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LEXICAL STRUCTURAL STRATEGIES OF FOREGROUNDING IN DAVID LODGE'S *SMALL WORLD*

Abstract: *This study aims to identify and analyze lexical structural strategies of foregrounding in David Lodge's campus novel* Small World*. We have considered as strategies of foregrounding through salience, frequency, rarely through unusualness caused by breaking of linguistic rules of any kind, lexical structures of different sizes and combinations which consist of concentrating as much and as varied information as possible in either short, condensed lexical structures (binary and ternary) or, most of the times, in long, exhaustive enumerations (multiple and mixed structures). The language used alternates terms belonging to different stylistic registers: informal, everyday speech with formal language (the register of humanities). As a consequence of Lodge's choices in terms of structures and lexis, the stylistic effects vary from ensuring a comfortable reading experience to making reading sometimes toilsome.*

Key words: *foregrounding, lexical structures, enumeration, reading experience, emphasis*

*Foregrounding***,** in its generic meaning, is synonymous with *emphasizing*, *focusing on* or *highlighting*. Some definitions of *foregrounding* assert that the essence of the concept lies with the effect of surprise, unpredictability or unexpectedness in a given context produced by the breaking of a rule or a convention. Thus, Jan Mukarovsky speaks of *uncommonness*, *unexpectedness* through *uniqueness*:

> foregrounding arises from the fact that a given component in some way, more or less conspicuously, deviates from current usage. If, however, all the components laid claim to this difference, it would no longer be different. The simultaneous foregrounding of all elements is therefore unthinkable (quoted by Cotrozzi14).

Roman Jakobson identifies as a mechanism that produces foregrounding, the *parallelism*, according to which, although different selections (from the two axes: "the axis of combination" and "the axes of selection") are expected at two or more points in the sequence, poetic language repeatedly shows the same categorial selection (syntagmatic foregrounding). This phenomenon involves different levels of language such as lexicology, phonology, syntax etc. There may be a parallelism of sound, stress, image and so on and more than one foregrounding device may be present in a single syntagm (Leech 18).

Geoffrey N. Leech has combined the two stylistic devices of deviation from a norm and parallelism into a unifying framework, namely: paradigmatic and syntagmatic foregrounding or foregrounded irregularity and regularity. The first device consists in the selection of an item that lies outside the range of permitted choices, the second in the repetition of the same option at two or more points in a sequence: "items are associated syntagmatically when they combine sequentially in the chain of linguistic events, and paradigmatically when they enter into a system or set of possible selections at one

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point in the chain" (18). Leech also argues that the greater the number of layers of language structure involved (e.g. phonological, grammatical, lexical etc.), the stronger the foregrounding resulting from it.

Foregrounding has also been defined in terms of the new information given. In the cognitive grammar approach, foregrounding is more or less synonymous with putting the element to be given prominence in the subject position and thus it becomes a syntactic mechanism by means of which "a non-pivot NP is moved into a pivot[3] position (this corresponds to the subject position in many languages)" (Cotrozzi 5).

Other definitions are based on *prominence*, a term used with a variety of senses: being central to the meaning of a text, accessibility, frequency etc. M. A. K. Halliday defines prominence as "the general name for the phenomenon of linguistic highlighting, whereby some linguistic feature stands out in some way," (quoted by Leech, Short 48) while *foregrounding* is an artistically motivated choice.

In specialized literature the term always stands in opposition to *backgrounding*. In general terms, Hopper and Thompson understand *foreground* to be "the material which supplies the main points of the discourse," while *background* is the material "which does not immediately and crucially contribute to the speaker's goal, but which merely assists, amplifies, or comments on it" (quoted by Elsness 47). The informational weight in a discourse can be signalled through morphological, syntactical features as well as by rhetorical devices. Polany and Hopper claim that foreground is therefore constituted by the following features: (1) significant events and states, the importance of which is signalled by the grammatical resources of the language, such as morphological marking or particles; (2) rhetorical devices such as repetition, expressive phonology, variation in clause length or complexity, distinctive lexical use, and so on; (3) events which deviate from predetermined sequences of actions called "scripts," around which a narrative is built (Cotrozzi 6).

To sum up, the divergent meanings and interpretations provided by different investigators show that there is no real consensus as to what exactly the term *foregrounding* refers to and the impression conveyed is that it is used as cover term for different notions and accounts. With regard to the mechanisms of foregrounding, analysts have shown that different texts will reveal different patterns of dominant or foregrounded features. In our analysis we will use the technical term of *foregrounding* as a means of emphasizing through salience, frequency at the lexical level of the literary discourse.

The purpose of this linguistic investigation is to identify and analyze some of the lexical structural strategies of foregrounding in David Lodge's campus novel *Small World*[4]. A distinctive peculiarity of the author's style, explainable through the close connection of the literary activity and that of university professor[5], is to deliver as much information as lexically possible with the declared intention of guiding the reader towards a more efficient understanding of the labyrinth of ideas and allusions of his literary texts. His didacticism is obvious all through the novel and is acknowledged not only at the level of the content, but also at a linguistic level, in the employment of specific lexical structures.

At a lexical level the author achieves the intended didactic purpose by means of two different strategies of foregrounding. The more preponderant is the use of long, exhaustive enumerations (multiple

[3] W. Foley and R. van Valin define the pivot of a syntactic construction as "the NP which is crucially involved in it; i.e., it is the NP around which the construction is built" (quoted by Cotrozzi 5)

[4] *Small World* (1984) is chiefly concerned with two enduring human illusions: the dream of a simple, fulfilling life set ironically against the huge and intricate background of globalization and the ideal romantic love. The novel is the ironic reiteration of the classical myth of the quest, but deprived of any grandeur as the object of the quest is not precisely known by its subject. It is, in fact, another form of the drama of the modern man, lost in this overwhelming universe of signs to which he looks for an integrator sense, an indication which should ensure control over any possibility of communication.

[5] "I am a teacher and a critic in my novels, because I am careful to give the readers all the information and clues they need to follow and understand my meaning" (Vianu, *Art must entertain* 229). David Lodge's double identity as both a novelist and a university professor and writer of academic criticism (1960-1987) has been one of the most frequently discussed aspects of his work (perceived as either in conflict or in completion). The author openly admits that "I never felt any creative or intellectual tension between these two activities: they complemented each other." (Vianu, *Art must entertain* 228)

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and mixed structures), while the other one is to concentrate far more complex information than the words usually have in condensed lexical structures (binary and ternary). However, mention must be made of the fact that although the former foregrounding strategy is didactic in purpose and as such is supposed to ease the comprehension process, it does not always ensure a comfortable reading experience. On the other hand, we may speak of a laborious reading experience in connection to the socio-educational profile of the reader who, if lacking higher education in the field of humanities, may find the long (sometimes even the short) enumerations exposing specialized and hermetic academic humanities-related vocabulary too burdening.

In order to better emphasize Lodge's strategy of foregrounding, we have used Horia Hulban's model of analysis employed in *Stylistic Structures* (7-20).

1. Binary Lexical Structures

The binary structures promote equilibrium at the level of words, phrases and sentences. This type of structure as foregrounding strategy is not frequently employed by David Lodge, as he is fond of long, exhaustive enumerations that usually entail more than two terms. Even if they are so scarce, the binary structures are instances of the author's intent to provide as complete information as possible:

> Oh, the amazing variety of **1.** *langue and parole*, ‖**2.** *food and custom*, in the countries of the world. But almost equally amazing is the way a shared academic interest will overcome these differences. (*SW* 233)

As in many other cases, the author chooses to cover as much as possible of the reality he intends to describe. The environment presented here is the academic universe which has spread and become as large as the whole world. The choice of the two pairs of noun phrases has been carefully made: *langue and parole*[6] designates both the theoretical scientific linguistic universe as well as the practical diversity in linguistic systems (*langue*) and speeches (*parole*) as languages in performance; *food and custom,* stand symbolically for diversity and multitude in cultures from countries all over the world. Used together, they skilfully emphasize the huge dimensions of the academic universe by projecting it onto the vastness of the real world.

> THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA is not, to British ears at any rate, a very appropriately named organization. It is concerned **1.a**. *with literature* │**b**. *as with language,* ‖**2.a**. *and with English* │**b**. *as well as with those Continental European languages conventionally designated 'modern'*. (*SW* 313)

The structure in the fragment above may be interpreted as either binary or quadruple. Considering the semantic perspective, we deal with only two semantic areas to be described: 1. *literature and language*, and 2. *English and the other modern languages*. The two are marked [+ Philology]. However, even if each of the four terms constitutes a different field in the study of philology, they are grouped according to their tendency of complementing each other from a scholastic as well as didactic point of view.

> There sit the two men in their familiar attitudes, like **1. a**. *cat and mouse*, │**b**. *spider and fly*, ‖**2. a**. *the one crouched over his computer console*, │**b.** *the other watching from his glass cubicle,* his hand moving rhythmically from a bag of potato chips to his mouth and back again. (*SW* 308)

The passage illustrates a double binary structure by means of which two academics are described while supposedly performing their academic duties. The similes *like* **1. a**. *cat and mouse*, **b**. *spider and fly* form the first binary structure in describing the two men and their familiar attitudes. As the second binary

[6] *Langue and parole* are clear references to Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism applied to anthropology by Claude Levi-Strauss in order to exemplify the differences between various cultures. (Levi-Strauss 67-80)

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structure **2. a**. *the one crouched over his computer console*, **b**. *the other watching from his glass cubicle* resumes and develops semantically the information contained in the comparisons, we can speak of a double appositive structure in which only two realities are described twice: one man acts like a cat or a spider watching his prey crouched over a computer console, while the other acts like a mouse or a fly protecting himself by being cautious.

On the whole, as strategies of foregrounding, the binary structures selected in this paper are rarely simple in number of terms or semantic areas described. Each of the lexical elements of the binary structures is constituted of two other items linked copulatively. Morphologically, the binary arrangements draw the readers' attention through the homogeneity of class. Semantically, they cover large lexical areas which prolong the academic space into the real life of societies and cultures and bring the element of detail which makes the academic universe more palpable and closer to ordinary in the mental depictions of the non-participants in this high form of education.

2. Ternary Lexical Structures

The ternary lexical structures in Lodge's work imply a special type of balance, explainable through their large number, within the same syntactic context and through a careful choice and blending of simple, "easy to read" terms with more difficult elements, belonging to the "serious" register.

> The members probably meet only once a year – at a conference. Then, what a lot of **1. a.** *hallos*, **│b**. *howareyous*, **│c**. *and whatareyouworkingons*, **2. a**. *over the drinks*, **│b.** *over the meals*, **│c.** *between lectures*. **3. a**. *Let's have a drink*, **│b**. *let's have dinner*, **│c.** *let's have breakfast* together. It's this kind of informal contact, of course, that's *the real raison d'etre of a conference*, not the programme of papers and lectures which has ostensibly brought the participants together, but which most of them find intolerably tedious. (*SW* 234)

The use of the three masterfully-balanced ternary lexical structures in the passage above stands as proof of Lodge's ability to be exhaustive in as few and as semantically concentrated words as possible. The first ternary structure is the best example in this case. The author uses original compound-complex nouns *howareyous and whatareyouworkingons,* written in a single word and formed through the union of words which form questions in common use. It is also worth mentioning that the greeting formula, *hallos*, is not ordinarily used in the plural, as Lodge does in his text. The stylistic value of the employment of the three lexical terms is contradictory: on the one hand, Lodge rejects sophistication and welcomes familiarity using simple words which belong to fundamental speech acts, on the other hand, difficulty is not lost. The reader finds it in Lodge's need to concentrate information in ad-hoc formed words, a technique which compels him / her to linger on the text trying to decipher meanings.

The second ternary lexical structure is made of three prepositional phrases. The first two are semantically related, [+ Domestic Activities], and repeat the preposition *over*: *over the drinks*, *over the meals,* while the last belongs to a different semantic area, [+ Scientific Activities], and is introduced by *between,* clearly suggesting avoidance: *between lectures*. The semantic information of [+ Domestic Activities] is resumed in the last ternary structure made of three forms of imperative: a. *Let's have a drink*, b. *let's have dinner*, c. *let's have breakfast*. This time the approach is even more familiar and more prosaic, cancelling the scientific dimension of the conference altogether. All of them define the space of the modern conference and together are described through the barbarism *the real raison d'etre* of a conference. The linguistic pretentiousness of the barbarism, used here as a strategy of foregrounding as well, applied to the succession of domestic activities suggests irony at today's modern conference.

The image of the modern conference as a representative dimension of the academic universe is redeemed in the next excerpt from Philip Swallow's lecture on the function of criticism:

> Philip Swallow was the first to speak. He said the function of criticism was to assist in the function of literature itself, which Dr Johnson had famously defined as enabling us better to enjoy life, or better to endure it. The great writers were men and women of exceptional **1.a**. *wisdom*, **│b**.

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insight, **|c**. *and understanding*. Their **2. a.** *novels*, **|b.** *plays* and **|c**. *poems* were inexhaustible reservoirs of **3. a**. *values*, **|b**. *ideas,* **|c**. *images,* which, when properly understood and appreciated, allowed us to live **4. a**. *more fully*, **|b.** *more finely*, **|c**. *more intensely*. (*SW* 317)

The strategy of foregrounding, employed at semantic and lexical levels, in a succession of four ternary lexical structures, brings forward cadence and rhythm, sustained by the series of three noun phrases: *wisdom, insight and understanding* at the basis of *novels, plays and poems* which become sources of *values, ideas and images*. The rhythm accelerates, through a crescendo created by the last three adverbs in the comparative of superiority: all the literary creations and the qualities that form the basis or are generated by them permit us to live *more fully*, *more finely*, *more intensely*.

The MLA is a professional association, which has some influence over conditions of **1. a**. *employment*, **|b**. *recruitment,* **|c**. *curriculum development*, etc., in American higher education. It also publishes **I.1**. a fat quarterly, **a.** *closely printed in double columns,* **|b.** *devoted to scholarly research*, **|c.** *known as PMLA*, **‖2**. and a widely-used annual bibliography of work published in book or periodical form in all of the many subject areas that come within its purview. But to its members the MLA is **II. a**. *best known*, **|b.** *and loved*, **|c.** *or hated*, for its annual convention. (*SW* 313)

The same language of simple, direct statement necessary to describe a concrete, down to earth reality is used in the passage quoted above. It begins with a ternary lexical structure, followed by a binary structure with a triple first substructure and ending with another ternary lexical structure. The pieces of information provided in the first ternary lexical structure are in sufficient number, although they could be more numerous, as the *etc* suggests: **1. a**. *employment*, **|b**. *recruitment,* **|c**. *curriculum development*, *etc*. Lodge seems aware that the statistical, academic-like presentation of facts may bore the readers and stops short, although they, as we will show later in the analysis, are used to long, exhaustive enumerations. Not the same happens in the next ternary substructure: **I.1**. a fat quarterly, **a.** *closely printed in double columns,* **|b.** *devoted to scholarly research*, **|c.** *known as PMLA*. The author goes back to his habit of compressing information in as many words as he thinks will not make the reading process more laborious and, at the same time, will ensure the balance of the text. The final ternary structure is clearly "easier" in terms of word length, source and current use: *best known*, *and loved*, *or hated* as elements of the general mass vocabulary, while *employment*, *recruitment, curriculum development, closely printed in double columns, devoted to scholarly research* are elements which belong to specific scientific styles.

These passages reveal rhythmicity and balance, which are, in fact, intended to ensure a comfortable reading experience. However, Lodge's efforts with language to make it express far more complex information than the words usually have, as well as the constant shifting of registers meant to obtain contrastive effects makes the reading sometimes laborious.

3. Multiple Lexical Structures

The selection of structures presented so far illustrate Lodge's need to provide information, to deliver as much input as lexically and semantically possible in just the right number of words, so as to appeal to the reader and ease his way into the reading and comprehension process. However, another distinctive strategy of foregrounding is the employment of long, exhaustive enumerations, used most of the times with a clear intent of directing irony at the academic universe. We have included in this type structures made from four to more lexical items. Sometimes two types of structures appear in the same sentence. However, the degree of blending is very small or doesn't exist at all, so we have added them to this classification, instead of the following one, the mixed lexical structures:

But on the whole, academic subject groups are self-defining, exclusive entities. Each has its own **1**. *jargon*, **|2**. *pecking order*, **|3**. *newsletter*, **|4.** *professional association*. (*SW* 234)

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The excerpt is an illustration of a balanced quadruplet made up of a succession of NPs set in parallel forms: noun (**1**) + adjective + noun (**2**) + noun (**3**) + adjective + noun (**4**). Its periodicity foregrounds, while intensifying the idea (also contained semantically in the binary lexical structure *self-defining, exclusive entities* and the restrictive adjective *own*) of a strict specialization of the academic world: **1**. *jargon*, **|2**. *pecking order*, **|3**. *newsletter*, **|4.** *professional association*.

> All the other papers are circulated in Xeroxed form, and the remainder of the day is allocated to *unstructured discussion* of the issues raised in these documents, or, in other words, to **1**. *swimming and sunbathing at the Hilton pool*, **|2**. *sightseeing in the Old City*, **|3**. *shopping in the bazaar*, **|4**. *eating out in ethnic restaurants*, **|5**. *and making expeditions to Jericho, the Jordan valley, and Galilee*. (*SW* 298)

The paragraph contains a quintet of gerundial structures with an appositive value for the nominal structure *unstructured discussion of the issues raised in these documents*. Semantically, they are marked [+Leisure-time activities]. Stylistically, the enumeration of these holiday activities, described as an appendix to the academic lectures of the conference, reveals irony at a situation which is far from the intended norms of higher education.

> **I**. Imagine ten thousand **1.** *highly-educated*, **|2**. *articulate*, **|3**. *ambitious*, **|4.** *competitive* men and women converging on mid-Manhattan on the 27th of December, **‖**
> **II.** **1**. *to meet* **|2.** *and to lecture* **|3**. *and to question* **|4**. *and to discuss* **|5**. *and to gossip* **|6**. *and to plot* **|7**. *and to philander* **|8**. *and to party* **|9**. *and to* ***a.*** *hire or* ***b.*** *be hired*. (*SW* 313)

The excerpt selected contains a quadruplet of qualifying adjectives and an enumeration of nine infinitive phrases combined with a polysyndeton, which uses the conjunction *and*, creating the impression of an endless chain, and closes with a binary substructure. Semantically, the quadruplet, marked [+ Highly Academic Qualities], creates an expectation supposedly to be fulfilled in the next enumeration. However, half way through the succession of the nine elements, things take another turn: the first four activities displaying [+Academic] feature continue with other five [- Academic], [+ Trivial] activities, creating an effect of shock at the level of the whole text. Thus, the scholars firstly described by means of an enumeration of semantically highly evaluative adjectives, become, towards the end of the second enumeration, a bunch of ordinary, mere people with earthly flaws and weaknesses.

> Then I began a commentary on the works of Jane Austen, the aim of which was to be utterly exhaustive, to examine the novels from every conceivable angle – **1**. historical, **|2**. biographical, **|3**. rhetorical, **|4**. mythical, **|5**. structural, **|6**. Freudian, **|7**. Jungian, **|8.** Marxist, **|9.** existentialist, **|10**. Christian, **|11**. allegorical, **|12.** ethical, **|13**. phenomenological, **|14**. archetypal, you name it. So that when each commentary was written, there would be *nothing further to say* about the novel in question. (*SW* 24)

At the beginning of his career, Morris Zapp embarked upon a colossal project of writing a complete analysis of Jane Austen's literary work. The grandeur of the project is conveyed by lexical cumulation: a succession of 14 items, with the intent of making the reader realize the huge dimensions of the character's professional claims: **1**. *historical*, **|2**. *biographical*, **|3**. *rhetorical*, **|4**. *mythical*, **|5**. *structural*, **|6**. *Freudian*, **|7**. *Jungian*, **|8.** *Marxist*, **|9.** *existentialist*, **|10**. *Christian*, **|11**. *allegorical*, **|12.** *ethical*, **|13**. *phenomenological*, **|14**. *archetypal*. The idea of exhaustiveness is strengthened through the syntagm *nothing further to say*, marked graphically in the body of the text through italics.

Another example of an abusive enumeration as a strategy of foregrounding is the following:

> And if you get tired of listening to lectures and papers and panel discussions, there is plenty else to do. You can attend **1.** *the cocktail party organized by the Gay Caucus for the Modern Languages,*

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> **|2**. *or the Reception Sponsored by the American association of Professors of Yiddish*, **|3**. *or the Cash Bar arranged in conjunction with the Special Session on Methodological Problems in Monolingual and Bilingual Lexicography*, **|4**. *or the Annual Dinner of the American Milton Society,* **|5.** *or the Executive Council of the American Boccaccio Association*, **|6**. *or the meetings of the Marxist Literary Group*, **|7**. *the Coalition of Women in German*, **|8.** *the Conference on Christianity and Literature,* **|9**. *the Byron Society*, **|10**. *the G. K. Chesterton Society*, **|11**. *the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society,* **|12.** *the Hazlitt Society*, **|13**. *and many others*. Or you can just stand in the lobby of the Hilton and meet, sooner or later, everyone you ever knew in the academic world. (*SW* 314)

The strategy of foregrounding consists of thirteen NPs co-ordinated disjunctively by means of *or* (between NPs **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, **5**, **6**) or juxtaposed towards the end of the succession (between NPs **7**, **8**, **9**, **10**, **11**, **12**), leaving the impression that enough is enough and the number of conferences is highly exaggerated. The NPs in the first half of the enumeration are complex as the author, as well as the reader, still have patience. In the second half patience has run out on both sides so the NPs are simpler and do not provide information regarding the organizers any longer. The effect achieved is that of saturation in an academic world obsessed with the cult of information.

The multiple lexical structures put emphasis on a complicated academic world, packed with unnecessary and much-too-elaborate information, delivered during never-ending conferences held on every scientific aspect one can imagine, with scholars who go out into the world and, just like the heroic characters they talk about during their conferences, struggle to find happiness through emotional or professional fulfilment, fully aware that neither will complete the void in their lives.

4. Mixed Lexical Structures

A better example that backs up our argumentation according to which David Lodge is fond of long, exhaustive enumerations is provided by the mixed lexical structures. The mixed lexical structures are combinations of all kinds of structures (binary, ternary, quadruple, quintuple, sextuple etc.), with superior rank structures and substructures. There are no rules of combination and the degree of mixing depends on the writer's stylistic skills and needs. The texts chosen to undergo stylistic analysis focus on the immensity of the academic universe, represented here by the images of the modern conference depicted from different perspectives:

> **I**. The modern conference resembles the pilgrimage of medieval Christendom *in that* it allows the participants to indulge themselves in all the pleasures and diversions of travel while appearing to be austerely bent on self-improvement. To be sure, there are certain penitential exercises to be performed – **a**. *the presentation of a paper, perhaps,* **|b.** *and certainly listening to the papers of others*. But with this excuse *you* **1. a.** *journey to new and interesting places,* **|b**. *meet new and interesting people,* **|c**. *and form new and interesting relationships with them*; **‖2. a**. *exchange gossip and confidences (for your well-worn stories are fresh to them, and vice versa)*; **‖3. a.** *eat,* **|b**. *drink* **|c**. *and make merry in their company every evening*; **‖4.** *and yet, at the end of it all, return home with an enhanced reputation for seriousness of mind*.
>
> **II**. **1.** Today's conferences have an additional advantage over the pilgrims of old **‖2.** *in that* their expenses are usually paid, or at least subsidised, by the institution to which they belong, be it **a**. *government department,* **|b**. *a commercial firm* **|c.** *or, most commonly perhaps, a university*. (*SW* Prologue)

The whole paragraph is symmetrically built under the sign of a comparison of the modern conferences to the medieval pilgrimages. The first part (**I**) presents the similitudes between the two introduced by the explanatory adverbial *in that*, resumed in the last sentence (II) presenting the differences. The first resemblances to the pilgrimage, in the appearance of *penitential exercises*, are illustrated in a parenthetical binary structure **a**. *the presentation of a paper, perhaps,* **|b**. *and certainly listening to the papers of*

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others, dislocated by adverbs of epistemic modality (*perhaps*, *certainly*) situated on different degrees of likelihood. However, these "nuisances" are compensated in the next quadruple structure made of 8 main co-ordinated sentences in the indicative mood with the subject *you* expressed only one time, graphically grouped by semicolon into four structures. The first structure (**1**) is made up of a ternary substructure marked stylistically and semantically by the repetitive binary structure *new and interesting*: **1. a**. *journey to new and interesting places,* │**b**. *meet new and interesting people,* │**c**. *and form new and interesting relationships with them.* The second structure (**2**) brings in an explanatory parenthetical structure *(for your well-worn stories are fresh to them, and vice versa)* as experiences of life are ironically conceived from the perspective of the newly-made acquaintances: *worn* from a chronological personal point of view and *fresh*, if recently heard or told. In the third structure (**3**) the author makes use of three verbs conceived as the quintessence of the conference activities: **a.** *eat,* │**b**. *drink* │**c**. *and make merry*. The fourth structure (**4**) introduced by the adverb *yet* semantically cancels the effects of the actions of the verbs in the previous substructures: *and yet, at the end of it all, return home with an enhanced reputation for seriousness of mind*.

Another advantage of the conference over the pilgrimage is illustrated in the last sentence of the paragraph (**II**) and is introduced by the explanatory adverbial *in that*, thus conferring equilibrium to the whole text. It is a binary structure in which the second element is made of a ternary nominal substructure: **a**. *government department,* │**b**. *a commercial firm,* │**c.** *or, most commonly perhaps, a university* as the institutions which provide financially for the modern conferences.

> But they were stuck with each other for three days: **I. 1**. *three meals a day*, │**2**. *three bar sessions a day*, │**3**. *a coach outing* │**4**. *and a theatre visit* – long hours of compulsory sociability; not to mention the seven papers that would be delivered, followed by questions and discussion. **II**. Long before it was all over they would have **1. a**. *sickened of each other's company*, │**b.** *exhausted all topics of conversation*, │**c.** *used up all congenial setting arrangements at table*, │**d.** *and succumbed to the familiar conference syndrome of* **2. a**. *bad breath*, │**b.** *coated tongue* │**c.** *and persistent headache*, that came from **3. a.** *smoking,* │**b.** *drinking* │**c.** *and talking five times as much as normal*. (*SW* 4)

The passage is an illustration of the writer's skilful manipulation of the language. It is an example of a balanced mixed structure made of two quadruple lexical structures (**I**, **II**.**1**.) followed by other two lexical ternary structures (**II**.**2**., **II**.**3**). The first quadruple structure introduces the usual activities from the programme of a conference. On a first reading the activities are semantically marked [+Positive] **I**. **1**. *three meals a day*, │**2**. *three bar sessions a day*, │**3**. *a coach outing* │**4**. *and a theatre visit*. However, the parenthetical nominal structure *long hours of compulsory sociability* cancels this first impression. The second quadruple structure reinforces the impression of torture contained in the parenthetical structure: **II. 1. a.** *sickened of each other's company*, **b.** *exhausted all topics of conversation*, **c**. *used up all congenial setting arrangements at table*, **d.** *and succumbed to the familiar conference syndrome of* […]. The enumeration insists on the intellectual and social dimensions of the imposed programme and is completed with the physical disastrous effects on people in the following two nominal ternary substructures: **II. 2. a**. *bad breath*, │**b.** *coated tongue* │**c**. *and persistent headache*, that came from **3. a**. *smoking,* │**b.** *drinking* │**c**. *and talking five times as much as normal*.

In yet another series of extracts on the same topic of conferences we find other examples of Lodge's exhaustive use of enumerations in mixed lexical structures:

> **I**. All over the world, **1**. *in hotels, university residences and conference centres*, **2**. *in chateaux and villas and country houses*, **3**. *in capital cities and resort towns*, **4.** *beside lakes*, **5**. *among mountains*, **6.** *on the shores of seas cold and warm*, people of every colour and nation are gathered together to discuss

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II. **1.** *the novels of Thomas Hardy*, **2.** *or the problem plays of Shakespeare*, **3**. *or the postmodernist short story*, **4.** *or the poetics of Imagism*. And, of course, not all the conferences that are going on this summer are concerned with English literature, not by any means.

III. **1.** There are at the same time conferences in session **a**. *on French medieval chansons* │**b**. *and Spanish poetic drama of the sixteenth century* │**c**. *and the German Sturm und Drang movement*│**d**. *and Serbian folksongs*; ‖**2**. there are conferences **a**. *on the dynasties of ancient Crete* │**b.** *and the social history of the Scottish Highlands* │**c.** *and the foreign policy of Bismarck* │d. *and the sociology of sport* │ **e.** *and the economic controversy over monetarism*; ‖**3**. there are conferences ***a***. *on low-temperature physics*│ **b**. *and microbiology* │**c**. *and oral pathology* │**d.** *and quasars* **e.** *and catastrophe theory*. (*SW* 233)

The first paragraph (**I**) contains a sextuple of prepositional structures in which the first three substructures illustrate a polysyndeton. The fairly long enumeration displays a gradual presentation of a vast area containing anything from man-made facilities **I**. **1. a**. *in hotels, university residences and conference centres*, │**b**. *in chateaux and villas and country houses*, │**c.** *in capital cities and resort towns* to the elements of nature **d**. *beside lakes*, │**e**. *among mountains*, │**f.** *on the shores of seas cold and warm.* The impression suggested is that there are no boundaries whatsoever. The conference "fever" has spread in every corner of the world.

The same impression of redundancy is contained in the following quadruple structure which introduces topics to be discussed at a conference: **II**. **2. a**. *the novels of Thomas Hardy*, │**b**. *or the problem plays of Shakespeare*, │**c**. *or the postmodernist short story*, **d**. *or the poetics of Imagism*. The nominal structure is co-ordinated disjunctively by means of *or* indicating possibility and likelihood.

The third paragraph (**III**) contains a ternary syntactic structure introduced repetitively by the neutral construction *there are conferences*. Each of the three structures is made up of other substructures: the first is a quadruplet, **III**. **1**. **a**. *on French medieval chansons* │**b**. *and Spanish poetic drama of the sixteenth century* │**c**. *and the German Sturm und Drang movement*│**d**. *and Serbian folksongs* and the last two are quintets: **2**. **a**. *on the dynasties of ancient Crete* │**b.** *and the social history of the Scottish Highlands* │**c.** *and the foreign policy of Bismarck* │d. *and the sociology of sport* │ **e.** *and the economic controversy over monetarism*; ‖**3**. ***a***. *on low-temperature physics*│ **b**. *and microbiology* │**c**. *and oral pathology* │**d.** *and quasars* **e.** *and catastrophe* theory. They present possible topics from different domains of activity. Lodge's deliberate abuse of the technique of enumeration is obvious. The intention is to create a state of saturation by depicting an overburdened and overexploited academic system.

> If literary criticism was supposed to be knowledge, it could not be founded on interpretation, since interpretation was **1. a**. *endless*, │**b**. *subjective*, │**c**. *unverifiable*, │**d.** *unfalsifiable*. What was **2. a.** *permanent*, │**b**. *reliable*, │**c**. *accessible* to scientific study, once we ignored the distracting surface of actual texts, were the deep structural principles and binary oppositions that underlay all texts that had ever been written and that ever would be written: **3. a**. *paradigm and syntagm,* │**b.** *metaphor and metonymy*, │**c.** *mimesis and diegesis*, │**d**. *stressed and unstressed*, │**e**. *subject and object*, │**f.** *culture and nature*. (*SW* 318)

The overuse of the enumeration device occurs in yet another instance dealing with the problem of literary criticism which is debated by one of the academic characters [Michel Tardieu] in the conference *The Function of Criticism*, held in New York. The excerpt is made of a quadruple lexical structure (**1**), followed by a ternary lexical structure (**2**), and ending with a sextuple lexical structure (**3**). The first two structures (**1**, **2**) foreground qualifying adjectives functioning as subject complements in different sentences. In an attempt to define literary criticism, the conference speaker contrasts two instruments of analysis / literary conventions: the interpretation of texts considered **1. a**. *endless*, **b**. *subjective*, **c**. *unverifiable*, **d**. *unfalsifiable* and the deep structural principles which are to be found at the base of any real scientific study of the written text, presented here in binary oppositions: **3. a**. *paradigm and syntagm,* **b**. *metaphor and metonymy*, **c**. *mimesis and diegesis*, **d**. *stressed and unstressed*, **e**. *subject and object*, **f**.

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culture and nature. These are considered **2**. **a**. *permanent*, **b**. *reliable*, **c**. *accessible.* Semantically, the sextuple represents a quintessence of basic elements and concepts of literary and linguistic theories.

The same impression of redemption of the academic universe is offered by the fragment of discourse delivered within the same conference by another character in the novel, Professor Philip Swallow:

> But **1. a**. *literary conventions changed*, **b.** *history changed*, **c**. *language changed*, and these treasures too easily become **2. a**. *locked away in libraries*, **b**. *covered with dust*, **c**. *neglected and forgotten*. It was the job of the critic **3. a**. *to unlock the drawers*, **b**. *blow away the dust*, **c.** *bring out the treasures into the light of day*. Of course, he needed certain specialist skills to do this: **4. a**. *a knowledge of history*, **b**. *a knowledge of philology*, **c.** *of generic convention* **d.** *and textual editing*. But above all he needed **5. a.** *enthusiasm*, **b.** *the love of books*. It was by the demonstration of this enthusiasm in action that the critic forged a bridge between the great writers and the general reader. (*SW* 317)

The text is another example of a well-balanced mixed lexical structure and is made of a ternary syntactic structure (**1**) + a ternary lexical structure (**2**) + a ternary lexical structure (**3**) + a quadruple lexical structure (**4**) + a binary lexical structure (**5**). The key element in the first structure is the verb *changed* used thrice and associated with three distinct realities that underline the changeable disposition of literature itself**, 1. a**. *literary conventions changed*, **b.** *history changed*, **c**. *language changed*. The effect obtained by means of the use of this ternary repetition is a rhythmic movement that reinforces the validity of this statement in its quality of general truth that does not need any other demonstration. The second lexical structure is an enumeration of past participle phrases that are in an antonymic relation with the infinitival phrases from the third structure:

2. a. *locked away in libraries* ≠ **3. a**. *to unlock the drawer,*
2. b. *covered with dust* ≠ **3. b**. *blow away the dust,*
2. c. *neglected and forgotten* ≠ **3. c**. *bring out the treasures into the light of day*.

The contrastive relation is prolonged at a temporal level as the past participles refer to the past, while the infinitives point to the future.

The last two structures complete each other: the quadruplet enumerates the scientific knowledge a literary critic needs to possess in order to put into practice the activities denominated by the non-finites in the second and third structures: **4. a**. *a knowledge of history,* **b**. *a knowledge of philology,* **c**. *of generic convention* **d.** *and textual editing.* The binary structure reveals a supreme truth that emphasizes the spiritual commitment as the most important quality a literary critic must have: **5. a.** *enthusiasm*, **b.** *the love of books*.

The employment of the mixed lexical structures as a strategy of foregrounding overburdens the text with redundant information. Moreover, the use of specialized vocabulary sometimes seems to aim at selecting readership familiar with the field of humanities. However, the effect created is hypnotic and the reader tries to keep up with the abundance of information provided by the author. "Apparently understanding is free and easy, when in fact it is greatly slowed down by the imperative need to remember what is written on the page" (Vianu, 2004:15).

Conclusion

To sum up, we have considered as strategies of foregrounding through salience, frequency, rarely though through unusualness caused by breaking of linguistic rules of any kind, the lexical structures of different sizes and combinations. Thus, a stylistic device that is recurrently used in the novel is the long, exhaustive enumerations meant to achieve maximum of foregrounding. This is explainable through the author's need to provide sufficient information so that the reader can understand his literary message. We have attributed the employment of this special type of foregrounding to his 27-year teaching habitudes. But even in pedagogical terms, sometimes (with the multiple lexical structures, especially) it seems that the author forces the information upon the reader too much. The overuse of exhaustive enumerations seems to

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negate their intended function (of helping the reader through the maze of information) and the particulars with which the author loads his writing seem to deny the reader a comfortable reading experience. Thus, the reader is lost in detail and there is always the danger of omitting the essential. The effect achieved is of motion waste, with a language used for its sake, not in the service of communication. On the other hand, we have noticed that the extensive use of lexis belonging to the scientific style, that is humanities-related vocabulary, in the multiple structures may burden the reading process for readers unfamiliar with this field of study, while it may prove a pleasant and educational experience to those who have undergone it.

Whenever the author fails to provide abusive enumerations of any kind, he resorts to condensing more information than the words usually carry in short structures (binary and ternary). As a result, this strategy of foregrounding ensures, through its structure, rhythmicity, cadence, balance hence easiness to the reading experience, but not necessarily to the comprehension process. The associations within the structures are made of words that belong to opposite semantic fields, different stylistic registers, or situated on different degrees of lexical and stylistic difficulty. In this way, Lodge provides unity in variety.

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