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ENGLISH STYLES AND REGISTERS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

1. Introduction

Linguistic diversity captured with the terms *style* and *register* is of interest to literary theory and to linguistic theory, as both are concerned with how individuals and the multiple social groups and networks that they can simultaneously be members of articulate themselves and how they distinguish themselves from others, the reasons that speakers/writers may have for their choice of linguistic forms, the ways in which these linguistic forms can be creatively exploited in particular contexts as well as with the effects that the choices and departures from norms or conventions of use may have on the hearers/readers. Among the issues of common interest to literary and linguistic theory are the formal, cultural, historical, axiological, moral, ideological, social, psychological, hermeneutic, and other aspects of the structure, production and perception of language.¹ These aspects are traditionally studied in relation to general concepts of convention and creativity, literalness and fictionality, objectivity and subjectivity, politeness and power, consensus and conflict, class and stigma, affect, personal identity and allegiance, and many others.

¹ While the study of the linguistic features of literary texts is not necessary for the development of literary theory and for studies of literature (Lye 1993, 2001; Semino 2006), linguistic models, including those developed with an aim of delineating the range of possible humanly attainable languages rather than any individual languages, cannot ignore the data of language, even if the crucial data on which theoretical arguments are built can only be acquired on the basis of introspective, intuitive judgments (Chomsky 1986).

Questions not only about what a particular choice of linguistic forms constituting a sentence, text or discourse means, but also how it gets to mean or to be interpreted, have been asked by literature critics and expert linguists as well as language commentators alike. The broad range of issues falling under the purview of both literary and linguistic inquiry into the significance of language, includes the relationship between form and content, language and cognition, and language and the extralinguistic reality as well as fictional, imaginary worlds which the human mind is capable of entertaining and exploring (cf., among others, Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012). Also questions about the functions of language and their interactions at different levels in texts and discourses have traditionally been investigated both from the literary perspective in explorations of literature through the analysis of its language, and from the linguistic perspective in empirical and theoretical explorations of language, including the language of literature. The answers have varied in the respective fields of inquiry over historical time. The diversity of ideas and models that have arisen in part reflects the changing nature of language and the sociocultural contexts of language use as well as conventions of categories of texts and genres (cf. Biber and Finegan 1989) and in part it reflects changes in the perspective on literature and language in twentieth-century literary and linguistic theory.

Traditionally viewed as highly complex formal objects with well-defined structural properties, language and literature alike have in the course of the twentieth century become reinterpreted by theoreticians from several influential schools of thought as complex processes in which both language and literature mediate culturally, historically, and ideologically saturated social interactions (Burton and Carter 2006; Eckert 2008; Lye 1993, 2001; Schilling-Estes 2002). Just as contemporary literary theory has come to be concerned with “the creative negotiation of meaning and affect between texts, contexts, and readers” (Wales 2006: 216), also linguistic variation studied by linguists in ordinary social interactions has recently become viewed as not simply deriving from and echoing pre-existing sociocultural meanings and social stratification, but as a resource for the creation of social meanings and identities and a force in social change (Eckert 2008; Schilling-Estes 2002). To the extent that linguistic variation constitutes a rich social semiotic system, linguistic forms have symbolic social meanings that speakers recognize and can exploit interpreting and creatively reinterpreting them in the wider social, cultural, political and ideological contexts of interaction. Seen from this perspective, linguistic diversity in literary as well as non-literary discourse need not be seen as driven by essentially different needs of speakers/authors even if the creative urges of individual speakers/authors on the whole have different linguistic expression in different discourses.

This short introductory article to the present volume comprising eleven studies into both literary and non-literary discourse selected from among the papers presented at the *English Styles and Registers in Theory and Practice* conference held in the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University in 2012 highlights some aspects of the structure, use and functions of language in different discourses explored in both contemporary literary and linguistic theory that have been dealt with in the papers included here. Its main aim is to place the analyses carried out in the selected paper in the broader context of the study of style and register from both the literary and the linguistic perspectives.

2. Language variation: literary vs. non-literary language

The popular view is that there is “literary” or “poetic” as opposed to “ordinary”, “normal” or “instrumental” language (cf., among others, Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012; Leech and Short 1981). On this view, literary language is simply the language of literature while ordinary language is language of non-literary discourse. However, as Burton and Carter (2006: 269) point out, “[d]efinitions of literary language necessarily entail theories of literature, regardless of whether these theories are explicitly announced or recognized as such,” and the same can be said about the views on language as the object of inquiry from the linguistic perspective.

As language is the medium of literature and the medium of ordinary discourse, it need not come as a surprise that there are two broad perspectives on what the object of study is in both contemporary literary and in linguistic theory. On the one end point of a scale on which the different literary approaches can be placed there are “formalist” or “inherency” models and on the opposite endpoint there are “functionalist” or “sociocultural” models (Burton and Carter 2006: 269). Also in contemporary linguistic theory, formalist approaches such as Chomskyan generative theory of language are usually viewed as a counter to functionalist approaches, including systemic-functional linguistics and modern sociolinguistic theory. Unsurprisingly, also views on the relationships between literary theory and the study of literature through the analysis of language have varied (Green 2006: 261) and sometimes the literary critical and the literary stylistic views of literary language and discourse have been poles apart, literary language, especially poetic language, taken to have “an ineradicable subjective core” (Green 2006: 264), and thus not being amenable to objective linguistic analysis (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012; Lye 1993, 2001). However, as Stockwell (2006: 748) observes, the study of style in a literary work can never be objective. The reasons is that:

[a]s soon as stylistic analysis is undertaken, it partakes of ideological motivations, from the nature of the reading to the selection of the particular work and particular model for analysis. Examining noun phrases in the poem, rather than verb phrases, or describing them as a semantic domain, or choosing to explore focalization are all matters of ideological selection.

Thus, “a stylistic study of any merit will say as much about (the limitations of) the model as about the text under scrutiny” (Wales 2006: 213). This much is true not only about the literary stylistic study of literature through the analysis of language, but also about the linguistic stylistic study of literary language as well as the language of non-literary discourses.

3. Style in literary stylistics and literary theory

Style is most simply defined as variation in the language used by individual speakers conditioned by contextual considerations such as type of text/discourse, setting, participants, purpose, etc. (cf. Fought 2006; Freeborn 2006; Stockwell 2006), with *registers* often taken to be subsets of language restricted by topic or field.² However, as Stockwell (2006: 746) points out:

[e]ven in its most simple sense of variation in language use, many questions instantly arise: variation from what? varied by whom? for what purpose? in what context of use?

For literary stylistics, the study of style in literary texts and discourses means analysing the relevant linguistic features and patterns at the levels of phonology, including prosody, lexis, grammar, semantics and discourse to find out the effects of rhetorical devices, patterns of (un)grammaticality, linguistic creativity and experimentation on readers (Burton and Carter 2006;

² Both *style* and *register* are defined differently in different sources. While Crystal and Davy (1969) subsume all types of linguistic variation under the term *style*, the more popular approach to *style* associates it with the linguistic choices that are codetermined by a variety of contextual considerations, but which are not fixed for each speaker/writer (cf., among others, Yule 1985). This view excludes variation determined by some relatively permanent characteristics of speakers'/writers' identity as group members, including ethnicity, social class or status, age and sex. Also the choices that are determined by topic or field of discourse, e.g. legal language, religious language, instructional language, are excluded as they are fixed for each participant in the respective type of discourse. The latter are sometimes captured with the term *register* (cf. Haegeman 1987; Yule 1985). I adopt this distinction between style and register here. See, however, Biber (2006), where *register* is an umbrella term for all language varieties defined by situational characteristics similarly to how register is defined by Halliday et al. (1964).

Leech and Short 1981; Wales 2006). Linguistic study of style in literary texts can benefit literary critical interpretation, as it can be used

[a]s a means of demystifying literary responses, understanding how varied readings are produced from the same text; and it can be used to assist in seeing features that might not otherwise have been noticed. It can shed light on the crafted texture of the literary text, as well as offering a productive form of assistance in completing interpretations, making them more complex and richer. (Stockwell 2006: 748)

However, if “[t]he aim is to find linguistic evidence for a critical judgment; to ground intuitions or hypotheses in a rigorous, methodical, and explicit textual basis; to produce an analysis that is verifiable” (Wales 2006: 213), the study of literary style must rely on linguistics to provide suitable theoretical and analytical instruments. Regardless which linguistic model is selected, its approach to language as the object of inquiry and the adopted methodology must be consistent with the broad approach to literature in the particular literary theory and with its practices.

Literary stylistics traditionally concerned itself primarily with describing how linguistic choices reveal individual author identities as well as conventions of genres, such as drama, satire, etc. It was author/writer-centred, and focused the text as the end product of the writer’s creative process aiming at uncovering the text’s creative principle (Burton and Carter 2006). The traditional view of literary language, arising from the preoccupation with poetic language, was that it was different in kind from ordinary language. Unlike ordinary language, whose main function is referential, which is truth-conditional and which by being monosemic is predictable, literary language was generally viewed as creative, polysemic and elaborated. The creativity and artistry of language in literary texts was taken to arise from elaboration of form (ornamentation), elaboration of meaning (figurativity), or from the interactions between both form and meaning on multiple levels of the production and perception of literary language (Leech and Short 1981). In early approaches, referred to as monist by Leech and Short (1981), elaboration of form, marked by complex language rich in unusual or even ungrammatical structural patterns, abstract, often archaic and foreign lexis and rhetorical devices such as alliteration, assonance and vowel harmony, metrical verse patterns, rhyme, repetition, omission, metaphor, metonymy etc., was taken as the medium of the aesthetic function, content inhering in the form itself.

However, the realization that there is a direct causal relationship between elaboration of form and elaboration of meaning led to the emergence of the dualist approach, in which the same content is taken to be capable of be-

ing expressed through different forms thus reducing style to the decisions that writers make in selecting one linguistic form rather than another for the purposes of expressing the same referential content, but with different connotation and effects on the readers. The dualist approach underpins the early formalist inherency approaches to literary language, the deviation theory, and Roman Jakobson's theory of self-referentiality of poetic language.

Deviation theory was predicated on the assumption that:

[L]iterariness inheres in the degrees to which language use departs or deviates from expected patterns of language and thus defamiliarizes the reader. Language use is therefore different because it makes strange, disturbs, and upsets a routinized 'normal' view of things and thus generates new or renewed perceptions. (Burton and Carter 2006: 269)

On the other hand, for Roman Jakobson language has a special role to play in raising the aesthetic effects. Apart from being the vehicle of expressing content, language in a literary text also represents what it signifies. On this view, literary language is inherently representational in nature, unlike ordinary language, which is primarily referential (Burton and Carter 2006: 270).

Both deviation theory and the theory of self-referentiality of poetic language, embedded in the broad context of linguistic structuralism, took the literary text to be an autonomous formal object and the end product of the creative urges of the writer. An alternative to both the monist and the dualist approaches to the relation between language and the aesthetic effects of literary texts is pluralism.

According to the pluralist, language performs a number of different functions, and any piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels. Hence the pluralist is not content with the dualist's division between 'expression' and 'content': he wants to distinguish various strands of meaning according to the various functions. (Leech and Short 1981: 24).

The pluralist approach, founded on the idea that "language is intrinsically multifunctional, so that even the simplest utterance conveys more than one kind of meaning" (Leech and Short 1981: 30), paved the way for functional interpretations of style in literature in which the activation of meaning of a text is a creative process engaging a reader who actively constructs the interpretation by taking into account various parameters of discourse that contribute to the meaning of the text. With the literary critic Richard Fowler's reinterpretation of literature as a socioculturally saturated action on the grounds that:

a literary text is not simply a formal structure with such properties as grammaticality, cohesion, and rhetorical patterning such as parallelism, chiasmus, metaphor and so on but it is also the medium of a situated interaction with a source and a recipient, (Burton and Carter 2006: 271)

literature becomes viewed as discourse in which both “[c]ulture and individuals are constructed through networks of affiliated language, symbol and discourse usages” (Lye 2001: 3). As a result all texts become interrelated. With the widening of the context for interpreting literature, the boundaries between literary and non-literary texts begin to dissolve. Not only canonical forms of literature valued by literary critics for their artistic or aesthetic merit, but also forms of popular entertainment such as detective fiction and romances become the object of critical literary study (Lye 2001: 5). As Wales (2006: 213) observes, increasingly focus shifts “cross-modally to media discourses such as those of film, news reporting, advertising, politics, and hypertexts and to the oral discourses of story telling and song lyric,” the discourses traditionally viewed as non-literary.

With attention drawn to “the text in its interactive discourse context ... and to the reader as constructing the meaning of the text, rather than simply the decoder of a given message or single or eternal truth encoded by the writer” (Wales 2006: 216), the relation between language and its functions in literary discourse becomes reinterpreted as a mutually creative interplay between the writer, the reader, the immediate situational and the broad sociocultural context. The consequence is that even if literary language can still be viewed as more creative than the ordinary language used by the reader as well as by the writer outside of the literary contexts of use, literary language cannot be viewed as essentially distinct from non-literary language. This turn in literary theory is supported empirically by observations of creative uses of language as well as not infrequent occurrence of rhetorical devices, once taken to be the signature of poetic language, also in non-literary discourses, such as personal letters, ordinary conversation, advertising, etc. (cf. Freeborn 1996). Also translation practice demonstrates the need to take literary texts as objects with multiple levels of signification, where the interpretation of texts requires broader sociocultural contextual support as well as appreciation of the relationships among the texts and discourses constructing a given culture. The sociocultural, interpretive turn in literary theory converges with the findings of the philosophers John Austin, John Searl, Paul Grice, Ludwig Wittgenstein and others pointing to violations of general principles of communication or rules of meaning composition to raise special cognitive and communicative effects, as in deception, irony, etc., (also) in ordinary social interactions. What has also contributed

to this turn in contemporary literary theory, in which meaning is negotiated between writers and readers in fictional worlds, is the emergence in the second half of the twentieth century of non-classical logical systems supporting different concepts of possible worlds as well as the rise of cognitive linguistics and its reinterpretation of the relation between language and cognition, in which figuration is part and parcel of all language, literary as well as non-literary, in reflection of the interdependence of language and thought (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012).³ The insight that human cognition is structured by metaphors, metonymic transfers of meaning, omission and other rhetorical devices and that human construal is founded on the principle of viewpoint or profiling that are reflected in language offered by cognitive linguistics has inspired new approaches to the study of tropes, mental schemes, subjectivization, etc. in cognitive poetics, where rhetorical devices earlier viewed as “manners of speaking” are taken to be different cognitive construals, hence as “manners of thought” that find reflection in language (cf. Stockwell 2006). As a result, the contemporary view of literary language is that while style is not imposed on language, literary language still functions differently from ordinary language. For Burton and Carter (2006: 272–273), “[l]iterary language is not special or different, in that any formal feature termed ‘literary’ can be found in other discourses.” Rather, there is a scale of literariness along which different discourses can be arranged. A prototypical literary text, being fictional, is less medium dependent than a non-literary one. It is polysemic rather than monosemic and the interaction between the author and the reader is more deeply embedded or displaced than the context-bound interaction between the discourse participants in non-literary discourse, which projects direct interaction. Literary discourse is characterized by reregistration, fully exploiting all the available linguistic resources. This is because literary discourse is not a subset of discourse defined by purpose, setting or field, unlike occupational registers, and thus it is not restricted lexically and/or grammatically. Non-literary discourse on the whole does not contain reregistration. What transpires from this view is that while style is difference, it is not an absolute and it is internal to language. Essentially the same view was expressed almost a hundred years ago by the eminent linguist Edward Sapir, who took style to be

[m]erely language itself, running in its natural grooves, and with enough of an individual accent to allow the artist’s personality to be felt as a presence, not as an acrobat. (Sapir 1921: 227)

³ This does not mean that the possible worlds of non-standard logic and the possible worlds in literary discourse have the same properties. See Semino (2006) for discussion.

4. English styles and registers in language descriptions and linguistic theory

Although variation is pervasive and persistent in language, in traditional descriptions of English it has only been a footnote added to the account of the complex structure of the core, stable and uniform grammar of English. Quirk et al.'s (1972) authoritative description of the grammar of contemporary English is a good example of the traditional approach to both inter-speaker and intra-speaker variation, while Biber et al.'s (1999) grammar, which systematically draws attention to the similarities and differences in the grammars of spoken and written English across various discourses, as supported by corpus studies, demonstrates a recent change of attitude to the significance of variability in language description.

The probable reason why variation has been the poor stepchild in studies on language for most of the twentieth century is that the first modern theory of language which put the analysis of actual languages on a scientific basis and informed language descriptions, the structuralist paradigm that had grown out of the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, drew a sharp divide between language understood as system (*langue*) and language understood as use (*parole*). The former was equated with the totality of the linguistic resources a language makes available that are summed up in a coherent system with well-defined structural properties. The latter was use of these resources in actual interactions in real time, constrained by a variety of factors, *parole* realising *langue* only imperfectly and incompletely. Of the two dimensions of language, it was *langue* that structuralism was concerned with at the expense of *parole*, the reason being that to offer a model of language understood as system, structuralism had to go beyond the available data. At the same time, by highlighting the social nature of language, *langue* never being completely realised in an individual, structuralism fostered the dichotomy between the community and the individual, focusing the structural complexity of community grammars at the expense of individual grammars. As a result, post-structuralist descriptions of English were descriptions of the grammatical norms of the written standard variety of English generally believed to constitute the common core of all kinds of English. Interest in variation and inclusion of data and sociocultural interpretation of the grammatical variables in descriptions of English such as Biber et al. (1999) can be viewed as stemming from the insight into language originally contributed by the sociolinguistic paradigm, the first modern framework for the description of language in its social context.

The hallmark of modern sociolinguistic theory is its focus on *parole*. It is a usage-based framework that studies linguistic variation at both the com-

munity and at the individual level. A divergent view on variation is taken in the theoretical framework most often seen as a counter to Labovian socio-linguistic paradigm, Chomskyan generative linguistics.

Although Chomskyan linguistics is mostly renowned for its assumption of the existence of Universal Grammar, the universal innate structural properties underlying human linguistics competence, variation has in fact been central to the generative view of language. The reason is that to construct a model of the knowledge of language rich enough to be compatible with the diversity of natural languages, its instruments must be flexible enough to account for all human languages, i.e. the model must be designed to cope with variation in the input.

In a framework predicated on the assumption that language is a cognitive faculty shared by all human minds, the study of language is the study of the shared properties of all internal, individual grammars, as they instantiate the architecture of the human language faculty (Universal Grammar, UG). UG is thus an innate toolkit that makes acquisition of language possible. On the assumption that the learner cannot learn the grammar on the basis of available external data, the representations of linguistic universals in the minds of children acquiring their first language, which could be any from the range of extant languages, must include the whole range of options that are available in natural language as such even if they are not instantiated in the grammars of individual target languages. Thus it is assumed that there is an initial pre-specification in the human brain of the form of the grammar of a possible humanly attainable language and that the brain is endowed with a mechanism for selecting the target grammar compatible with the external data available in the linguistic environment in which acquisition takes place. In the Principles and Parameters framework (Chomsky 1986), UG, the initial state of the mind of the language learner along with the language acquisition device, the mechanism for constructing a grammar on the basis of input, contains a set of universal principles, each with an open value parameter. The parameters of grammatical variation offer a choice between two settings. For example, languages may differ as to whether finite clauses must contain a lexical subject (English, French) or the subject may be phonetically unrealized or null (Polish, Italian, Spanish). The learner selects the appropriate value of the open parameter (+null subject language/–null subject language) on the basis of linguistic input and arrives at the grammar compatible with the data in the linguistic environment, i.e. the community grammar, on the basis of the universal principles interacting with the parameter setting for the target language. The Principles and Parameters framework is thus at the same time a model of the universal properties of language structure and a model of the cross-linguistic diversity of languages.

However, by taking grammar to be an autonomous system, in which choice has no role to play, the Principles and Parameters model is not designed to cope with inter-speaker and intra-speaker grammatical variation, including the stylistic and register variation characterized by structures that are ungrammatical or semantically deviant judged in terms of the parameter setting of the core grammar. To the extent that speakers (of Standard English) accept both the structures in (1a) and (1b), using (1b) in informal contexts of spoken interactions, but not in (more formal) writing, they have separate or competing grammars in their minds rather than a single variable grammar:

- (1)a. There are books on the table.
- b. There's books on the table.

Alternatively, stylistic and register variation must be taken to arise by “stretching” the core grammar. Marked exceptions such as structures that are strictly speaking ungrammatical, but are acceptable in specific styles or registers, e.g., informal spoken language, telegraphic or abbreviated as well as instructional registers, are dealt with in special subsystems of the language system and relegated to the periphery of the language in Chomsky (1986: 150–151). On this view, also phenomena such as subject omission in finite main clause contexts in the diary register shown in (2a) from Haegeman (2006: 471), possible also in embedded finite clauses illustrated in (2b) cited from Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* in Haegeman (2006: 472), illustrate a relaxation of the constraints on subject ellipsis active in the core grammar of English. While the core grammar licenses subject deletion only in coordinate finite structures illustrated with the example in (3b) (cf. Haegeman 2006: 469), where the deleted subject in the second conjunct must be identical with the subject of the initial conjunct, in the register-specific subsystem of the grammatical component of English this constraint is lifted and the identity of the deleted subject can be established in the wider situational context of the utterance rather than in the immediate linguistic context:

- (2)a. _Wonder what he will do next.
- b. Was worried that _ might split.
- (3)a. *_ Speaks English.
- b. I am very upset and _ will not talk to him any more.

Structures with stranded prepositions, such as *Who are you looking at?*, perfectly acceptable in informal English but stigmatised in formal English, which favours the variants with no preposition stranding, *At whom are*

you looking? can also be captured by postulating a ban against preposition stranding which is part of the core grammar of (formal) English, but which is lifted in the grammar of informal English. Also exceptional structures observed in literary discourse can be captured by appeal to relaxation of the constraints on core grammar, in which such structures are strictly speaking ungrammatical. The example in (4) from Mrs. Cotes's *Cinderella* cited in Haegeman (1987: 215) involves the violation of the condition on the syntactic movement of a *wh*-phrase in English. As shown in (5), a *wh*-phrase cannot be moved across an interrogative word in core English grammar, unlike in (4), which is licensed in the literary style or register in the periphery of English grammar:⁴

- (4) It was really complicated with emotion and excitement in a way *which*
I don't know *whether* I can describe _.
- (5) *This is a film *which* you will be furious *when* you see _.

Wrapping up, on the assumption that the language of ordinary discourse modelled on the competence of the ideal speaker-hearer is unmarked and invariable, non-canonical constructions must be viewed as departing from the parameter setting of the core grammar and belong with the periphery of marked exceptions, which is also where irregular morphology and idioms belong.⁵ In this model, cross-linguistic variation (macrovariation) and variation within the speaker as well as within the speech community (microvariation) are entirely different kinds of variation, which raises an important theoretical problem, namely why distinct systems of knowledge in the mind of a child do not affect negatively the rapidity of language learning in the social reality of linguistic diversity in the community grammar that the child eventually acquires. To the extent that speakers know that structures like (3a) and (5) are strictly speaking not entirely ruled out in English provided appropriate context, as shown in (3b) and (4) respectively, knowledge of register and stylistic variation that they illustrate does not seem to be independent of the knowledge of core grammar in the mind of the speakers. However, if the principles and the parameter setting for the individual language and the community grammar that provides input for

⁴ The single underscore in (4) and (5) marks the original site from which the *wh*-pronouns are moved in the course of the syntactic derivation of these structures. The asterisk (*) marks ungrammaticality as judged by the parameter setting of the core grammar of English.

⁵ As Haegeman (2006) argues, as UG determines the limits of syntactic variation in natural language, the periphery of the grammar of a language is still constrained by the principles of UG. This, however, raises the question of the nature of the interdependence between the core and the periphery of language.

the linguistic competence of the speaker influence each other, the assumption of the invariability of the internal grammar of the speaker, on which Chomsky's theory is built, may be in need of some refinement. Thus, stylistic and register variation, while internal to language, cannot be captured in the Chomskyan paradigm without some additional assumptions.

By contrast, the linguistic paradigm that focuses variation, including stylistic and register variation, is Labov's usage-based sociolinguistic theory, where variants that belong to the same linguistic variables such as the variants illustrated in (1)–(5) are captured with variable rules. The entire range of variability is modelled by assuming that all the variants of the same variable must be specified by the total number of occurrences and the potential occurrences. The output of variable rules is thus probabilistic rather than deterministic, unlike in the generative paradigm. However, rather than taking variation to be free or optional and relegating style and register to the periphery of language, the study of all kinds of variation has been at the centre of Labovian sociolinguistics, and the notion of the linguistic variable, a primitive construct in the study of language, has been applied to all levels of language analysis, from phonology to discourse. The factors that determine the choice of a variant are both language-internal and language-external. The external variables that contribute to the relative frequency of the variants of the same linguistic variable, such as a choice of an allophone, a grammatical category, or a grammatical process, include relatively permanent user characteristics such as age, social class, region, constructed social or occupational networks or communities of practice, as well as idiosyncratic choices that determine the personal linguistic styles of the speakers. The special status of structures occurring in informal styles and in registers, which are judged as marked or ungrammatical compared with their variants found in written, more formal language, is not due to a violation of the grammar of English but is rather a frequency effect that may be explained in terms of processing, production or other external factors.

The classic methodology for the study of stylistic variation in this linguistic perspective is Labov's attention to speech model (Fought 2006; Schilling-Estes 2002). This approach is founded on the belief that individuals vary their speech according to how much attention they pay to it, in other other words, how carefully they select their language depending on the actual contexts of use, where the amount of attention is determined by the perceived level of formality. In this approach, style is the relation between linguistic variants or choices and a predetermined scale of formality. The more attention speakers pay to their language, the more formal the language is and the more standard, prestige linguistic forms it has. Linguistic repertoires are correlated with specific genres, as speakers vary their language

consistently according to the pre-determined scale of formality. The popular view triggered by the results of research in the Labovian paradigm, which appears to indicate that stylistic variation is always less than the degree of social differentiation, is that linguistic variation derives from and echoes social stratification (Bell 1984).⁶

The Labovian and similar models assume that variation or style-shifting is determined along a social axis, where social group characteristics constrain variation in some systematic fashion, and along an individual axis, where variation is constrained in a very specific manner determined by individual factors relating to participants and individual context of use of language. As speakers shift styles easily and frequently, all such models face the problem of explaining how the two dimensions are related to each other. A related problem is whether social variables have general, static meanings and how the factors that affect variation on either of the dimensions can be controlled to yield more objective findings. These problems have inspired novel approaches to style in sociolinguistics. The alternative models that developed on the basis of Labov's paradigm have shifted focus away from speakers' control of their linguistic resources to the factors that influence the relationships between speakers and other participants in the social contexts of interaction. Both Bell's (1984) audience design model focusing on how speakers may converge with the speech styles of their interlocutors to signal shared identity or intimacy, or diverge from them to highlight a separate identity or distance, and Eckert's (2008) multidimensional model of variation in which speakers are agents constructing their identity appropriately to the given context of interaction by freely manipulating the social and linguistic variables available in a given group or community, have shifted the focus from variation seen as product defined in terms of taxonomic distinctions to variation viewed as a process in which speakers give specific meanings to variants themselves or rather create meanings for the variants and for themselves. In the latter approach, style is no longer a linguistic entity reflecting group norms. Rather, variation constitutes "an indexical system that embeds ideology in language and that is in turn part and parcel of the construction of ideology" (Eckert 2008: 453). Eckert's approach to style as a complex system of all kinds of distinctions or differentiation occurring in the community in which speakers engage as social agents, style constituting only one kind of symbolic differentiation, is the first cross-modal model of style and style-shifting (Fought 2006:12). Importantly, this model is not

⁶ However, Finegan and Biber's (1994) study suggests that greater attention to speech need not result in a higher level of formality and that the slope of style-shifting tends to be identical across social classes.

founded on the distinction between social and stylistic constraints on variation, which is problematic in view of the fact that the social and stylistic variation in a given sociolinguistic community both draw upon the same linguistic resources.

Sociolinguistic focus on the social context of language and the inclusion of external, sociocultural and interactional factors in modelling language variation has drawn attention to *parole* and widened the scope of inquiry in linguistics since the 1970s, complementing independent developments in pragmatic theory, Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, and text and discourse analysis. All of these developments have moved "beyond the sentence" to texts in their broader situational and sociocultural contexts and to (dialogic) discourses in their investigations of how the meaning of linguistic forms is interpreted. Language use has become studied as it is exercised in the communities of social practice, attention being drawn to the way communication is organized socially. Unlike in the early approaches of Austin, Searle, and Grice, who focused the speaker's role in the activation of meaning, recent advances in pragmatic theory, such as relevance theory, focus the role of implicature and inference in the hearers'/readers' interpretation of meaning. Unlike Gricean pragmatics, speech act theory, and more recently, also relevance theory, which treat figures of speech such as metaphors and metonymy as processed differently from ordinary language, requiring additional cognitive effort, cognitive linguistics has offered a uniform approach to both literal and figurative meaning and supplied new tools for the analysis of metaphors, metonymy and mental schemes and concepts for the study into readers' comprehension, including the concepts of figure and ground useful in the account of the readers' response to foregrounding, which are among the traditional concerns of literary semantic theory (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012). Of all the properties traditionally taken to be distinctive of literary language in contrast to ordinary language, it is perhaps only (un)grammaticality that continues to divide the linguistic community, as explained above.

As overviewed in section 3, the pragmatic and cognitive turns have also taken place outside linguistic theory, in literary theory and in stylistics. Here attention has shifted to the study of literary texts in their interactive discourse contexts, the negotiation of meaning, narrative strategies, interest in conversation in literary texts as well as in the cognitive interpretations of rhetorical figures and the relevance of mental schemes and semantic frames in readers' comprehension of texts in their broader contexts. This is not surprising as after all, the medium of verbal communication in all kinds of discourse, is language and literary stylistics has traditionally drawn upon

the advances in linguistics (Leech and Short 1981; Semino 2006; Stockwell 2006).⁷

As the study of style and register variation touches on the creative nature of language, one of the design features of human language, at the time when the boundaries between literary and non-literary discourse are dissolving, it seems that both literary stylistics and linguistics can teach each other even more fruitful lessons than in the past. The present volume can be viewed as an attempt at offering a broader view of the language of literary and ordinary discourse than is usually the case. Hopefully, it will bring inspiration to further studies on the essence of linguistic invariance and variation in all kinds of discourses.

5. English styles and registers in practice

The contributors to the present volume are all professional literary critics, stylisticians and linguists. The studies included here demonstrate how specific linguistic features or textual elements trigger the readers' understanding and mental creation of the world of the text and how they contribute to the literariness of the texts under scrutiny as well as what parameters of the situational and broader sociocultural contexts contribute to the text's meaning, what linguistic devices writers use to create their own personal identities and what linguistic devices they use to create the world-texts, how language is manipulated for the purposes of shared identity creation, and how the changing sociocultural context is reflected in changes in the linguistic choices in various kinds of discourse. Three studies approach their concerns through translation. Despite differences of general approach and analytic details, all of the contributions provide ample evidence for the significance of style and register and style- and register-shifting for the expression of the individual's creative urges and for group or community pressures on the linguistic practices of its members. Although the introductory comments have stressed the recent change of attitude to the question of the distinctiveness of the language of literary compared with non-literary discourse, the studies presented in this volume have been arranged in two broad parts in reflection of the differences of focus and methodology.

⁷ However, Green (2006: 266) observes, despite the now dominant strains in "historicized analysis, postcolonial and feminist (and postfeminist) work, including psychoanalytical approaches" in literary theory, many traditional concerns inspired by advances in linguistic theory are still being explored in stylistics, including metaphor and metonymy, speech acts and pragmatics, mind style, etc.

Part I includes studies concerned with the language of literary discourse, pursued in fiction as well as in poetry and drama. Of the seven articles, five combine stylistic and literary critical analysis. These are the studies by Katarzyna Bazarnik, Teresa Bela, Izabela Curyłło-Klag, Marek Pawlicki and Krystyna Stamirowska. The remaining two, by Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska and Grzegorz Szpila, are linguistic stylistic studies into literary language.

Katarzyna Bazarnik takes a close look at the style of James Joyce's interior monologue in *Ulysses* and shows the degree of difficulty that the blending of third person narrative and free indirect speech exploiting features of colloquial spoken language in a written text and inexplicitness due to associative gaps and sparse punctuation have for the interpretation of the text, as revealed in the problems that she points out in Maciej Słomczyński's translation of *Ulysses* into Polish. Due to morphosyntactic, lexical, and orthographic contrasts between the language of the original text, English, and the language of the translation, Polish, many nuanced meanings of the original text are lost or misinterpreted in translation.

In her analysis of the love sonnets by five Elizabethan sonnet writers: Philip Sidney, Michael Drayton, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and Sir John Davis, **Teresa Bela** looks at how these writers express their ironical attitude to the excessive praise of the object of love in Petrarchan convention of love sonnets by focusing the style or attitudes conventionally employed in Petrarchan love sonnets. A scrupulous comparison of the sonnets of the five Elizabethan writers reveals finer-grained differences among the authors, each of which responds to different aspects of Petrarchan convention, playing with it in his own original way while at the same time upholding the ideals of love.

Izabela Curyłło-Klag focuses on the stylistic identity of the Polish avant-garde artist Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), who is well-known for extremely complex, idiosyncratic and creative language as well as a highly visual, painterly manner of expression. Such a highly literary style poses innumerable problems in translation, not only of the linguistic, but also of the broad sociocultural nature. The degree of foregrounding, ambiguity and linguistic innovation characterized by style- and register-shifting make a faithful rendering of the Polish text into English impossible. In addition, the translation of drama calls for departures from the original to meet the rhythmical structure of English and demonstrates the difficulty in translating the "sound" of Witkacy's texts.

Marek Pawlicki's paper offers a very careful and insightful analysis of the function that irony plays in John Banville's confessional novel *The Untouchable*. Irony is shown to be used by Banville to characterize the narrator,

a spy, whose confession reveals his attempts at distancing his true thoughts and feelings from the views he expresses during the confession. Irony extends over the entire novel and is used by Banville to show the inability of the narrator who takes an auto-ironical stance to himself, to ever uncover and confront his true self.

Krystyna Stamirowska's paper is concerned with how Harold Pinter resorts to reregistration of ordinary conversation in his play *The Birthday Party* to build a portrait of humanity. Falling back on Deborah Tannen's discourse analysis of conversational style, Krystyna Stamirowska shows how repetitions used in ordinary conversation to ensure cohesive development of exchange are exploited by the author to show the power relationships between the protagonists and how the simple language of ordinary dialogue augmented with "machine gun questions" can be used to reveal the true sense of fear and insecurity.

Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska looks at a variety of stylistic devices such as gaps, omissions of content and silence, instantiating the large figural strategy of suppression, to show how they operate at level of phrases and clauses in a text (microlevel), larger stretches of text (macrolevel) and at the level of the entire text (megalevel). Falling back on a variety of linguistic approaches, including text analysis, politeness theory and cognitive linguistics, she shows that suppression triggers psychological, cognitive and aesthetic effects, influencing both style and content, with implications for the text-world construal, narrative strategies, the portrayal of characters, and other dimensions of literary texts. The various functions and effects are illustrated with excerpts from poetry, drama, as well as fiction.

Grzegorz Szpila is concerned in his paper with Salman Rushdie's individual style as fiction writer. Rushdie's favourite stylistic device is shown to be idioms. Applying a methodology developed independently in analyses of non-literary language, Grzegorz Szpila shows that idioms in a literary text can undergo exactly the same range of manipulations as idioms in non-literary discourse, thus contributing to the debate on the distinction between literary and non-literary language. The phraseo-stylistic methodology employed in the analysis of Rushdie's fiction can provide tools for rigorous and verifiable studies into the textual function of idioms and the role that they play in creating the world-texts in Rushdie's novels.

Part II includes four papers concerned with stylistic and register variation in non-literary discourse. These are the studies by Agata Hołobut, Jerzy Freundlich, Mariusz Misztal, and Ewa Willim.

The paper by **Agata Hołobut** is concerned with the effects that the cultural transformation in post-communist Poland has had on audiovisual translation practice. Her study is based on a comparative analysis of two

renderings of the pilot episode of *Miami Vice*, the 1989 version and a DVD version released twenty years later. The comparison reveals a significant change, demonstrating increased target orientation and stylistic independence of the original communicative patterns of the more recent version, attributable to free translation strategy, compared with the source-oriented, literal and explanatory translation of the 1989 version. It also demonstrates how the changing sociocultural context of communication, and in particular colloquialization, influences the language of the dialogic film discourse.

Jerzy Freundlich's paper presents the results of a small-scale empirical study into the speech habits of four British political leaders: Tony Blair, David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband, a homogeneous group in terms of the social variables of age, gender, social class, higher education and occupation. The study, conducted on the basis of video material including both formal and informal production, was aimed at determining the frequency and circumstances in which these four RP speakers used a non-standard pronunciation of /t/ in word-final prevocalic position, and showed that Labour politicians were more likely to use pre-vocalic glottalling than Conservative and Liberal Democrat politicians. The differences in the styles of the four politicians are interpreted in terms of two influential models of stylistic variation: Bell's audience design model and the Coupland/Eckert personal identity projection model.

Mariusz Misztal's paper is concerned with the influence of Court etiquette on the language of official correspondence produced at Queen Victoria's Court, including her own official correspondence. A comparison of the Queen's official written style with the style she used in her semi-private letters reveals significant differences in lexis and sentence structure, which illustrate the effects that the social parameter of (in)formality has on the style of the letters. These differences demonstrate how language reflects the social role and personal identity of the author and the social relationships between the author and her addressees. The paper ends with a novel analysis of the apocryphal phrase "We are not amused" commonly attributed to Queen Victoria, including a discussion of the plausible sources of the common misunderstanding of the phrase.

Ewa Willim addresses the problem that stylistic and register variation poses for linguistic theory. In her paper she looks at the sociolinguist Peter Trudgill's characterization of Standard English as a naturally evolved social variety of English, which stands in sharp contrast to the received tradition of treating standardized varieties as social objects resulting from complex, ideologically saturated processes. She points out that stylistic and register variation in Standard English provides evidence against the crucial criterion used by Trudgill to delineate Standard English, the claim that as a result of

codification, Standard English is for the most part invariant. This criterion brings Trudgill's sociolinguistic perspective close to the view that there is no variability in the grammar espoused by formal generative linguistic theory, in which languages are only natural objects. To treat stylistic and register variation as internal to language, standard languages should be viewed as both natural and social objects.

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