FACOLTÀ DI STUDI UMANISTICI

Lingue e Comunicazione

Lingue e culture per la mediazione linguistica

Lingua Inglese 2

LESSON 4

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Topic of this lesson

Stylistic effects & stylistic choices

- Stylistics is the study of style,
- how a message is communicated,
- different ways of expressing content.
- It involves: grammar, lexis, phonology, graphology …
- but also coherence, cohesion, paragraphing, sentence structure.

Style

- Style changes according to the writer's stylistic choices, a "choice among a number of possible and appropriate alternatives" (Ulrich, 118)
- While register is influenced by suitability to the situation,
- Dialect is affected by the language user's personality and socio-geographic background

Stylistics and Discourse Genres

- Literary texts
- An intermingling of text form and content to build meaning in a creative & personalized way
- Form is used to boost content
- Creative use of language: literature & advertising

Factors

- Figurative language:
  - Metaphor, pun, personification, syllepsis, metonimy, etc.
  - Figurative lg: built on images of objects and actions experienced
- Phonological features:
  - Segmental: Alliteration, Assonance, Onomatopoeia
  - Suprasegmental: Rhyme, rhythm, sound-symbolism
- Graphological features:
  - Paragraph division, font, punctuation, spelling, etc.

Some examples in ads

- **Always Coca Cola**
- **Canon you Can**
- **With Vodafone you can**
- **Don’t touch my Breil**
- **I’m lovin’ it**
- **Zurich Because change happenz**
- *chocolate-flavoured,*
- *feather-light*
- *longer-lasting*
- "It gets clothes whiter"… but whiter than what?

Figurative language 1

- Metaphors are “unlike objects (…) identified with each other for the purpose of emphasizing one or more aspects of resemblance between them without the use of the explicit markers” (Ulrich, p. 120)
- Types of metaphors: *dead metaphors*, also termed *crystallized* (Greco 2009: 199), *fossilized* (Partington 1998: 118), or *frozen* and *historical*; *orientational* metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:14); *less dead* and more *organism* metaphors

Some examples

- “Anaemic domestic demands” (FSR: June 2005);
- “This contagion occurred…” (Dec 2007: 14);
- “To depress house prices” (June 2008: 13);
- “Measures designed to alleviate strains….” (June 2009: 13);
- “… a number of hazardous contagion channels and adverse feed-back loops” (FSR June 2010: 9)

- “To weather the possible materialization of the risks” (June 2009: 15);
- “Perturbing” (June 2008: 18);
- “… a macroeconomic environment clouded by downside risks..” (Dec. 2009: 12);
- “Inclement asset price dynamics” (FSR Dec. 2006).

Simile

- More explicit than a metaphor, it is a comparison
- It “demonstrates an explicit resemblance between two more or less similar objects”, introduced by *such* or *like* (Ulrich 119)
- Examples: Our soldiers are as brave as lions, Her cheeks are red like a rose, He is as funny as a monkey, The water well was as dry as a bone, He is as slow as a snail.

Figurative language 2

- Advantages in the use of metaphors: terminological transparency, conciseness, and tangible quality of images
- Metaphors have a substitutive function, and sometimes become 'shortened similes', and an interactive function (Black, 1962), when the second term does not merely qualify the semantic features of the first term but also adds new ones.
- They have both a referential & a pragmatic function (descriptive & persuasive)

- The most widely used metaphors in economics regard expressions such as the elasticity of demand, competition among firms, a condition of economic depression; the fields of gambling (Keynes 1936, 1973), of natural catastrophe, aggression and physical violence, suffering, resisting and escaping (Hubler's three metaphorical paradigms, 1990), argument as war (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

- For example, metaphors in financial discourse, during a crisis period, where the dramatic force of the events discussed is particularly salient, may trigger more interest and satisfaction on the part of the audiences involved, thus drawing their attention further on specific issues.

- *Original* metaphors are deeply cultural bound

Metaphors & similes are made up of 3 elements:

- Tenor (Object/idea, the comparing)
- ground (common element)
- The vehicle (the compared)

Personification

- “an abstraction or inanimate object I endowed with personality” (Ulrich, 125)

Syllepsis

- “using a word in a metaphorical and literal sense at one and the same time” (Ulrich, 125)

Metonymy

- “The naming of a person, institution or human characteristic by some object or quality which is clearly associated with it” (Ulrich, 126)

Pun

- Word games that “exploit the potentials of homophones and homographs for serious or humorous purposes” (Ulrich, 126)
- They activate diverse meanings of a word that sounds or looks the same
- An equivalent in the TL

Phonology

- Encoding the meaning of sound
- Two groups of sound:

➢ **Segmental** (or individual) sounds

- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Onomatopoeia

➢ **Suprasegmental** sounds

- Rhythm & Stress

Graphology

- Visual symbols encode meaning
- Altering the conventional patterns on a page: paragraph division in prose, line division in poetry, punctuation, italicization, spellings, capitalization, type size & type style
- Building meaning
- Evoking a character's style of speech in dialogue
- The verbal meaning of the text is strengthened and enhanced through the visual element

Individual & Conventional Style

- The writer's unlimited choice of the way to formulate the message
- Discourse genres – principles and conventions
- Genre style may differ from one language to the other
- Prioritize

Nominal & Verbal Style

- Level of formality according to communicative event & participants + stylistic variations
- Nominalization in –ion, -ing, infinitive
- Latin derivation
- Clarity is a priority – avoiding excessive nominalization & long NP & sentences – using verbs
- Nominal = static, Verbal = dynamic
- Formal = nominal form
- Neutral & informal = verbal forms

Personal & Impersonal Style

- < use-related (field, tenor & mode) or user-related (text-producer)
- Impersonal < register
- Impersonal/personal < text-producer's choice
  Clarity + readability

Discourse Genre

- There is a tight relationship between a specialized text and its structure. This involves a number of mutual correlations between the conceptual, rhetorical and linguistic features that characterize the text itself.
- A genre provides a conventional framework and affects all the textual characteristics, constraining their conceptual and rhetorical development, which determine the linguistic choices made as the text unfolds.

- The quality of textual organization and the identification of the pragmatic function of each section of the document – e.g. informative, evaluative, predictive, etc. –, form standard sequences that reflect the specialist's theoretical or practical activities (Gotti 1991, 2005).
- The text genre mirrors those structures and communicative purposes shared by the specialist members of a specific discourse community

- Textual and non-textual features enhance the communicative function of the text (Swales 1990: 45)
- They must be clear, intelligible and unambiguous, taking into account the different target readers.
- Following Hymes (1986) and conceiving communication as a *genre of events* rather than as a *genre of texts*, the combination of visual resources, or text-external factors (Bhatia 2008: 161-162), such as repeated chapters and paragraphs, headings and structures, lists, colors, the intermingling of texts, graphs and tables, synergically arranged either horizontally or vertically, tell us the text's social and pragmatic functions.

- The Analysis of conventionalised/ institutionalised textual features “in the context of specific institutional and disciplinary practices, procedures and cultures” helps us understand how and why the members of a specific discourse community build, interpret and use them” (Bhatia 2002: 6).

- The text needs to be considered from

✓ the textual point of view, focusing on the formal and functional aspects of the documents;

✓ as genre, also including context, in particular specific social, institutional and professional contexts;

✓ as social practice, which identifies texts as closely related and embedded in specific social contexts and which concentrates more on the characteristics of context rather than on the textual output. The focus is on participants' identities, on social or professional structures and relationships the genre is likely to maintain or change, and on the benefits or disadvantages such genre is likely to bring to a particular set of readers (Bhatia 2002: 16-18)