Book Reviews

Introducing stylistic analysis: Practicing the basics (a review)

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Introducing stylistic tools to teach language patterns, cultural references, and meaning based on linguistic textual evidence cannot always be a straightforward task. There is a plethora of books available but most of them are produced for advanced researchers and native learners of the English language. In fact, few stylistic books are accessible to foreign language learners. This book under review is written by an EFL Yemeni Professor, who comes from a background that allows him to understand the difficulties that EFL and ESL learners face. Needless to mention that learners whose native language other than English lack the cultural and linguistic competence that might help them as readers to analyse, understand and interpret texts correctly.

This book is highly recommended for ESL/EFL teachers and students for several practical reasons. First, it offers teachers who aim to teach various text types including literary texts (i.e., poetry, fiction, drama) and non-literary texts (social media language, advertisements, etc.). This book contains many practical exercises with key answers. In addition to that, it is suitable for advanced-level students and native language learners. *Introducing Stylistic Analysis* consists of three parts. Parts 1 and 3 are devoted to introducing stylistics both as a linguistic field and as an analytical framework. The first part is mainly concerned with definitions of stylistics and the main stylistic toolkits that help in conducting text analysis. For example, definitions of key terms – such as deviation, foregrounding, and style – are presented with practical examples to foster readers' understanding. The last part, the third one of the book, entitled *The Story of Stylistics,* reveals the historical journey of the development of the field. Beginning with Russian formalism, a literary criticism and literary theory school that flourished in the early 20th century, stylistics has been influenced by other contemporary methods to the present day. Not only this but also, Part 3 shows future development in the field and displays a few textbooks for those who wish to immerse themselves with the stylistic experience.

Generally, stylistics' main concern can be defined in terms of authorial and text style. The latter is the main focus of the book. This pertains to the examination of how textual choices that indicate the overall meaning and impact of a text by considering the reasons behind the selection of a specific word or expression from a variety of available options. In addition to that, the rationale for choosing a particular structure is highlighted.

Part 2 is the heart of the book. After introducing definitions of the key terms in the first part and presenting how stylistics developed over the years in the second one, the practical analysis of many text types is exemplified in the middle part. Thus, the second part entitled *Into the Practice of Stylistics* nourishes readers with illustrations of textual evidence about each and every stylistic term. Furthermore, its importance lies in presenting all types of stylistic approaches including the formalist, functional, critical, corpus, feminist, pragmatic, cognitive, and multimodal approaches. The interdisciplinarity feature of the discipline enables dealing with various data and appeals for readers with different linguistic backgrounds. The author provokes critical thinking by providing questions to readers. To have some detailed information about each type of the practical section it is crucial to reflect on these stylistic divisions. Firstly, functionalist stylistics invites readers to examine verbs through transitivity processes and agency. Categorising the types of verbs in terms of material (doing), verbalisations (saying), mental (thinking, feeling), relational (relation, equivalence), behavioural (behaviour), and existential enables us to reveal the way how language patterns are textually constructed.

Concerning feminist stylistic analysis, the textual creation of gender ideology in an example of narrative fiction is the subject of this chapter's investigation. This section covers gender prejudice, the distribution of gender roles, and the fragmentation of the female body in a book written in the twentieth century by employing the analytic framework of feminist stylistics.

To provide readers with a variety of literary text analyses, Algabardy also presents a pragmatic stylistic model to an extract from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Dramatic dialogue can best be described through pragmatic theories for instance; turn-taking, speech acts, politeness, Grice's maxims, politeness, and cooperative principles, etc. Next, cognitive stylistics is discussed, and analysis is exemplified through humorous discourse in particular jokes. Relevance theory is applied to understand cognitively how readers receive humour while reading or hearing jokes. Relatedly, the human mind allows for the maximisation and manipulation of optimum relevance about the world and language to generate humour. More approaches are presented to deal with different data, such as Multimodal Stylistics applied to study the language of ads. Stylistic frameworks are used with visual grammar techniques to achieve this aim.

The author's goal is to demonstrate how the interaction of verbal and visual aspects in advertising creates meaning and effect. The approach of stylistics here is multimodal, which simply means paying attention not only to verbal aspects (written) but also to visual ones including visual modes of communication such as typography, layout, colour, distance, and other visual effects. Moving to the next phase, critical stylistic approach to political speech demonstrates how to uncover ideology through ten textual functions that also pay attention to grammatical aspects of the discourse.

Lastly, corpus stylistics refers to huge data spoken or written stored electronically and analysed by computer and stylistic tools. This is exemplified in the book by news published on social media referred as to journalism. In sum, after each practical type of stylistics, lists of books are recommended for the readers to have in-depth knowledge.

These methodological varieties are presented in a practical and convenient way to the readers, for example, each type of stylistics is enhanced with an introductory section supported with definitions of the main tools that can be used in the analysis. Then an illustration from a literary text is selected to apply such a method in a detailed simplified manner. Guided questions are introduced to the readers to question themselves about certain textual features in the text. These questions are fundamental in guiding readers to what features they should pay attention to. They work as maps to the treasure island of meaning.

Followed by an example of the analysis by the author so readers can compare their answers with the given model of the analysis. The do-it-yourself activity is the most exciting and interesting part present in the form of questions. The closure glossary section is useful and handy for readers who might come across unfamiliar words. Thus, it provides definitions of key terms in stylistics.

It's worth noting that the goals of *Introducing Stylistic Analysis: Practicing the Basics* may be similar to those of other popular stylistics textbooks like Gibbons and Whiteley (2018), and Jeffries and McIntyre (2010). While those other works are aimed at experts in the area and more specialised readers, this book by Gibreel Sadeq Alaghbary is accessible to readers with varying levels of familiarity with the discipline. Moreover, in comparison to previous stylistics textbooks, this book, as Alaghbary characterises it, is more 'practice-oriented than research-based'. Thus, this book is highly recommended to general readers, learners, and teachers in linguistics and in particular those who are interested in text analysis by means of applying stylistic interdisciplinary methods.