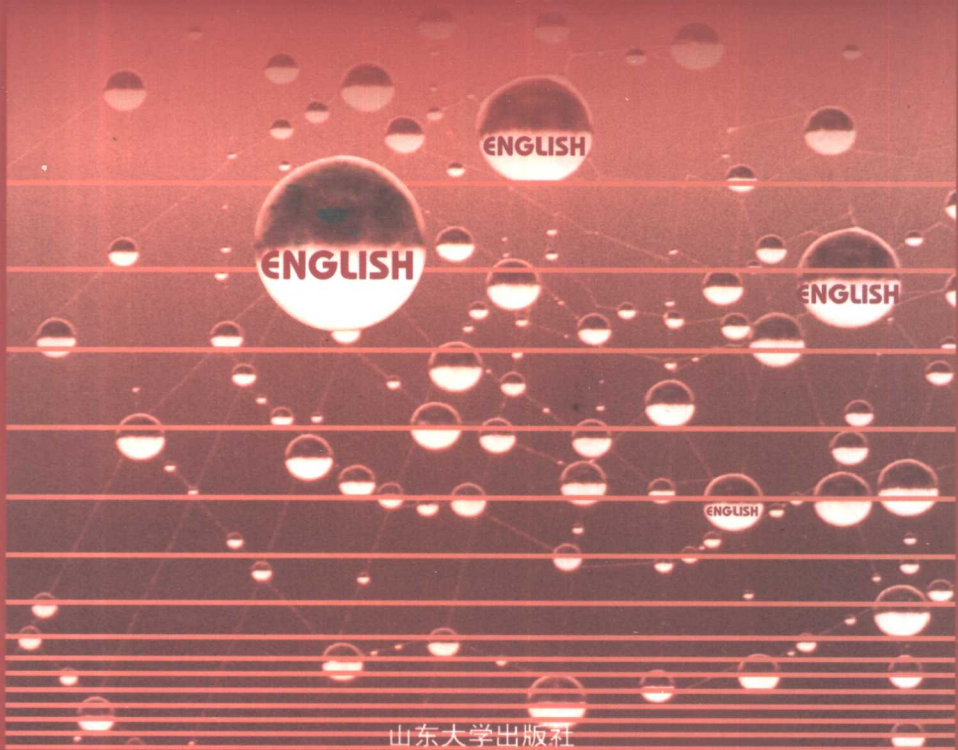


外语院系英语专业
高年级系列教材

王守元 著

英语文体学要略

*Essentials
of
English Stylistics*



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前 言

英语文体学在我国部分高校英语专业的开设始于 80 年代初期。就笔者所知，这门课当时多为选修课，且带有试验性质。1985 年原教育部外语专业教材编审委员会制订了《高等院校英语专业〈英语文体学〉教学大纲》，把文体学正式纳入了英语专业教学计划，从而有力地促进了这门课程的建设与发展。英语文体学现已成为高校英语专业的一门重要课程。

为配合这门课的教学，我于 1990 年在山东教育出版社出版了《英语文体学教程》。该书出版后在国内引起了好的反响。我国著名文体学家已故王佐良教授给予了较高的评价，北京大学、北京航空航天大学、山东大学、山东师范大学、曲阜师范大学等数十所高校将其采用为本科生和研究生教材或辅助教材。现根据学科发展和实际需要，对原书作了较大修订，更名为《英语文体学要略》，并纳入由山东大学外国语学院组织编写、山东大学出版社出版的“外语院系英语专业高年级系列教材”。

《英语文体学要略》是一本专门介绍和探讨文学文体的专著性教材，由九章构成。第一章为绪论，主要讨论现代文体学的定义、理论假说、文体分析的目的、组成部分、步骤和性质等。第二章论述三种有较大影响的文体观：文体是变异，文体是选择，文体

是突出。第三至第六章集中分析语言学各层次上的变异性突出和过规则性突出两大类文体特点。第七章论述文学语篇的连结。第八章运用言语行为、合作原则和话轮替换等理论对文学作品中的对话进行分析和解释。最后一章探讨文体学的理论与方法对英语文学教学的启示。另外，每章都配有习题；书末附有术语和人名英汉对照索引。

本书不仅可用作高校英语专业文体学课教材，而且还可供广大英语教师、英语专业研究生以及高级阶段英语学习者参考使用。

本书的出版得到了山东大学出版社的大力支持，在此表示衷心感谢。还应特别提及的是，“山东大学出版基金委员会”对本书的出版给予了资助。

本书再版之际，作者没有忘记撰写第一版时曾给予帮助的学界前辈和朋友。北京大学英语系胡壮麟教授审阅了该版全稿并热情作序。广东外语外贸大学李筱菊教授、山东大学李玉陈教授和中山大学肖洁文教授曾审读该版主要章节。英国著名学者魏多逊（H. G. Widdowson）教授、美国斯基德摩学院利维斯（M. Levith）教授和美籍教师兰德里（H. Landry）女士也曾积极提供帮助。这里一并表示谢意。

由于作者水平有限，书中疏漏之处在所难免，欢迎各位文体学同行和广大读者批评指正。

作者

2000年1月

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Definition of Stylistics | 1 |
| 1.2 Emergence of Stylistics as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study | 2 |
| 1.3 Two Important Assumptions of Stylistics | 4 |
| 1.4 The Goals, Components and Procedure of Stylistic Inquiry | 6 |
| 1.5 The Nature of Stylistic Analysis | 9 |
| Exercises | 10 |
| Chapter 2 Three Views on Style | 11 |
| 2.1 Style as Deviance | 12 |
| 2.2 Style as Choice | 15 |
| 2.3 Style as Foregrounding | 18 |
| Exercises | 22 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 3 Surface-structure Deviation | 23 |
| 3.1 Phonological Deviation | 23 |
| 3.1.1 Omission | 23 |
| 3.1.2 Mispronunciation and Sub-standard Pronunciation | 24 |
| 3.1.3 Special Pronunciation | 29 |
| 3.1.4 Change of Stress | 30 |
| 3.2 Graphological Deviation | 30 |
| 3.2.1 Shape of Text | 30 |
| 3.2.2 Type of Print | 32 |
| 3.2.3 Grammetrics | 35 |
| 3.3 Syntactic Deviation | 39 |
| 3.3.1 Unusual Clause Theme | 39 |
| 3.3.2 Deviant Phrase Structure | 43 |
| 3.4 Lexical Deviation | 45 |
| 3.4.1 Affixation | 46 |
| 3.4.2 Compounding | 47 |
| 3.4.3 Conversion | 48 |
| Exercises | 50 |
| Chapter 4 Deep-structure Deviation | 61 |
| 4.1 Contradiction | 61 |
| 4.1.1 Oxymoron | 61 |
| 4.1.2 Paradox | 62 |
| 4.2 Transference | 64 |
| 4.2.1 Synecdoche | 64 |
| 4.2.2 Metonymy | 65 |

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| 4. 2. 3 | Metaphor | 66 |
| 4. 3 | Deception | 70 |
| 4. 3. 1 | Overstatement | 70 |
| 4. 3. 2 | Understatement | 72 |
| 4. 3. 3 | Irony | 74 |
| 4. 4 | Ambiguity | 77 |
| | Exercises | 80 |
| Chapter 5 | Phonological Overregularity | 91 |
| 5. 1 | Phonemic Patterning | 91 |
| 5. 1. 1 | Alliteration | 91 |
| 5. 1. 2 | Rhyme | 94 |
| 5. 1. 3 | Assonance | 101 |
| 5. 1. 4 | Consonance | 103 |
| 5. 1. 5 | Onomatopoeia | 104 |
| 5. 2 | Rhythmic Patterning | 108 |
| 5. 2. 1 | Stress | 108 |
| 5. 2. 2 | Metre | 110 |
| 5. 2. 3 | Metrical Variation | 116 |
| | Exercises | 121 |
| Chapter 6 | Syntactic Overregularity | 131 |
| 6. 1 | Repetition | 131 |
| 6. 1. 1 | Immediate Repetition | 131 |
| 6. 1. 2 | Intermittent Repetition | 133 |
| 6. 2 | Parallelism | 134 |
| 6. 2. 1 | Large-scale Parallelism | 135 |
| 6. 2. 2 | Small-scale Parallelism | 142 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Exercises | 145 |
| Chapter 7 Cohesion in Literary Discourse | 154 |
| 7.1 Phonological Devices | 154 |
| 7.2 Syntactic Devices | 159 |
| 7.2.1 Co-reference | 159 |
| 7.2.2 Ellipsis | 161 |
| 7.2.3 Linkage | 164 |
| 7.3 Lexical Devices | 168 |
| 7.3.1 Lexical Repetition | 168 |
| 7.3.2 Elegant Variation | 170 |
| 7.4 Cohesion of Foregrounded Features | 171 |
| Exercises | 180 |
| | |
| Chapter 8 Speech Acts, The Cooperative Principle and Turn-taking | 188 |
| 8.1 Speech Act Theory | 188 |
| 8.2 The Cooperative Principle | 197 |
| 8.3 Turn-taking | 204 |
| Exercises | 211 |
| | |
| Chapter 9 Implications of Stylistics for Teaching English Literature | 215 |
| 9.1 A Brief Description of Students | 215 |
| 9.2 Implications of Stylistics for Defining the Aims of Teaching Literature | 217 |

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 9.3 | Implications of Stylistics for Devising Classroom | |
| | Literary Exercises | 219 |
| 9.4 | The Advantages and Challenges of a Stylistic | |
| | Approach to Teaching Literature | 231 |
| | Exercises | 233 |
| | Bibliography | 235 |
| | General Index (with Chinese Translation) | 242 |

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Definition of Stylistics

A reasonable start for a book of this nature is to briefly examine how the field has been defined. Wales defines stylistics simply as “the study of style” (1989: 437). This definition is clear and concise, but it does not tell us much about the field until we have had a good discussion of what style is. Widdowson provides a more informative definition: “By stylistics, I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is essentially a means of linking the two” (1975: 3). He further explains the definition from the morphological make-up of the word stylistics, pointing out that the ‘styl’ component relates stylistics to literary criticism, and the ‘istics’ component to linguistics. Leech holds a similar view. He defines stylistics as the “study of the use of language in literature” (1969: 1), and considers stylistics a “meeting-ground of linguistics

and literary study” (1969: 2). From what Widdowson and Leech say, we can see that stylistics is an area of study which straddles two disciplines: literary criticism and linguistics. It takes literary discourse (text) as its object of study and uses linguistics as a means to that end. Thus defined, we may exclude two kinds of ‘border line’ studies, work which is in some ways linguistically oriented but not directly related to literary interpretation (e. g. computer-oriented study of authorship), and work which is claimed to deal with style but does not make use of linguistic facts and theory.

1. 2 Emergence of Stylistics as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study

The date when stylistics became a field of academic inquiry is difficult to determine. However, it may be said that it was not until the late 1950’s that stylistics began to advance with significant and measurable strides. In 1958, the first conference on stylistics was held at Indiana University, U. S. A. and eleven years later, another conference which attracted specialists from over ten countries was convened in Bellagio, Italy. The papers presented and discussed at both conferences were characterized by systematic and objective analysis of the language of literature and were later published. This greatly helped stylistics to gain popularity and led to a growing interest in the subject. Consequently, a number of more coherent and systematic works of both a theoretical and a practical nature were published in the field. Now, stylistics has developed into an interdisciplinary area of study with explicit aims and effective tech-

niques, and promises to offer useful insights into literary criticism and the teaching of literature.

English stylistics has developed on the basis of traditional rhetoric which may be traced back to Aristotle's time. Nevertheless, it was the 'three revolutions' in social sciences (Lott, 1988) that brought it to the right track and brought about its present status.

One of the revolutions is the modernist movement in art and literature, lasting from 1890 to the beginning of World War II. To a great extent, the revolution was a break with tradition in the ways it influenced both the content and language of literature. From this movement onwards, creative writers exercise no restraints on the sort of language they use in their writings. In modernist literature, readers could find much to surprise them in respect of content as well as language.

Another revolution is the one in literary criticism which has had a profound and radical influence on stylistics. In the 1930's, the critical theorist, I. A. Richards, expressed his dissatisfaction with those critics of his age. In his opinion, they seemed to be too much preoccupied with literature's role in educating the readers morally and emotionally. He called for a more objective approach to literary texts. In his famous book; *Practical Criticism* (1929), he established an approach to poetry which depended on close reading of the text. He was joined by scholars such as William Empson whose work *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) had a wide influence and promoted the concept of ambiguity as a defining linguistic characteristic of poetry. Their insistence on close reading of the text and analysis of the language of the text coincides with the starting point

of stylistics, thus greatly facilitating its development.

The third revolution took place in linguistic science starting in the late 1950's. It was initiated by the work of Noam Chomsky and Michael Halliday whose thoughts were directly or indirectly influenced by the linguistic theory of F. de Saussure, the founder of modern linguistics. Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar revealed a system of surface structure and deep structure in English syntax. It also brought about a new awareness of how the human mind is innately able to systematize reality by the use of language. Halliday's systemic grammar has offered many insights into the methods of text analysis, particularly in respect of cohesion between sentences in discourse. The work done in the field of linguistics in the last three decades has provided the stylisticians with effective and completely new tools for investigating language in use in both literature and other types of discourse.

The above-mentioned revolutions, in their own ways, have played a fundamental role in shaping stylistics into the important interdisciplinary field of academic study that it is today.

1.3 Two Important Assumptions of Stylistics

The first important assumption of stylistics is that literature is made of language. This point is most explicitly made by Halliday in the "Foreword" he writes for Cummings and Simmons' book *Language and Literature* (1983). He states: "Perhaps the first step towards becoming a stylistician . . . will be to recognize that literature is made of language" (1983: vii). Halliday observes that the way literature is made of language is not analogous to the way that archi-

texture is made of steel and concrete; steel and concrete are formless until the builder imposes some pattern on them. But language is already meaningfully structured and systematized. A close analogy to the way literature is made of language, according to Halliday, would be the way that dancing is made of the movements of the body. Dancing starts from everyday actions like leaping, balancing and reaching and these too are not formless. They are already highly orchestrated, 'meaningful' patterns of bodily movement. But out of these patterns, further patterns can be created; and it is when we become aware of these second order patterns that we come to realize something we call dancing or bodily art.

Since literature is made of language, linguistics which is the scientific study of language should in principle be most helpful to us in analyzing and interpreting literary texts.

The second assumption of stylistics is just as basic and important as the first one. That is the assumption that literature is a type of communicative discourse. Not many stylisticians have made the point explicitly, but Widdowson has given a clear statement: "a piece of language use, literary or otherwise, is not only an exemplification of linguistic categories . . . but is also a piece of communication, a discourse of one kind or another" (1975: 29). This point is not difficult to see. A study of any literary text will reveal that stylistic features do not occur randomly in it but form patterns. In other words, they have cohesion. They are understood, therefore, not simply with reference to the linguistic system, but also with reference to the context in which they appear.

The assumption that literature is a type of discourse allows stylisticians to account for literary texts not just intra-sententially

but also inter-sententially, not only in terms of linguistic facts and theory but also in terms of sociolinguistic facts and theory. Thus, it is possible to study literature from a wider dimension.

1. 4 The Goals, Components and Procedure of Stylistic Inquiry

Halliday identifies two possible goals of stylistic inquiry. The first is “to show why and how the text means what it does” (1983: x). This goal, according to Halliday, is more immediate and unquestionably attainable. In attaining the goal it is necessary to describe and interpret the text, in the process of which we may find that we have done more than simply show why the text means what we knew it meant already. We may have discovered fresh meanings we had not previously been aware of, though we may have been reacting to them unconsciously. To attain this goal means that we should be able to say “I can demonstrate why this text means all that I say it means” (1983: x).

The second goal Halliday puts forward is much more difficult to attain. It is that of “showing why the text is valued as it is” (1983: x). This, Halliday says, might be taken as an aim that is characteristic of stylistics, as distinct from text analysis in general. To attain this goal means that one should be able to say why this text is good and that one is not, or why this text is better than that one, or why this text has been received into the canon of major literary works. This is indeed a challenging task, since at the moment we know very little of how value inheres in the text. This is per-

haps why Leech and Short say that “it is with interpretation that stylistics is more directly concerned” (1981: 13).

Now let us consider the components and the procedure of stylistic analysis. In discussing the goals of stylistic inquiry, we might have observed that a stylistic analysis involves description, interpretation and evaluation. When discussing components of literary criticism, Short has pointed out: “the three parts are logically ordered: Description ← Interpretation ← Evaluation” (1984: 15). Description is logically prior to interpretation because a reasonably convincing interpretation of a literary text is only derived from a careful and systematic examination of its language. Interpretation is also logically prior to evaluation. As Short most humorously puts it, “it makes no sense to say ‘I think X is good because I don’t understand it’” (1984: 15). Short has a further observation: “Indeed, an evaluation of e. g. a poem is always relative to some interpretation. If, for example, someone comes up with a better interpretation for a poem in the sense that it explains the text more adequately than previous attempts, the aesthetic merit of the text increases too” (1985: 15).

In discussing the components and procedure of stylistic analysis, Halliday (1983) uses the term ‘phase’ instead of the term ‘part’ employed by Short. He mentions two phases, analytic phase (similar in meaning to what Short calls description) and interpretative phase. Evaluation phase is not explicitly mentioned, but is undoubtedly implied since Halliday sets evaluation as a goal of stylistic inquiry. He points out that these phases are conceptually distinct. “An analysis may be wrong, an interpretation is not right or wrong, but more or less convincing, more or less penetrating and