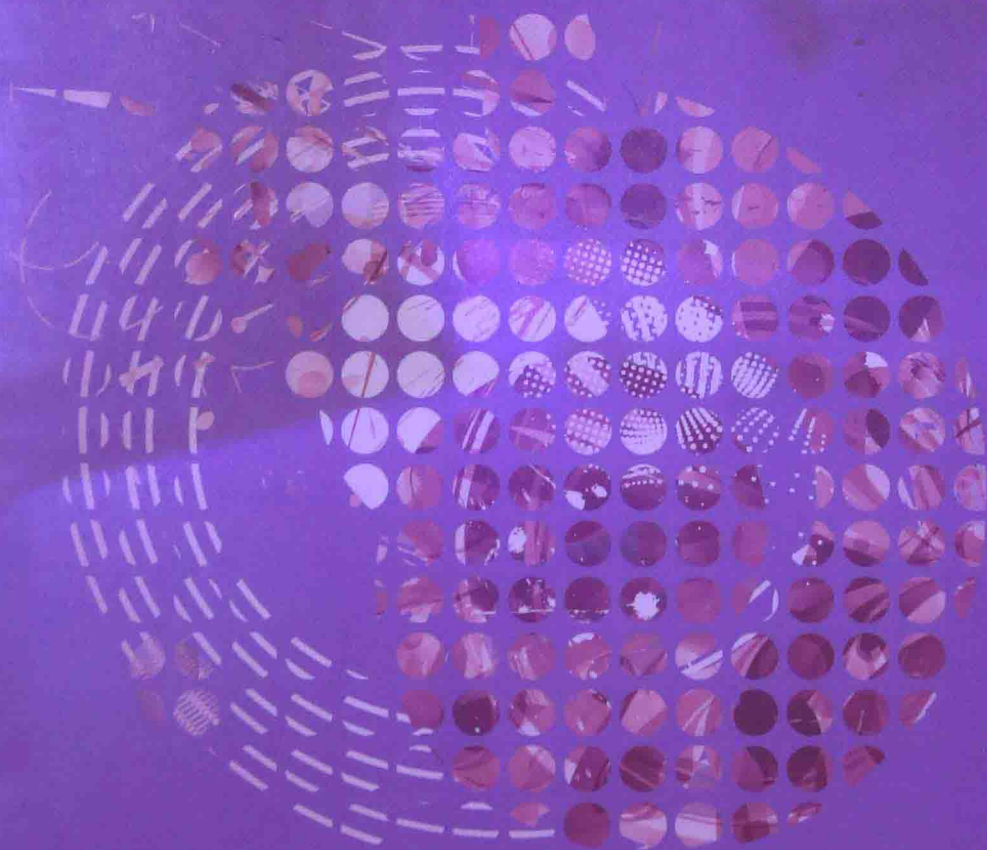


文体学研究论丛 3  
Essays in Stylistics

# 文 体 学 研 究： 实证 认知 跨学科

Stylistics: Empirical, Cognitive, Interdisciplinary

■ 主编 苏晓军



Essays in Stylistics 文体学研究



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Stylistics: Empirical, Cognitive, Interdisciplinary

主编 苏晓军

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## 文体学研究论丛

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## 序

世纪之交,尤其是进入新世纪以来,西方政治文化批评的势头减弱,对文本形式研究的兴趣回归。在美国,文体学在 20 世纪八九十年代曾走到低谷,进入新世纪以来逐渐复苏。文体学在西方不少其他国家发展势头一直较旺,在新世纪更加受到重视。2014 年英美劳特利奇出版社和英国剑桥大学出版社前后推出文体学发展史上首部《文体学手册》<sup>①</sup>,体现了文体学的成熟和兴旺发达。

在国内,自改革开放以来,文体学取得了长足进展。20 世纪八九十年代,当文体学在西方(主要是在美国)受到政治文化批评和解构主义等新潮的冲击时,在国内则幸运地遇到了适宜的学术氛围:经历了长期政治批评的中国学术界注重作品的形式审美研究,欢迎科学性和客观性,教学界(尤其是外语教学界)则看重工具性和实用性,而文体学正好符合这些需求。国内很多大学陆续开设了文体学课程,培养出文体学方向的硕士和博士,越来越多的文体学著述在杂志上发表或成书出版。近几年来国内的文体学研究呈现出更加迅猛的发展势头。根据中国学术期刊网络出版总库的检索,2010 年至 2013 年这四年期间,在国内发表的主题中包含“文体学”的文章共有 899 篇,而 1980 年到 2009 年这 30 年间,期刊网上检索到的同样主题的文章为 1592 篇,也就是说,国内最近几年发表的文章超过 1980 年到 2009 年这 30 年间所发表的文章一半的数量。

中国修辞学会文体学研究会自 2004 年成立以来,一直隔年举办文体学国际会议暨全国文体学研讨会,这对于推动文体学研究的发展和中外学者的学术交流起了较大作用。2012 年 10 月,由文体学研究会主办、苏州大学承办的第四届文体学国际会议暨第八届全国文体学研讨会成功举办。在上海外语教育出版社的大力支持下,由苏晓军教授主编的会议文集即将付梓,可喜可贺。

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<sup>①</sup> M. Burke (ed.) (2014) *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, London & New York: Routledge; P. Stockwell & S. Whiteley (eds.) (2014) *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 这种 Handbook 是权威性参考书,往往标志着学科的成熟。参见拙文《文体学研究的新进展——〈文体学手册〉评介》(2014 剑桥版),载《外语教学与研究》2014 年第 2 期。

来自中国、英国、比利时、加拿大、新加坡等国家的 150 多名代表参加了本次会议。代表们就实证文体学、认知文体学、功能文体学、小说类文学文体分析、非小说类文学文体分析、语篇分析、语用文体学、语言变体、修辞与文体分析、叙事文体学、文体学与外语教学、文体学与翻译等议题展开了热烈的研讨。从会议代表的发言来看,国内外学者的研究在广度和深度上均有拓展,研究的范围既有理论探索,又有应用研究,既有文体学纵深研究,又有文体学跨学科研究。

文体学的实证研究是我国学者较为忽视的一个方面,本文集的前三篇论文聚焦于这一方面,分别出自在实证研究方面很有建树的 Willie van Peer、David S. Miall 和 Paul Simpson 之手。Willie van Peer 教授曾任国际文体学协会的主席,是文体学实证研究的开创人和领军人物。2008 年 John Benjamins 出版社出版了 *Directions in Empirical Literary Studies: In Honor of Willie van Peer* 这一文集,其副标题显示出 Willie van Peer 教授在实证研究方面的贡献和地位。David S. Miall 教授也长期致力于实证研究,他 2006 年出版的 *Literary Reading: Empirical & Theoretical Studies* 是第一部以实证方式来研究文学阅读的重要英语著作。Paul Simpson 教授是国际文体学协会的现任主席,他的论文将文体分析与实验认知心理学的方法相结合,来研究读者阅读作品以及观众观看电影的过程,聚焦于叙事紧迫性,提出了研究叙事紧迫性的综合性文体分析模式。他的研究表明:系统关注文体技巧可以充实、重新界定甚或挑战实验认知心理学的研究。Simpson 的这篇论文具有较强的跨学科性质,本文集中的一些其他论文也是如此。

我们知道,20 世纪 90 年代以来,在西方语言学、文体学、叙事学等领域均出现了“认知转向”。认知文体学成为带动文体学研究向前推进的一个龙头流派,这方面的论文也是本文集的一个重要组成部分;另外一个占较大比重的是文学文体学方面的论文。尽管文体学的研究范围早已拓展到文学之外,但文学文本依然是文体学研究的中心对象,在国内尤其如此。第一篇文学文体学的论文出自 *Language and Literature* 期刊主编 Geoff Hall 教授之手,其独到之处是对文体学与文学批评的相互抵触进行了反思,指出了两者各自的局限性,说明两者应该以更加开放的态度,相互取长补短,以便通过跨学科的方式来更好地分析文学文本。功能文体学和语用文体学的新发展在本文集中也得到一定体现。文体学与翻译和教学的关系也是本文集所探讨的一个方面。总之,本文集中的论文从不同角度对不同领域的文体进行了富有新意和颇有价值的探讨。

虽然由于篇幅和版权所限,本文集仅仅收入了本次研讨会上宣读的部

分论文,但依然较好地体现了这次国际研讨会论文的前沿性和广阔性。借此机会特别感谢这次会议的东道主苏州大学外国语学院,感谢该院为大会的成功举办在人力、物力、财力等方面所做出的巨大贡献,尤其感谢苏晓军教授为本次会议所付出的大量心血。也特别感谢上海外语教育出版社庄智象社长对本文集出版的大力支持,感谢责任编辑周岐灵女士为本文集的出版所付出的诸多辛劳。这次研讨会的成功举办和本论文集的出版一定会对我国文体学事业的发展产生深远的影响。

申丹

2013 年秋于燕园

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## Part I Empirical Stylistics



# Scientific Methods for Stylistics

Willie van Peer (University of Munich)

**Abstract:** The present article argues that stylistics as a discipline has made little progress over the past decades, and that one major reason for this is a severe lack of methodological consciousness (and knowledge). This demands the formulation of quite explicit hypotheses, opening the possibility of independent data analysis, often also opening new perspectives on unforeseen aspects of a problem. In doing so a point is reached where statistics becomes unavoidable for the analysis. Two kinds of statistics are needed: *descriptive* statistics (to detect patterns in the data, patterns that our daily intuitions are unable to uncover), and more importantly, *inference* statistics (to estimate in how far one can generalize one's findings). Examples are given to show results that are reliable, interesting and unexpected. They show us which of our intuitions are right and which ones are not. In other words: they inform us about what we are and how we function as human beings.

**Key words:** stylistics; progress; methodology; hypothesis testing; statistics; intuitions

Let me begin our journey<sup>①</sup> for scientific methods in stylistics with a rather pugnacious quote from a literary scholar:

People agree that the academic field of literary studies is in trouble. It seems

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① I have tried to preserve the character of the oral presentation at the conference, and therefore kept the style informal and the notes to a minimum.

that literary scholars are to be the laughingstocks of the academic world (...) We are savagely parodied in academic novels, humiliated by hoaxers, and held up to ridicule by satirical journalists (...) This is all revenge for our perceived pretentiousness, for the impenetrability of our verbiage, for our unearned moral vanity, and for our apparent contempt for reality.

(Jonathan Gottschall: *Literature, Science, and a New Humanities*,  
New York: Palgrave, 2008: 1)

I agree. Maybe you don't, but then you may be out of touch with reality. Certainly in Western countries the study of literature (in most — if not all — of its academic varieties) has lost significantly in prestige and has indeed become the laughingstock to journalists and the public at large. Surely, the discipline of stylistics has not been singled out in these parodies and attacks, but that is because nobody outside academia has ever heard of stylistics. This is in sharp contrast to the self-laudatory praises that participants at stylistics conferences compliment each other with. Frankly, I have never heard such praise from someone *outside* the discipline. Maybe it is time for some humility?

If you would ask me whether stylistics nowadays has made advances I must confess — after having been in the field for over 30 years — that my answer is an unabashed “no” — or, “hardly” maybe in some areas. Surely, some of us produce better analyses than 30 years ago, but that is mainly because of the accumulation of professional expertise over the years. To the beginning stylistician, the field is as esoteric and as poorly equipped as ever. I mean that we are no more certain of the correctness of our analyses than we were a generation ago.

But aren't we advancing then at all? Look at the models that are now developed in cognitive poetics and cognitive stylistics? Aren't these an improvement over older models? Again my answer would be in the negative: we are doing things *differently*, not *better* in any sense. We are dealing here with mere fashions, and we deceive ourselves into thinking that these different ways of doing things are an advancement. Take something like the whole fad about “blending”. Many stylisticians think this is the future and that the approach is going to stay with us. In my opinion one may rest assured that in 10 years time the blending fashion will be overtaken by yet another one. And one we will then

again blind ourselves into believing that it is going to change stylistics for ever. And so on. We seem to be unable to overcome older models by integrating them into newer ones. We are caught in circles of fashionable changes that trick us into self-deception. Nobody in the outside world seems to believe that these changes are in any way meaningful from a scientific point of view: how often are stylisticians quoted in the works of linguists — let alone psychologists or cognitive scientists? And since they aren't, we must compliment each other perennially how great we are as a discipline in our publications and at our conferences. But smugness has its limits. Maybe it is time for some humility.

My proposal in this contribution is that we are not making progress in our field (which is not the same as changing fashions) because of a fundamental lack of *methodological* consciousness. Basically, we are still in the position that mediaeval scholars were in: we are just repeating the views of some who carry more institutional weight in the area, and are then endlessly arguing around these views, as monks did in the Middle Ages. Francis Bacon has a nice story illuminating what goes on when he describes (in his *Novum Organon*) how Aristotle's notion that females had two teeth less than males. When one of the monks proposed that we just ask some men and women to open their mouths so that we could count for ourselves, they gave him a sound beating/thrashing at the hands of the other monks. We do not beat each other up any more over arguments, but most of what goes on in stylistics, I argue, is based on "received ideas" (mostly initiated by some and then endlessly reiterated until the next fashion comes on), not on firm independent and replicable knowledge.

I would like to remark at this point that this does not mean that stylistics is a senseless enterprise. A good deal of work in this area has a certain interest in itself: it can illuminate us in terms of thematic material and its structure, it can throw light on linguistic features that one would not notice at first sight, or it can heighten our sensitivity for certain "hidden" meanings in the text. But all that rests very much on literary intuition, on subjective insight and on speculative guesses, not on hard (which basically means — among other things — independently replicable) evidence. We may engage in interesting and enlightening

conversation about stylistic features of a literary text. But it is not a scientific endeavor, and hence will not lead to progress in a scientific sense. This makes stylistics (contrary to what most stylisticians believe and assert) not so very different from literary criticism (see the contribution of Geoff Hall in this volume.) I have nothing better to say about literary criticism than what I just said about stylistics: that it rests on intuition, subjectivity and speculation. But the “war” (or skirmishes) that stylistics has been fighting with literary criticism may be rather illusionary. The self-complimentary attitude of most stylisticians that they do “scientific” work of a much more advanced and well-founded nature seems to me to be (again) some kind of self-delusion. In order to validate such a claim, stylistics would need to have a methodology. It has none. To put the matter in a clearer perspective, I would like to reiterate what I once said about such methodology:

QUOTE FROM “JUSTICE IN PERSPECTIVE”

Do we have such standards to judge what is right and wrong in stylistics? Apart from trivial issues, I would say: “hardly”. And as long as we do not, we do not have a developed methodology, and will not be able to make progress — and are condemned to run around in circles, introducing ever new views that do not advance our understanding other than that we focus on different aspects of literary texts, while the older approaches are largely forgotten, if not disqualified: think of the vehement rejection of Formalism nowadays. But one should not forget that some 40 years ago almost everyone was wildly enthusiastic about formalist analyses!

In a sense, this is paradoxical. Because compared to nature, culture is millions of times more complicated. So one would expect that students in the humanities would receive a thorough training in methodological issues. They hardly do — and what goes under the name of methodology is often not more than how to refer to or quote authors, how to adhere to a particular style sheet, how to compose a bibliography. It is, on the contrary, the natural scientists who get a more methodological training. Humanities scholars seem to think that they can easily dispense with things like logic, parsimony, or statistical reasoning.

Until recently, there may have been an excuse of sorts that there were no introductions to methodology for the humanities. It was precisely because of this shortcoming that two colleagues and myself have devoted a good part of our professional lives to develop such a handbook (see Van Peer, Hakemulder and Zyngier (2012)). In it, the student learns to carry out research in a scientific sense step by step, in a language that is as much free of jargon as is possible, with scores of examples from the literature, in a hands-on way, including numerous exercises for self study and simulation on a DOI (to be found on the website of the publishers'). In other words, the old excuse that one doesn't know *how* to train stylistics (or humanities) students in matters of scientific methodology no longer holds.

## **An Example**

Let me give an example on how such methodology may work. In a very famous essay, Viktor Shklovsky, one of the towering figures of Russian Formalism, wrote:

And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar", to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.

(Shklovsky, 1965: 12)

This is, as one can see, some kind of *anthropological* statement about the function of art and literature (Shklovsky treats both of them side by side and makes no distinction between their functions), but it also has serious repercussions for *stylistics*. It means no less than that literary authors must have recourse to special techniques that make objects (the language, the text, etc.) "unfamiliar". In 1917 this was quite a bold hypothesis and neither Shklovsky, nor anyone at the time, has the possibility of testing the claim. Since then, stylisticians have quoted this passage from Shklovsky's essay time and again in publications, lectures and seminars, but they have let it stand as such — or criticized it by



means of some sophistry. This is another clear sign of a lack of our subject's methodology: not answering critique of your work — compare that to the natural sciences! The reason is simple: because Culler is a “star” and in the humanities stars are there to be imitated, not criticized: how much more medieval can one get?

Yet nowadays there are methods available to test Shklovsky's claim. To this end, readers were presented with a “poem” in a line by line fashion in several reading experiments (involving altogether 597 participants in 16 different situations, including 10 different nations, some of which spoke non-European languages, such as Finland, Tunisia, Egypt and China).

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you not

I love you notwithstanding

Readers were requested to judge the beauty of the poem as it unfolded line by line, on an 11-point scale, going from - 5 (for absolutely ugly), via 0 (indifferent) to + 5 (absolutely beautiful). No definition was given what was to be understood under the notion of “beauty”, but participants were encouraged to apply their own private (or cultural) notions of the notion, and to do so spontaneously. (Note that leaving the definition of the concept open works *against* our hypothesis: one may safely assume that “beauty” has different meanings and connotations for different cultures and individuals.) As you can see in the poem, it is been made up in such a way that a certain monotonous pattern is built up, to which the readers will get used — leading to ever lower estimates of beauty. But line 9 is all of a sudden “unfamiliar” in that it text-internally deviates from the previous text. If Shklovsky is right in his quote above, readers should react in an aesthetic way, hence finding the “unfamiliar” line more beautiful than the previous lines, with which they have been