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(1908—2010)*

CONTENTS

Preface

We all read literary texts because they are interesting, enjoyable or moving. This enjoyment, however, is only the first, though important, step in the study of such texts. An important aspect of their study is that we must work on explaining how we come to understand literary works.

It is popular at the present time to stress the idea that different readers all have different understanding of the texts they read. This must be true for some extent as we all have different experiences which may prompt us to have slightly divergent interpretations of different texts. However, fascinatingly, we often agree over our understandings of poems, plays and novels in spite of the fact that we are all different. This book aims at exploring how the writers communicate to us through their works and how these works affect us. It examines the way in which the language of literary texts acts as the basis of our understanding and responses when we read. We assume that understanding involves an important contribution from the reader, who brings along background knowledge and processes for inferring meaning. However, we also assume that the text itself plays an essential part in prompting and guiding our interpretation. Thus, this book aims at explaining how we understand literary texts and offers a methodology which allows to apply the techniques described in it to other texts.

The approach that we take in this book is generally known as "stylistics" or "stylistic analysis". Although the term "stylistics" appears to suggest an overall concern with the study of (authorial) style, the main effort in stylistic analysis in the last 30 years or so has been to try to

understand the relationship between the literary text, on the one hand, and how we understand it, and are affected by it, on the other.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Irina Vladimirovna Arnold (1908-2010), one of the pioneers of stylistic research in this country, a stylistician who developed her own original version of stylistics which she called Decoding Stylistics. Decoding Stylistics aims at explaining how the information encoded by the creator of a literary text is decoded by the reader and offers methodology and procedures for such analysis.

Professor Arnold has authored many books, text-books, monographs and articles, among which the most important are:

1. Семантическая структура слова в современном английском языке и методика её исследования: на материале имени существительного: Монография. — Л.: Просвещение, 1966.

2. Стилистика. Современный английский язык: Учебник для вузов (1-е издание). — М., 1974.

3. Лексикология современного английского языка (The English Word). — М.: Высшая школа, 1986.

4. Основы научных исследований в лингвистике: Учебное пособие. — М.: Высшая школа, 1991.

5. Проблемы диалогизма, интертекстуальности и герменевтики: (В интерпретации художеств. текста) / РГПУ им. А. И. Герцена. — СПб.: Образование, 1997.

6. Семантика. Стилистика. Интертекстуальность // Теоретические основы стилистики декодирования: Сборник статей. – СПб.:Изд-во С.-Петерб. ун-та, 1999.

7. Стилистика. Современный английский язык: Учебник для вузов (8-е издание). — М.: Флинта-Наука, 2010.

One of the authors of this book (Zh.Ye. Fomicheva) was fortunate enough to work on her dissertation under the supervision of I.V. Arnold who generously presented her with the hand-written notes for the course in Stylistics that she taught at Hertzen Russian State Pedagogical University for many years. Professor Arnold gave permission to use her notes in creation of a text-book in Stylistics for university students.

Our work has included general editing of the manuscript, supplementing it with examples, providing more detailed consideration to the problems discussed and more up-to-date treatment of the problems of stylistics as well as development of a series of practical tasks on the basis of theoretical notes in each chapter.

Chapter 1 "Aims of Decoding Stylistics and its Theoretical Basis", chapter 2" The Theory of Information as one of the Cornerstones of Decoding Stylistics", chapter 3 "Basic Notions of Text Theories" are based on I.V. Arnold's hand-written notes and presented here with the amendments done by I.V. Rodionova; paragraph 3.6. «Cohesion and Coherence» is presented here with the amendments done by Zh.Ye. Fomicheva. Paragraphs 4.1. - 4.4. of chapter 4 "The Concept of Norm and its Developments in Contemporary Stylistics" and chapter 5 "The Theory of Foregrounding and its Developments in Contemporary Stylistics" are written by Zh.Ye. Fomicheva. Paragraph 4.5. «The Relevance of Norm and Deviation from Norm in Decoding Stylistics» is based on I.V. Arnold's hand-written notes and presented here with the amendments done by V.N. Andreev. Chapter 6 "The

Relevance of Foregrounding to Decoding Stylistics" is based on I.V. Arnold's hand-written notes and presented here with the amendments done by V.N. Andreev. Preface, Introduction to chapters 2, 3, 6 and test to chapter 5 are written by V.N. Andreev. A series of practical tasks and tests to all chapters, with the exception of chapter 5, is worked out by I.V. Rodionova.

Our aim in compiling this book has been to enable the students to be more systematic in their approach to reading and analyzing texts. We are in full agreement with Professor Arnold here, whose work in Stylistics was aimed at "educating a whole new generation of readers" (Arnold 2007:2) who, through the stylistic analysis, become aware of intuitions they don't capture, leading them on to new things to try to explain.

The authors would like to thank the reviewers of the book: Professor Sandra Kraze, Assistant Professor Olga Nikitina and Professor Igor Chekulai, for the time and effort they invested in the careful reading of the manuscript as well as their valuable comments and suggestions for its improvement which have been taken into account in preparing the present volume for publication. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to I.V.Arnold's disciple, Professor Sandra Kraze, for her inspired in-depth review which is appended to this book.

1. Aims of Decoding Stylistics
and its Theoretical Basis

1.1. Introduction

The development of each particular branch of knowledge depends upon the tasks set before it by society, upon the general level attained at each given period by other related and unrelated sciences, and upon its own history.

Decoding Stylistics is no exception and we shall, therefore, deal with it from the point of view of its importance as a part of mental outfit of a future teacher of English (as a foreign language) and in the light of modern science. Decoding Stylistics has grown from what was formerly known as "explication du texte", but differs from the latter, as the student is taught to get maximum information from the text itself and not from the commentaries of the teacher on extratextual matters.

In the light of modern science, i.e. according to the general level of cognition reached by humanity – we shall have to take into consideration not only the progress of linguistics, but also the possibilities of some branches of knowledge seemingly very distantly related to Decoding Stylistics.

It has been repeatedly said by many that it is on the borderlines of sciences that most interesting results are often obtained. The birth of cybernetics may serve as a good example, because cybernetics came into being as a result of collaboration of mathematicians and physiologists.

It goes without saying that we must try and make full use of what has been done in Decoding Stylistics in the past. People had to

deal with text interpretation for many centuries. There is quite a number of disciplines concerned with it in some way or other; such as stylistics, rhetoric, poetics; one of the oldest is hermeneutics, originally developed as a science of interpretation of the Scriptures.

In this course of studies we shall mainly rely on Decoding Stylistics, which, in its turn, is based on modern linguistics, on text theory, theory of literature, including poetics, and on Information Theory (Арнольд 1999, Макаров 2003).

Linguistics can help the study of literature in many ways because it is concerned with language as an observable phenomenon of human activity and because literature is language, no less than everyday speech. It is art created from language, and language is the object of linguistic study (Cook 1994).

Decoding Stylistics is a suitable theoretical basis for text interpretation because it is concerned not with the writer but with the reader; it aims at a deeper understanding of imaginative literature and a keener insight into the ideas, emotional values, linguistic and aesthetic features of each text by observing the structure of the text as such, the contextual interdependence of its elements on all levels (phonetical, lexical, grammatical) and aspects (imagery, composition), and the interdependence of separate elements and the whole (Арнольд 2004). In short, *it aims at bringing home to the reader the total significance of a poetic text as a whole*. By poetic text we shall mean any text of imaginative literature, not necessarily in verse.

Decoding Stylistics includes also some problems dealt with in the disciplines studying methods of teaching languages (esp. reading on advanced stages). The necessity of this contact will be readily un-

derstood if we take into consideration the professional aspect of the subject. Students have to learn not only to grasp the full meaning of a literary text themselves and interpret it convincingly, but also know how to help in future their own pupils in acquiring this type of competence and the ability of finding within new texts the keys necessary to understanding. The aim is grasping thought and feeling, together with experiencing aesthetic pleasure, and this involves much more than a simple dictionary understanding.

The basic methodology of the course is provided by contemporary linguistics (Филиппов 2007, Ворожбитова 2005, Болотнова 2007, Бабенко 2009). Decoding Stylistics demands and provides a kind of synthesis for all previous curriculum work in analytical and home reading and for all theoretical subjects studied during all the years at the University; such as lexicology, theoretical grammar, history of literature, phonetics, and other subjects. The data of these disciplines will be combined with some new notions and terms introduced by the teacher. These will be mainly connected with Information Theory, as used in Decoding Stylistics, and also with Text Grammar, Text Theory, Theory of Literature, and Poetics. The application of psychology might be very helpful as well.

1.2. Aims of Decoding Stylistics

Aiming at the comprehension of the total significance of a text as a whole, we must be ready to account in some consistent manner for the existence and function of every text element of every level, for the way in which these elements are combined in creating the meaning, and for the associations they may evoke in the reader's mind.

In this paragraph we shall sketch some important aspects of Decoding Stylistics as a means for inculcating knowledge and culture and building up a personality.

A fairly common and somewhat aggressive argument runs as follows: "*A reader's appreciation of literature is subjective and individual, it depends upon one's innate ability to react to beauty and upon one's personal experience. We can all read English prose at the University, can't we*?" The first question, that has to be answered, is then: "*Why bother develop a text interpretation theory? And, if this theory exists, why bother study it at all?*"

We are apt to think that appreciation of art is always only innate: either the student is "sensitive", "gifted" and can "feel" everything in a most refined way, or he is "dull" and "it cannot be helped", and it is "wasting time to try and teach him". We shall try to show that this intellectual defeatism is unacceptable.

In the first place it is unacceptable because it implies the idea that art exists for a chosen few. Actually, it is true that some people are more responsive, and others possess this quality to a smaller degree. What is worse, the readers of the second group are, as a rule, insensitive to their own insensitiveness. Now, art being a specific form

of reflection of objective reality and important form of cognition (this, as you know, is the basic thesis of aesthetics), the insensitiveness, that we are speaking about, becomes a great handicap in the development of human personality and, hence, culture in general.

The importance of responsiveness, as a kind of internal maturity, is true about all art – poetry, music, theatre, cinema. People who know how to listen to music, how to read poetry become capable of listening to what other people say, and this is indispensable in all human relations, and indispensable for a person's general culture. In short, **a capacity of responsiveness is a valuable part in the makeup of a human personality**.

Luckily, experience shows that intelligent reading can be taught quite successfully. The gift of appreciation and responsiveness can be developed. It is, for example, a well known fact that people differ in their capacity to visualize imagery. Nevertheless, if attention is paid to the problem, those who do not possess vivid imagination will, at least, understand logically, if not feel, the part played by this or that image in the text as a whole, the truth and worth of the message embodied. A teacher must know how to develop appreciation, and this is precisely what Decoding Stylistics is about, and why we have to study it.

The aim of Decoding Stylistics at a foreign languages department is manifold. In addition to **the general educational task** we have just pointed out, it includes **deriving linguistic information from every text**. It **ensures a better and more complete understanding** of what is read, along with **enhancing aesthetic pleasure** and **emotional involvement**.

Lev Tolstoy once noticed "*Art is not a handicraft, but a transmission of feeling the artist has experienced*".

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