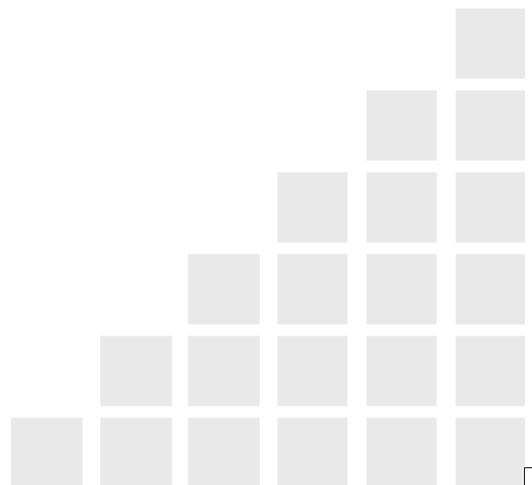
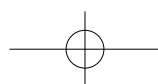
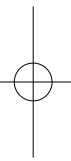
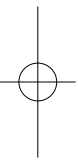
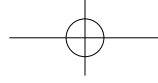
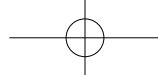


Part One

Theoretical Preliminaries and Major Varieties of English







Chapter 1

Style and Stylistics

1.1 Introduction

A young girl student, coming back from college for her Christmas holidays, told her grandmother who received little education how to suck an egg in the following way:

“Take an egg, and make a perforation in the base and a corresponding one in the apex. And then, apply the lips to the aperture, and by forcibly inhaling the breath, the shell is entirely discharged of its contents.”

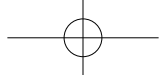
After hearing this explanation, the elderly woman seemed puzzled and said to her granddaughter:

“When I was a gal, they made a hole in each end and sucked.”

Why was the old woman puzzled over the words of her granddaughter? Is there any difference between what they said? Which is better? Why?

These questions concern the issue of *style* and the study of *stylistics*. Denotatively speaking, what they said have roughly the same meaning—offering a method of sucking an egg. The difference lies in the fact that the young student used some big and formal words, such as “perforation” (meaning “hole”), “apex” (meaning “top”), and “aperture” (meaning “opening”) which made her utterance difficult to understand, especially by an old woman without much education, while the old woman used some informal words, such as “gal”, “hole”, “end” and “suck”. As a result, her utterance is easy to understand.

Is it to say that informal language is always better than formal language? We cannot make such a conclusion so far. It all depends on the occasion.



Let us go back to the example again. They had a conversation at home, which is a very informal occasion. And what is more, the person the girl talked to was her grandmother, an old woman without much education. In this situation, she should have used informal language. But in order to show off her knowledge obtained at college she used formal language in the wrong place to the wrong person. This example indicates we should use proper words in proper places, otherwise we cannot achieve our purpose of communication. And using proper words in proper places is a very important purpose of the study of language, which is also a great concern of “style”.

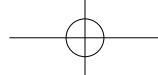
Let us look at some other examples:

- 1) When his dad died, Peter had to get another job.
- 2) After his father's death, Peter had to change his job.
- 3) On the decease of his father, Mr. Brown was obliged to seek alternative employment.

These sentences mean roughly the same thing, but would occur in different situations. Sentence 1) would be part of a casual conversation between friends of Peter Brown. Sentence 2) is of fairly natural (“common core”) style. Sentence 3) is very formal, in fact stilted, and would only occur in a written report. (Leech & Svartvic, 1975: 24)

From these examples we may become clearer: Different styles should be used on different occasions, and the key to the effective use of language is “appropriateness”, and the key to effective communication is the ability to use language appropriately. Stylistics, which is the systematic and scientific study of style, can help us acquire this ability.

The native speaker of English of course has a great deal of intuitive knowledge about linguistic appropriateness and correctness which he has acquired over his growing years. He knows how to adjust his style to different types of situations; he knows when to use one variety of language rather than another. Whereas the foreign learner of English is lacking in this linguistic awareness. He has no awareness of conventions of conformity, because he has not grown up in the relevant linguistic environment. Therefore, he needs to develop a “sense of style”. (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 5-6)



The process of the acquisition of this “sense of style” should be speeded up by a systematic study of style—stylistics.

Stylistics can help us to use proper words in proper places so as to make our language more idiomatic; it can help us to understand the “norm” and the “deviation” of different varieties of language so that we can use them more skillfully; it can help us to do translation work more successfully so as to achieve fidelity, fluency and elegance; it can also help us to be better equipped in literary appreciation and criticism. Stylistic analysis of different literary genres can enhance our understanding of the ways in which different lexical items, graphological forms, deviations in syntax, rhetorical devices are employed in different literary works. Therefore it can help us to understand and appreciate literary works more profoundly from the special manipulation of language and the relationship between the skillful use of language and the meaning it conveys.

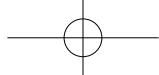
1.2 Definitions of Style

It is difficult to define “style” since it has many meanings. 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:

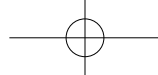
“variation in a person’s speech or writing. Style usually varies from casual to formal according to the type of situation, the person or persons addressed, the location, the topic discussed, etc. A particular style, e.g. a formal style or a colloquial style, is sometimes referred to as a stylistic variation...Style 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.”

These are some general senses of the word “style”, and there are also many different views of style from different scholars. The following list is only a small part of the most familiar ones:

- 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 ingratiatio. 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 alterative 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 & Levi Strauss)
20) Style is meaning potential. (Michael Halliday)
(cf. 刘世生, 1998)

The list may go on and on, but still, it cannot give the whole that “style” implies. Nevertheless, we can see something in common from these definitions: Some scholars viewed the issue from the point of view of classic rhetoric, putting emphasis on the “effective use” of language. (Swift, Enkvist, et al.); some viewed the problem from the point of view of structural linguistics, emphasizing the relations between linguistic units within the language system (Jakobson & Levi-Strauss); some viewed the issue from the point of view of transformational generative linguistics, stressing the stylistic effect produced by the transformation of linguistic structures at different levels (Ohmann); Halliday’s definition of style is based on his systematic-functional linguistics. (cf. 刘世生, 1998: 9-11)

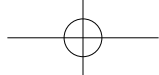
The definition of style used in this book is a general, linguistic-oriented one: **Manners indicating prominent linguistic features, devices or patterns, most (or least) frequently occur in a particular text of a particular variety of language.**

1.3 Definitions of Stylistics

To say stylistics studies style does not make matters clear. We have to define it in a more rational and more scientific way.

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics (Richards, et al., 2000: 452) defines stylistics in the following way:

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 a writer



and the reasons why particular forms and expressions are used rather than others.

G. W. Turner (1973) defines stylistics in this way:

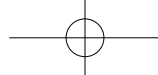
Stylistics is that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language...Stylistics means the study of style, with a suggestion, from the form of the word, of a scientific or at least a methodical study.

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (Bussmann, 2000: 459) gives a more detailed definition of stylistics:

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). This newest branch of stylistics forms the foundation for scientific analysis of style as well as for practical stylistics, the standardization of style, and the fostering of the mother tongue. The results of functional stylistics are particularly important for research into the connection between the style and the function of a text (or type of a text). Since functionally explicable properties of style are also fundamental for rhetorical texts, stylistics overlaps here with its ancestors and with the modern neighboring discipline of rhetoric.

From these definitions and from our sense of style mentioned above, we can make our own definition of stylistics:

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies style in a scientific and systematic way concerning the manners / linguistic features of different varieties of language at different levels.



1.4 The Development of Stylistics

In the West

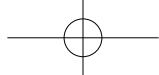
Modern stylistics got its development in the 19th and 20th centuries from rhetoric and from the interpretation of literature. But stylistics is often considered as both an old and a young branch of learning. It is old, because it originated from the ancient “rhetoric”. The famous ancient Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, et al., all contributed a lot to this branch of learning. It is young, because the word “stylistics” first appeared only in 1882, and the first book on stylistics was written by a French scholar Charles Bally, student of the famous modern linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in 1902 and was published in 1909, entitled *Traite de Stylistique Francaise*. This book is often considered as a landmark of modern stylistics.

The subject of study in Bally’s time was oral discourse. Bally considered that apart from the denotative meaning expressed by the speaker, there was usually an “overtone” which indicated different “feelings”, and the task of stylistics was to find out the linguistic devices indicating these feelings.

Later, the German scholar L. Spitzer (1887-1960), began to analyze literary works from a stylistic point of view, and therefore, Spitzer is often considered as the “father of literary stylistics”.

From the beginning of the 1930s to the end of the 1950s stylistics was developing slowly and was only confined to the European continent. During this period, the Russian formalists, the Prague School and the French Structuralists all contributed to the development of stylistics. There emerged some well-known stylisticians, such as E. Auerbach, J. Marouzeau, M. Cressot, R. Jakobson.

From the end of the 1950s to the present time, modern stylistics has reached its prosperity. This can be further divided into roughly four periods: The first period is from the end of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s, in which, Formalist Stylistics was the prevailing trend. The second period is the 1970s, in which Functionalist Stylistics predominated. The third period is the 1980s, in which Discourse Stylistics flourished. While in the fourth period, the



1990s, the Socio-Historical/Socio-Cultural Stylistics or Contextualized Stylistics) developed quickly.

During these 40 plus prosperous years, a large number of books on stylistics were published. The following list shows only a few examples of the achievements.

Style in Language—Sebeok, T. A. (ed.), 1960.

The Five Clocks—Joos, M., 1962.

Linguistics and Style—Enkvist, N. E. & J. Spencer, 1964.

Investigating English Style—Crystal, D. & D. Davy, 1969.

Linguistic Style: A Symposium—Chatman, S. (ed.), 1971.

Stylistics—Turner, G. W., 1973.

Style in Fiction—Leech, G. N. & M. H. Short, 1981.

Essays in Modern Stylistics—Freeman, D. C. (ed.), 1981.

Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in Social-Semiotic Perspective—Halliday, M. A. K. & R. Hasan, 1985.

Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introductory Reader in Discourse Stylistics—Carter, R. & P. Simpson, 1989.

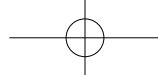
The Stylistics of Fiction—Toolan, M., 1990.

Prose Style: A Contemporary Guide—Miles, R. et al., 1991.

The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present—Weber, J. J., 1996.

Patterns in Language: Stylistics for Students of Language and Literature—Thomborrow, J., 1998.

In the new century, stylistics has enjoyed further development. In the departments and institutes of language, literature and linguistics around many universities in the world, stylistics has always been one of the main courses or subjects of research. Monographs and textbooks on stylistics are published, and research papers on stylistics appear in the influential academic journals all over the world. The trend is interdisciplinary study, and narrative stylistics, cognitive stylistics, feminist stylistics, etc., will get further developed. The following two books marked the trend of stylistic development at the beginning of the new century:



Cognitive Stylistics—Language and Cognition in Text Analysis—Semino, E. & J. Culpeper, 2002.

Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students—Simpson, P., 2004

In China

Chinese stylistics can be traced back to a work of literary criticism—*The Carving of the Literary Mind* by Liu Xie (465-532) in the Southern Dynasty period. Later there were the generic classification of the Tang poetry, the Song prose poems, the Yuan verse poems, and the Ming and Qing novels. Chen Wangdao's *Principle of Rhetoric* (1932) indicated the beginning of modern Chinese stylistics.

The study of modern Western stylistics in China can be divided into two periods. The first is from the founding of the People's Republic of China to the year 1976. This is the fundamental stage for the development of modern stylistics in China. Some scholars, such as Wang Zuoliang, Xu Guozhang, Xu Yanmou, Yang Renjing, et al., began to study stylistics in its modern sense. In 1963, Wang Zuoliang published an article entitled "On the Study of English Style" (王佐良, 1980). And later some other articles on stylistics got published. But all in all, in this period of 28 years, no more than 30 articles concerning stylistics got published in China. There were no academic works or textbooks on modern stylistics. What is more, there were almost no academic studies during the 10-year "cultural revolution" (1966-1976) (王守元, et al., 2004).

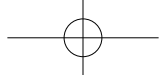
The second period is from 1977 up to the present time. It was also Professor Wang Zuoliang who took the lead in the research of modern stylistics. In this period, more and more academic works were published. The following list exemplifies the achievements:

Papers on English Stylistics—Wang Zuoliang, 1980.

Introduction to English Stylistics—Wang Zuoliang & Ding Wangdao, 1987.

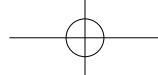
A Survey of Stylistics—Qin Xiubai, 1986.

Readings in Stylistics—Cheng Yumin, 1988.



- Varieties of English*—Hou Weirui, 1988.
English Stylistics—Cheng Yumin, 1989.
A Course in English Stylistics—Wang Shouyuan, 1990.
Stylistics: A Coursebook for Chinese EFL Students—Qian Yuan, 1991.
Modern English Stylistics—Xu Youzhi, 1992.
Literary Stylistics and Fictional Translation—Shen Dan, 1995.
Outlines of Western Stylistics—Liu Shisheng, 1998.
A Study of Narratology and Fictional Stylistics—Shen Dan, 1998.
Functional Stylistics—Zhang Delu, 1998.
English Stylistic Analysis—Guo Hong, 1998.
Varieties of Modern English—Pei Wen, 1999.
Theoretical Stylistics—Hu Zhuanglin, 2000.
Essentials of English Stylistics—Wang Shouyuan, 2000.
Introducing Varieties of English—Xue Hanrong, 2003.
Stylistics Study in China—Wang Shouyuan et al., 2004.
English Stylistics—Xu Youzhi, 2005
Functions of Language and Style—Zhang Delu, 2005.
Stylistic Analysis of Varieties of English—Dong Qiming, 2006.
A Survey of Stylistics—Liu Shisheng, 2006

Apart from the academic works and textbooks, a large number of articles on stylistics also got published and the number increased with each passing year. In the 12 years from 1977 to 1988, there were altogether 378 articles on stylistics all over the country, with an average of 31.5 each year, while in the 9 years from 1989 to 1997, there were 479 articles, with an average of 56.3 each year. And in the year of 1998, there were 109 articles (王守元, et al., 2004). And in the new century, stylistics is developing even faster. The founding of the Chinese Association of Rhetoric in 1980 marked the new era of Chinese stylistics research, while the founding of China Stylistics Association in 2004 in Henan University during the 4th National Symposium on Stylistics marked the new era of studies of Western stylistics in China. The International Stylistics Conference held



in Tsinghua University in June 2006 further indicated the development and achievements of stylistics in China.

1.5 The Scope of Study

The study of modern stylistics can be divided into three main aspects: General Stylistics, Literary Stylistics and Theoretical Stylistics.

General Stylistics

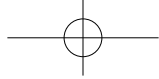
General stylistics studies different varieties of language. For example, according to field of discourse, with the related functions of language used in different genres, there are varieties such as news reports, advertisements, public speeches, novels, poetry, scientific treatises, and legal documents. According to attitude (tenor of discourse), there are different degrees of formality used on different occasions, such as formal language and informal language. According to medium of communication (mode of discourse), there are spoken language, written language, and e-discourse. According to regions, there are British English, American English and other regional dialects. According to social groups, there are standard language and non-standard language, language used by people of different classes, different sexes, and so on. According to time, there are Old English, Middle English, Modern English and Contemporary English. This discipline is the main concern of this book.

Literary Stylistics

Broadly speaking, literary stylistics studies variations characteristic of different literary genres—poetry, prose, novels, drama, etc., with the purpose of promoting literary texts as communicative acts. Literary stylistics concentrates on literary significance as well as linguistic choices in literary texts. It also studies the different styles of individual authors and their works, as well as period styles. This discipline is not the main concern of this book, but we also touch upon it as a variety of language.

Theoretical Stylistics

Theoretical stylistics studies the theories, the origin, the trend, and the historical development of stylistics as well as characteristics of different



branches of stylistics. It also studies the relationships between stylistics and other branches of learning. This discipline is not the main concern of this book.

Exercises

1. What does general stylistics study?
2. Why should we learn stylistics?
3. What is the aim of stylistics?
4. Paraphrase the girl's words (see 1.1 Introduction) in proper style.
5. Give examples of improper styles you come across in daily life and try to improve them.
6. Say something about the development of stylistics.