wanted to signal that he refers to a specific word used by Dorian.

In written English there are many grammatical opportunities for introducing clause elements into a text or for emphasizing their importance in discourse. The grammatical means available for this purpose include certain types of element order and sentence structures. Peter Erdmann instead of the term "intensifying" uses the term "focusing" in his book with the same title "Focusing and defocusing in English". He says that the term "focus" and "focusing" are used in linguistic literature to mean different things. They may, for instance refer to emphasizing of parts of sentences through stylistic and grammatical means [3, p.56].

With reference to this, Faglicht A. says: "I shall use focusing as a general term for the assignment of prominence by phonological or syntactic means" [4, p.71].

From the diversification of the grammatical elements of intensity we would like to pay a particular attention to English cleft sentences as a mean of expressing intensity. Generally, English is very rich in cleft constructions. A cleft sentence is a complex sentence in which a simple sentence is expressed using a main clause and a subordinate clause.

e.g. It was like a train going in and out of tunnels and that was like the noise of the boys eating in the refectory when you opened and closed the flaps of the ears [2, p.24].

The meaning of this cleft sentence is emphasized due to the beginning of the sentence. The emphatic element *it was* makes the sentence stronger.

We can emphasize particular words and expressions by putting everything into a kind of relative clause except the words we want to emphasize: this makes them stand out. These structures are called "cleft sentences"

by grammarians: "cleft" means "divided". They are useful in writing because we cannot use intonation for emphasis in written language, but they are also common in speech. The next combination: *The person who/ The thing that* gives to the sentence an extra force and strength. The words to be emphasized are joined to the relative clause by *is/was* and an expression like *the person who/what, the thing that, the place where, the day when/ that, the reason why.*

We can put the words to be emphasized first or last in the sentence.

1. e.g. *Mary keeps a pig in the garden shed* [5, p.63].
2. *Mary is the person who keeps a pig in the garden shed.*
3. *The person who keeps a pig in the garden is Mary.*
4. *A pig is what Mary keeps in the garden shed.*
5. *The garden shed is the place where Mary keeps the pig.*

In the first and second example the cleft element is *the person who* and it provides attention and higher intensity to the name of the person that keeps the pig. In the second sentence the word *what* exacerbates the animal that Mary has. In the last sentence the author emphasized the fact that Mary kept the pig namely in the garden shed and not in other side.

A what-clause is normally considered to be singular, if it begins a cleft sentence it is followed by *is/was*. But a plural verb is sometime possible before a plural noun in an informal style.

e.g. *What he wants is/are some of those cakes* [2, p.45].

This sentence exists in singular form but in an informal style it is possible to appear in plural form too.

A whole sentence can be given extra emphasis by using a cleft structure with "*what*" and the verb *"happen"*.

e.g. *The car broke down.*

   What happened was that the car broke down [1, p.76].

If we compare these two sentences, we can clearly see that in the second one is given extra emphasis. This accentuation was possible due to the cleft structure *what happened*.

At the beginning of a cleft sentence *"this"* and *"that"* often replace emphasized *"here"* and *"there"*.

e.g.

1. *You pay here.*
2. *This is where you pay.*
3. *We live there.*
4. That's where we live [2, p.69].

In the second example the word *here* was replaced by *this* and in the fourth *there* was substituted by *that* for making the meaning more prominent and highlighted.

If we can move words to an unusual position, this peculiar position gives the words more importance. Words are often „fronted" for this reason. Cleft structures with „*it*" and „*what*"can be used to focus on particular parts of a sentence and give them extra importance. The term „*It Clefts*" is used in oredr to distinguish them from so-called „*Pseudo Cleft Sentences*". Focusing „*it sentences*" are syntagms in which the determinative but unspecified „*it*", is determined by a nominal or adverbial expression. If this is formed from a nominal group, then its naming function will be emphasized.

e.g. *In general it is the people who are bound to pay fees to state* [2, p.87].

In this type of sentence, the nominal group is predominantly definite. A second type of focusing *it* sentence occurs if the determinative it, is specified by a descriptive noun such as *idiot* or by a nominal group containing, for example, a qualifying adjective carrying the main accent.

e.g. *The person who planned this was certainly no idiot.*

It certainly was no idiot who planned this [2, p.121].

In this example the author gave an extra effect implying the cleft structure *it* followed by the determinative noun *idiot*.

In focusing it sentences, nominal and adverbial groups appear in the position after „*be*".

e.g. *It is daily discipline which keeps him going* [2, p.43].

The adverbial group that appears in the above example after *is* shows that namely the everyday discipline helps the speaker and not something else.

From the grammatical point of view the focusing *it* sentence seems to be a complex sentence with a main and a subordinate clause. It is often stated that a copula clause „*It is daily discipline*" is followed by a restrictive realtive clause „*which keeps him going*" but this is a contentious analysis of the focusing " *it sentence*". This type of sentence will be described grammatically as the „*complete sentence*" its focus as the „*pre-clause*"and its non-focus as the „*post-clause*".

In addition to the focusing „*it*" sentence, there is another way of grammatically emphasizing parts of a sentence or whole sentences. This is a focusing construction introduced by a „*-wh-*„ form after identifying „*be*", nominal verbal and adverbial groups can feature, as well as nominalized clauses:

E.g. *What is needed is political stability.*

What I want is money [2, p.53].

Generative literatute refers to such sentences as: „*pseudo-cleft*" sentences or „*-wh- clefts*". In systemic grammar they are known as „*thematic equatives*". The main difference between the use of the focusing „*–wh-*„ and the focusing „*it*" sentence in texts is that the former is primarily hearer related form of focusing whilst the later is a primarily speaker-centred one.

Focusing „*–wh-*„ sentences enable the speaker to take into consideration the accessibility of his utterance for the hearer. Focusing „*it*" sentences, on the other hand allows the speaker to present objects, facts or conditions purely in accordance with the state of his consiousness. The focusing „*–wh-*" sentence allows a speaker to set up a piece of text to serve as a platform for the presentation of parts of the discourse which are concurrent state or future progress of the discourse.

After analyzing the possible grammatical modalities of expessing intensity we can mention that no matter how many means of emphasizing a speech exist, only the interlocutor could emphasize the information he considers worthy of being noticed and remembered.The intensity of a quality involves different degrees and has an evaluated character. It can be an absolute intensity or a relative one. Neither in English nor in Romanian exists an unanimous agreement in accordance with the stylistic or grammatical means which reproduce the absolute or relative intensity. In order to illustrate the unclosed material, we will analyze the next example:

e.g. *She is a very wonderful lady.*

What a wonderful young lady! [1, p.79].

These two examples are grammatically different, because in the first sentence the speaker uses an adverb in order to emphasize his speech and in the second one he used an exclamative sentence with the same purpose. Even if the ways of expressing intensity are different, the first and the second example express the same information about the respective person. It depends on the speaker's preferences while choosing a particular way of emphasizing a sentence.

Finally, we would like to mention that although the intensifiers are frequently used, they can be almost reduced from our speech. It would be a pity to do this, because by pronouncing a word or expression more loudly, by writing it in capital letters, by using „*do*" in an afirmative clause or introducing cleft elements in a sentence, we can give importance to what we consider to be prominent and significant.

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