

山东省社会科学规划研究重点项目
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English Stylistics

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曹春春 杨彬 孙炬 编著

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前 言

语言的创造性使用促成了各种文体的产生,才有了色彩斑斓的语言世界。文体学是一门运用语言学理论和方法对文体风格和特征进行描述和研究的学问,是一个古老而又年轻的学科。西方对文体学的研究可上溯到古希腊、古罗马的修辞学研究。20世纪以来,随着现代语言学的兴起,文体研究逐渐走向深入,成为一门独立学科。目前,文体学借鉴吸收语言学和其他相关学科的成果,已发展成为跨学科、多视野、综合性的研究领域。我国的英语文体学研究的教学始自20世纪80年代,虽不是一门“显学”,但也得到广泛的关注和长足的发展。近年来,国内外文体学研究在理论深度和涉猎广度等方面都得到了巨大的发展,诸多专家学者就文体学与相邻学科、文体学方法论、语体特征、文学各体裁风格、文体学与外语教学等众多议题进行了纵深或跨学科研究,取得了丰硕成果。英语文体学研究能够更为深入地揭示文体的实质以及语言建构与运作规律,对于英语学习者认识文体差异、探讨文体特征的表现形式和交际效果、对不同体裁的文本进行文体欣赏和分析、提高文学修养和语言实际运用能力也大有裨益。

本书适于攻读英语语言文学、外国语言学和应用语言学专业的硕士研究生,英语专业高年级本科生,以及对文体分析和文本欣赏有兴趣的读者,也可为其他英语学习者全面了解英语文体学提供一个导引。全书共九章,以文体为主线,厘清了文体与文体学的基本概念,讨论了变异与过度规则化在文体实现中的作用,阐释了文体与文学文本、文体与新闻、演讲和法律文本、文体与认知、文体与语篇、文体与互文等的关系。既涵盖了传统文体学的内容,也关注到了文体研究的最新进展,以期能够与时俱进,拓宽研究范围,展示英语文体学的全貌。因篇幅所限,有些方面还未能展开讨论,仅作了概要式的介绍,感兴趣的读者可以进一步深入研读相关文献。每章后面的思考题也给读者提供了运用文体学理论与方法审视和解决语言现实问题的实践机会。

本书是作者多年来在文体研究方面的一个阶段性总结,整个过程得到了许多人的帮助。本书参考引用了大量国内外学者的论著,在此表示衷心的感谢。同时,本书是山东省社会科学规划研究重点项目的研究成果,感谢山东省社科规划办提供的资助。山东大学出版社为本书的出版提供了便利,责任编辑王潇先生的勤勉与细致令人感动,在此一并致谢。

书稿写作历时两年多,期间虽经过多次修改和校对,但仍不免存在疏漏、不足、甚至错误,恳望学界同行及广大读者匡正。

作者

2014年9月于泉城济南

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Chapter 1 Style and Stylistics

1.1 Defining Style

It can't be denied that style is forever with us. Whenever we wish to express ourselves, consciously or subconsciously we convey a kind of style. So when talking about style, it seems that we are rather familiar with it, however, when we intend to define it, we feel hard and somewhat frustrated, for it carries so many meanings and thereby has so many different definitions.

According to *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*, style is "the manner of expression in writing or speaking which changes at all times according to the actual situational elements, e. g. the participants, time, place, topic, etc. of the communicative event, from very formal to very informal".

And according to *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (Richards, et al., 2000:451-452), style is "variation in a person's speech or writing. Style usually varies from casual to formal according to the type of situation, the person or persons addressed, the location, the topic discussed, etc. A particular style, e. g. a formal style or a colloquial style, is sometimes referred to as a stylistic variation... Style can also refer to a particular person's use of speech or writing at all times or to a way of speaking or writing at a particular period of time, e. g. Dicken's style, the style of Shakespeare, an 18th-century style of writing".

In *Investigating English Style* (Crystal & Davy, 1969), style is held as carrying four senses:

It may refer to some or all of the language habits (i. e. speech and writing habits) of one person, e. g. Mark Twain's style.

It may refer to some or all of the language habits shared by a group of people at

one time, or over a period of time, or a genre, e. g. the style of Lake Poets, the style of news' writing.

It may be used in an evaluative sense, referring to the effectiveness of a mode of expression, e. g. his speech has certain persuasive style.

It may refer solely to literary language.

Moreover, for the definition of style, different scholars offer different views:

- 1) Le style, c'est l'homme meme. (Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon)
- 2) A man's style is his mind's voice. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- 3) Proper words in proper places makes the true definition of a style. (Jonathan Swift)
- 4) Style is the very thought itself. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 5) Style is ingratiation. It involves saying the right thing in the most effective way. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 6) Style is a shell surrounding a preexisting core of thought. It is regarded as an addition to a central core of thought or expression. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 7) Style is choice. It is the choice between alternative expressions. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 8) Style is a set of individual characteristics. It is the man himself. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 9) Style is a deviation from a norm. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 10) Style is the relation among linguistic entities that are stable in terms of wider spans of text than the sentence. (Nils Erik Enkvist)
- 11) Style is the linguistic features that communicate emotion or thought. (John Middleton Murry)
- 12) Style is personal idiosyncrasy. (John Middleton Murry)
- 13) Style is technique of expression. (John Middleton Murry)
- 14) Style is the highest achievement of literature. (John Middleton Murry)
- 15) Style is transformation. (Richard M. Ohmann)
- 16) Style is expressiveness. (Stephen Ullman)
- 17) Style is a choice among the non-distinctive features of language. (Leonard Bloomfield)
- 18) Style is the selection of features partly determined by the demand of genre, form, theme, etc. (Katie Wales)
- 19) Style is equivalence. (Roman Jakobson & Levis Strauss)



- 20) Style is meaning potential. (Michael Halliday)
- 21) Style is a pivotal construct in the study of sociolinguistic variation. (Labov)
- 22) Style is the locus of the individual's internalization of broader social distributions of variation. (Eckert)

(cf. Liu Shisheng, 2006)

The above various and colorful definitions of style reveal the rich connotations that *STYLE* holds. However, none of the definitions can truly uncover implications that "style" carries. Just as Enkvist states, "Style is a concept as common as it is elusive." (Enkvist, 1973: 11) Thus, it is not exaggerating to say that defining "style" is a tough task. Within late 20th century linguistics, however, the view that style as the sum of linguistic features which distinguish one text from another has dominated. Therefore, from the various definitions and views, certain features of "style" can be generated, namely, style as form, style as deviation, style as foregrounding and style as choice.

Style as form reveals the point that style is a dress of thought. Style as deviation reveals the point that the departure from the norm is stylistically striking and eye-catching. Style as foregrounding proves the belief that prominent features of discourse are significantly motivating and expressing. Style as choice states the fact that each individual holds his own language habits and ways of expression.

Nevertheless, in this book, style mainly refers to the foregrounding features of language use in a particular discourse, literary or non-literary, spoken or written.

1.2 Defining Stylistics

What is stylistics? This is the question we may be very well asking before settling down to work. Again, there are various answers and definitions.

Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1988) defines stylistics as:

A branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of situationally-distinctive uses of language, with particular reference to literary language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language.

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (Bussmann, 2000: 459)

defines stylistics from different levels:

Stylistics developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from the traditions of fostering the mother tongue, from rhetoric and from the interpretation of literature. Correspondingly, the discipline is quite broad: a) methodically, stylistics is a procedure for the analysis of texts; b) normatively, stylistics is a directive for what is right in the use of language; c) descriptively, stylistics is a text linguistic discipline which explains the style of a text and sets it in relation to other features of the text (style).

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics (Richards, et al., 2000: 452) offers the following definition:

The study of that variation in language (STYLE) which is dependent on the situation in which the language is used and also on the effect the writer or speaker wishes to create on the reader or hearer. Although stylistics sometimes includes investigations of spoken language, it usually refers to the study of written language, including literary texts. Stylistics is concerned with the choices that are available to writer and the reasons why particular forms and expressions are used rather than others.

Widdowson holds that “Stylistics occupies the middle ground between linguistics and literature” (Widdowson, 1975: 117). He argues that stylistics means the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation, and it is distinguished from literary criticism and linguistics in that it links the two and has no autonomous domain of its own.

G. W. Turner (1973:7) defines stylistics as “that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language... Stylistics means the study of style, with a suggestion, from the form of the word, of a scientific or at least a methodical study”.

Paul Simpson, on the other hand, claims that “Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*” (Simpson, 2006: 2). Here he focuses the importance of language on the stylistic study, believing that the function of a discourse can be realized through various forms, patterns and levels which constitute linguistic structure.

Qian Yuan in her *Stylistics: A Coursebook for Chinese EFL Students* defines stylistics as “a branch of linguistics which applies the theory and methodology of modern linguistics to the study of *STYLE*” (Qian, 2006: 1). She holds that stylistics



pays attention to the use of language in specific contexts and it studies the features that mark the language use of individuals and social groups.

In *English Stylistics*, Xu and Wu insist that “The stylistics we are discussing is Modern Stylistics, a discipline that applies concepts and techniques of modern linguistics to the study of styles of language use. It has two subdivisions: General Stylistics and Literary stylistics, with the latter concentrating solely on unique features of various literary works, and the former on the general features of various types of language use” (Xu & Wu, 2005: 2).

However, what characterizes “stylistics” as a discipline concerned with theory and analysis of style, are quite different theoretical and methodological motivations that determine which of those linguistic features in a particular discourse are considered to be worth analyzing, and which ones are best left alone. Thus, the variation in language use and the analytic choice are the focus of stylistic study. In this book, we attempt to claim that stylistics is a field of study which straddles two disciplines: literary criticism and linguistics. It takes various discourses (literary or non-literary) as the object of study and uses linguistics as a means to that end. In practice, stylistics focuses on the study of different styles, formal or informal, written or spoken, elegant or commonplace, conventional or deviated.

1.3 The Development of Stylistics

According to Shen Dan, western modern stylistics has undergone four periods of development: the growing period, which covers the first half of 20th century; the prosperous period, which is from 1960s to 1970s; 1980s is the period of naissance of discoursal/discourse stylistics and 1990s witnessed the prosperous development of socio-historical and cultural stylistics. While Xu Youzhi claims three stages for the development of stylistics. The first three decades of the 20th century is the first stage of new stylistics, a stage of the naissance of modern linguistics and modern stylistics; 1930s to 1950s is the second stage, a stage of the development of modern stylistics; from 1950s to the present is the third stage, a stage of western stylistics, marked by the prosperous development of British and American stylistic research.

It is well recognized that stylistics originated from the ancient “rhetoric”. And some famous ancient Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle contributed a lot to the field of study. Thus the discussion about the fittingness of style concerning

oratory and then to writing language has been passed down from the rhetoricians of Ancient Greece and Rome. Up till the late 19th century, the main concern of style studies had been the art of writing and the evaluation of literary works.

From the beginning of the 20th century to the end of 1950s stylistics was developing slowly and was confined mainly to the European continent. The publication of *Traite de Stylistique Francaise* in 1909, by a French scholar Charles Bally, is often regarded as the landmark of modern stylistics. And it was Charles Bally, a student of Ferdinand de Saussure, who started the systematic study of "stylistics". Then the German scholar L. Spitzer (1887-1960), the "father of literary stylistics", approached the analysis of literary works from a stylistic angle. Many stylistic analysts, following the lead of Leo Spitzer (1948) and the behaviorist model of I. A. Richards, began with some sort of critical intuition about what might be semantically significant, and usually chose a linguistic detail as a way of gaining "entry" to the text. This allowed an analyst to build up more and more delicate levels of analysis, beginning with a less explicit inspiration and ending with a more rigorous linguistic description. Spitzer spoke of this inspiration as a "click" which gave entrance to the hidden literary meanings which lay somewhat at the center of the text.

The period from 1960s to 1970s saw the flourishing of modern stylistics. In this period, Functionalist Stylistics predominated. The quick development of modern stylistics pushed the study of style. *Style in Language* (MIT Press) and *Literary Style: a Symposium* (OUP) are the two influencing volumes of papers presented respectively to the Indian Style Conference in 1958 and the Bellagio Style Conference in 1969. Besides, some important works such as *Linguistics and Style* (Enkvist, et al., 1964), *Investigating English Style* (Crystal & Davy, 1969), *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (Leech, 1969), *Stylistics* (Turner, 1973) came into being and contributed a lot to the development of stylistics.

Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957) brought about a revolution in the field of linguistics, which was chiefly concerned with grammatical description, claiming the inherited system of language rules. Its contribution was to show that mentalistic grammar could be made scientific by the use of explicit and rigorous forms of statement, known as *Generative Grammar*. Chomsky believes that human mind is constituted at birth to receive certain patterns of language and he was savaging Skinner's behaviourist theory of language acquisition on the ground that it ignored the crucial creative aspect of language. M. A. K. Halliday developed both a linguistic



theory and an analytic practice which suggested themselves as a potentially powerful means of understanding *how* texts mean (Halliday, 1973, 1985). His argument is that such analysis can “establish certain regular patterns, on a comparative basis, in the form of differences which appear significant over a broad canvas” (Halliday, 1973: 134).

“What are the linguistic peculiarities of this text and how can they be accounted for in grammatical terms?” (Widdowson, 1972: 298) is the most frequently asked question in stylistic studies. Another more appropriate question, which involves a dynamic approach, is “What is being communicated in this text and how are the resources of the language being used to bring this communication about?” (Widdowson, 1972: 299).

Since 1980s, stylistics has been healthily developing in China. Over the decades, large numbers of papers on stylistics have been published in Chinese academic journals and numerous books and textbooks on stylistics have been published: Qin’s *A Survey of Stylistics* (1986); Wang and Ding’s *Introduction to English Stylistics* (1987); Cheng et al.’s *Readings in Stylistics* (1988); Hou’s *Varieties of English* (1988); Cheng’s *English Linguistic Stylistics* (1989); Guo’s *Practical English Stylistics* (1989); Qian’s *Stylistics: A Coursebook for Chinese EFL Students* (1991); Xu’s *Modern English Stylistics* (1992); Wang’s *A Course in English Stylistics* (1990); and etc. A number of books were also published abroad in this period: *Style in Fiction* (Leech & Short, 1981), *Essays in Modern Stylistics* (Freeman, 1981), *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in Social-Semiotic Perspective* (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), *Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introductory Reader in Discourse Stylistics* (Carter & Simpson, 1989).

Stylistic analysis, like most intellectual activity, is a journey of discovery. Knowledge-meaning preexisting the text, is uniquely shaped in a relation of form and content into a text, and, with assiduous attention, can be rediscovered. It is a view of the world which has become increasingly questioned by critical theory, but which shapes, in one form or another, most stylistic analysis of literary and nonliterary texts (e. g. Hasan, 1988; Birch & O’Toole, 1988; Haynes, 1989).

1990s is the period of quick development of socio-historical/socio-cultural stylistics and contextualized stylistics. Besides, cognitive approach becomes the main trend of Western Stylistics, which not only focuses on the detailed analysis of literary texts, but also on the cognitive structure and cognitive pattern of the receiving

process.

In the early 21st century stylistics is taught and researched the world over, while stylistic methods are enriched and enabled by various theories. The new century witnesses the further development of stylistics, and there appear a proliferation of branches of stylistics, such as cognitive stylistics, critical stylistics, functional stylistics, discourse stylistics, feminist stylistics, pragmatylistics, pedagogical stylistics, computational stylistics and etc. Its flourishing development can also be mirrored by many scholarly associations, academic publications, research journals, international conferences and symposia.

1.4 Classifications of Stylistics

Since stylistics is the study of style, as style can be viewed in different ways and different objects can be taken for stylistic study, so there are different stylistic approaches, thus, generating different kinds of stylistics. In one way, stylistics can be divided into three main aspects, namely, general stylistics, literary stylistics and theoretical stylistics.

General Stylistics takes as its object of study not only literary discourse/text but also non-literary discourse, namely different varieties of language. From the respective of *field of discourse*, language varieties cover language of news, science, law, advertising, religion, foreign trade, business, public speeches, novels, poetry, etc. From the respective of *tenor of discourse*, language varieties refer to different degrees of formality used on different occasions, such as formal language and informal language. More specifically, various factors related to contacts between people from different status, associated with notions such as formality, informality, respect, politeness, deference, intimacy, etc. are involved. American linguist Martin Joos puts forward five degrees of formality: frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate. From the perspective of *mode of discourse*, there are spoken language, written language, and e-discourse. In brief, general stylistics concentrates on the studies of the sum total of stylistic features characteristic of the different varieties of language, including literary genres.

Literary Stylistics takes as its object of study various literary discourse such as novel, short story, poem, poetry, drama, etc. It concentrates on literary significance as well as linguistic choices, the particular language styles of literary texts,



associating language feature description with the interpretation of their artistic function, literary purposes and theme perception. Leech insists that literary stylistics is typically concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function (Leech & Short, 1981).

Theoretical Stylistics concerns solely with theoretical investigation and exploration. It studies the theories, the origin, the trend, and the historical development of stylistics, as well as characteristics of different schools and branches, the relationships between stylistics and other branches.

However, as an interdisciplinary field of study, stylistics has applied various theories as its theoretical framework, including linguistics, literary study, psychology, cognitive psychology, discourse analysis, feminist theory, etc. Besides, stylistic study can take different objects for exploration and can be approached from different perspectives; thereby there are many other stylistic schools and classifications. Thus, according to linguistic theories on which a stylistics is set up, stylistic study can be classified into formal stylistics, structural stylistics, functional stylistics, systemic functional stylistics, linguistic stylistics, affective stylistics, discourse stylistics, cognitive stylistics, critical stylistics, pragmastylistics, pedagogical stylistics, feminist stylistics, computational stylistic, sociolinguistic stylistics, TG stylistics, socio-historical and socio-cultural stylistics, corpus stylistics, etc. And based on corpus or object of study, stylistics can be further classified into literary stylistics, fictional stylistics, poetic stylistics, dramatic stylistics, essayistic stylistics, non-literary/practical stylistics, advertising stylistics, journalistic stylistics, political stylistics, legal stylistics, stylistics of business language, oratorical stylistics, scientific and technological stylistics, hypertext/E-text stylistics, etc.

Each of these schools has a theoretical framework and an objective of its own. All in all, stylistic study aims to explore various texts from a particular perspective, focusing on different elements, either on form, or on function, or reader's response, or discourse, or cognition, or social significance, or context, or interpersonal communication, or language teaching, etc.

Besides, there is also a view which holds that stylistics is nowadays contextualized and discourse-based (Verdonk, 2002; Simpson, 2004), concentrating on issues of choices of style, register, genre, culture and identities in varying contexts.