

The logo for the Société de Stylistique Anglaise (SSA) features the letters 'S', 'S', and 'A' in a stylized, blue, serif font. A horizontal blue bar with a gradient effect passes behind the letters.

Société de Stylistique Anglaise

Manuel Jobert
Université Jean Moulin – Lyon 3
manuel.jobert@wanadoo.fr



PHONOSTYLISTICS AND THE NOVEL

STYLISTIQUE ANGLAISE

- + *Société de Stylistique anglaise (SSA)*
- + *Poetics & Linguistics Association (PALA)*
- ✗ **Mick Short & Geoff Leech** (University of Lancaster)
- ✗ ***Style in Fiction***
G. Leech & M. Short
Longman, [1981] 2007



FICTIONAL SPEECH

- ✘ Phonostylistics (coined by phonologist Nicolaï Trubetskoy)
- ✘ **Phono + stylistics:** studies variation in speech
- ✘ **In literature:** representation of speech & not real speech
- ✘ Tension between **realism** and a certain amount of **conventions**

FICTIONAL SPEECH

- ✘ Altogether, it may be concluded that real conversation is unlikely to be promising material for literary employment, and that it must strike an observer who has an eye on the aesthetic capabilities of language as sloppy, banal, and ill-organised. We come, once more to our familiar conclusion about realism: the author of a literary fiction does not aim at a completely realistic representation of the features of ordinary conversation. (***Style in Fiction, 2007: 129***)

FICTIONAL SPEECH

- × **Several parameters may be encoded in fiction:**
 - + ***Spatial markers*** (countries, regions, localities)
 - + ***Social markers*** (education, social background)
 - + ***Attitudinal markers*** (emotions conveyed)

FICTIONAL SPEECH

- ✗ Fictional speech is rarely studied.
- ✗ When it is → DS, IS, FIS , NRSA (Leech & Short ch. 10).
- ✗ Fictional speech regarded as:
 - + not important enough ('vividness'; 'brings local colour' & 'conveys the flavour of real speech' but nothing important).
 - + So different from real speech: no use to study it *per se*.
- ✗ However, when reading, readers accept FS as authentic enough for two reasons:
 - ✗ S.T. Coleridge's notion of '**willing suspension of disbelief**' (we suspend our disbelief and accept the fictional world as it is presented or we close the book. (We accept to cooperate with the narrator). // Grice's Cooperative Principle
 - ✗ Good writers have a **good ear for conversation** → easy to be taken in.

FICTIONAL SPEECH

- ✘ *Orality & Literacy*, Walter Ong, Routledge, 2003.
- ✘ *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*, R. Chapman, Longman, 1994.
- ✘ *Strange Talk*, Gavin Jones, University of California, 1999,
- ✘ *Rotten English – A Literary Anthology*, Dohra Ahmad (ed), Norton, 2007.
- ✘ Impossible to present everything: focus on
 - + Spatial markers (Somerset Maugham G.B.)
 - + Attitudinal markers (Edith Wharton U.S.)
 - + **Case study:** Kate Chopin's 'Beyond the Bayou'

1. SPATIAL MARKERS

- ✘ Eye-dialect; dialect encoding
- ✘ **Stage Cockney**: type of accent used by actors to represent a Cockney accent conventionally.
- ✘ Similar thing in literature:
- ✘ **Jocular spelling** used by Dickens, G.B. Shaw or S. Maugham to represent Cockney speech (accent and / or dialect).

THOMAS WOLFE 'ONLY THE DEAD KNOW BROOKLYN'

- ✘ `_ere's no guy livin_ _at knows Brooklyn t_o_ an' t_ro_ (only the dead know Brooklyn t_ro_ and t_ro_).`
- ✘ **There's no guy living that knows Brooklyn through and through (only the dead know Brooklyn through and through).**
- ✘ **Dere's no guy livin' dat knows Brooklyn t'roo an' t'roo (only the dead know Brooklyn t'roo and t'roo).**

-
- ✘ Nous n'identifions vraiment que de dix à douze lettres par saccade : trois ou quatre lettres à gauche du centre du regard, et sept ou huit lettres à droite. Au-delà de cette zone, que l'on appelle l'empan de perception visuel des lettres, l'expérience montre que nous ne sommes pratiquement plus sensibles à l'identité des lettres, mais seulement à la présence des espaces qui délimitent le mot suivant (*Les Neurones de la lecture*, Stanislas Dehaene, 2007)
 - ✘ Dialect encoding /decoding is not an obstacle to the reading process even when readers do not know the target accent / dialect.
 - ✘ The reading process is very sophisticated and makes up for idiosyncratic encoding.


















SOMERSET MAUGHAM: LIZA OF LAMBETH (1897)

- ✗ 'Graphie, phonie et encodage dialectal :le cas du Cockney de S. Maugham' M. Jobert 2003 Lexis (available online)
- ✗ Maugham is recognised as accurate in his presentation of Cockney
- ✗ Cockney is famous for its *diphthong shifts* :














R.P.	Cockney
ʃ	ʃ
ʃ	ʃ
ʃ	ʃ
ʃ	ʃ

- ✗ Sheep /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/ → /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/
- ✗ Shape /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/ → /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/
- ✗ Time /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/ → /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/
- ✗ Boy /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/ → /ʃ ʃ ʃ ʃ/

LIZA OF LAMBETH

- ✗     is often the result of a stressed <i> followed by a consonant and a vowel (often <e>)
- ✗ Maugham changes the original spelling to <i>. This change is in fact based on a **regular spelling-to-sound rule**:
- ✗ <i> C <e># :
- ✗ *bibe* (89), *fice* (11), *gime* (78), (40), *nime* (53), *sime* (59), *tike* (24), *wiges* (21), *wike* (81), *wiste* (45).
- ✗ The sequence <i> C V is rarer : *lidies* (40), *fital* (64). Perhaps because <i> CV is less easy to recognise visually.
- ✗ There are very few cases where the digraph <ai> is changed into <i> : *Wite* (57), *afride* (68)
- ✗ On top of this change a final <e> is added in order to evoke the regular sequence <i> C <e>. Otherwise, it would have given      and        

LIZA OF LAMBETH

- ✗ There are few attempts to indicate shifts from /  / to / / :
- ✗ *Come an' jine in'* (45)
- ✗ The author uses the same tool <i>C</i> <e> but this does not correspond to / /.
- ✗ The spelling resources are too limited. The shift from /i:/ to   ɨ / is absent from the novel.
- ✗ The shift from / / to / / is not represented with forms such as *toim(e)* for *time* or *foin(e)* for *fine* probably because this sequence is rare in English.

ACCENT ENCODING

- ✘ Why am I so 'omble? Because I am da boss o' da most 'omble institution in da world – Da Roman Catlick Choych!



A SOUTH AMERICAN ACCENT?

- ✗ H-dropping ('omble)
- ✗ TH-fronting (d /t) instead of ❄️ 📧 👎)
- ✗ o' instead of 📧 ✍️ ❖ / (weak form and not dialect encoding)
- ✗ 2 lexical oddities: Catlick / Choych

These features do not typically represent a South American Accent.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ACCENT ENCODING

- ✘ In *Liza of Lambeth*, very few Cockney features are actually encoded.
- ✘ When they are, they are based on a regular spelling-to-sound pattern.
- ✘ The other features graphically encoded are interpreted as belonging to Cockney speech.
- ✘ In the Cartoon of the Pope, the phonetic features encoded do not represent a South American accent.
- ✘ In both cases, the cognitive framework of readers is re-programmed to trigger specific references to Cockney or to a South American accent even when the hard facts do not represent a particular accent.

2. ATTITUDINAL MARKERS

✘ Paralinguistic Vocal Features:

- ✘ Paralinguistic features of speech are those which contribute **to the expression of attitude by a speaker**. They are phonetic features of speech which do not form an intrinsic part of the phonological contrasts which make up the verbal message. (*G. Brown, 1990, 112*)
Listening to Spoken English,
- ✘ What is important is to distinguish **variation from the speaker's norm**.

1. Para-prosodic features

Loudness

Pitch

Tempo

Rhythm

Pause

2. Vocal qualifiers

types of tension

- articulatory precision (precise / slurred)

- articulatory setting (tense / lax)

- lip setting (smiling / pursed)

types of phonation

- falsetto voice

- whispered voice

- creaky voice

- harsh /husky voice

- breathy voice

peripheral modes

- culturally coded onomatopoeia (“tsk”,
“tut” etc.)

- intentional cough / throat clearing etc.

3. Vocal qualifications

Laughter

Crying

Sighing

PVF

- ✘ The combination of some of these features is typical of certain attitudes or emotions.
- ✘ However, there is **no direct mapping between a given feature and a particular emotion.**
- ✘ When dealing with written texts, references to PVFs are not always straightforwardly encoded and a certain amount of literary convention exists.
- ✘ *“I love you’, she smiled”*
- ✘ *(?) “I love you’, she said with deliberate articulatory precision”.*

PVF

- × *She said loudly* (phonetic feature encoded)
- × *She said irritably* (attitude encoded)

- × A certain amount of inference is needed and interpreting these comments is heavily context-dependent. A loud voice can be triggered by **anger** or by **happiness**.

- × “This is beyond every thing!” **exclaimed** Elinor. (phonetic feature encoded). Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (177).

- × “Perhaps, then,” he **hesitatingly replied**, (attitude encoded) “what I heard this morning may be – there may be more truth in it than I could believe possible at first. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (167).

- × “But have you note received my notes?” **cried** (phonetic features encoded) Marianne **in the wildest anxiety** (attitude encoded). Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (149).

- ✘ The fact that authors do this, that readers habitually cope with it, and that readers-aloud often adopt the same sorts of paralinguistic features to express a given emotion or attitude, suggests that **there are regular, conventional, relationships between some descriptive terms and the paralinguistic features which they evoke.** (Brown, 1990, 114)

- ✘ PVFs can either corroborate the actual content of an utterance (**redundancy**) or contradict it (**discrepancy**), the latter being rarer in fiction:
 - ✘
 - ✘ “Oh yes, I have!” Felix **declared**, with some spirit; “before I knew better. But you don’t catch me at it again”. Henry James, *The Europeans* (114). (**redundancy**).
 - ✘
 - ✘ “Do you know I love you?” the young man **said, jocosely**, to Isabel. Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady* 327). (**discrepancy**).
 - ✘ It is believed there are about 600 possible substitutes for *said* after DS and that 20th century novelists use only about 50 of them in a given novel (Crystal: 2003). There are major quantitative differences from one author to the next in the use of these “prose stage-directions”.

EDITH WHARTON: 'COPY: A DIALOGUE' (1900)

TEXT 0

- × **Ventnor.** Your letters.
- × **Mrs Dale.** My letters – do you remember them?
- × **Ventnor.** When I don't, I reread them.
- × **Mrs Dale.** You have them still?
- × **Ventnor.** You haven't mine, then?
- × **Mrs Dale.** Oh, *you* were a celebrity already. Of course I kept them! Think what they are worth now! I always keep them locked up in my safe over there.
- × **Ventnor.** I always carry yours with me.
- × **Mrs Dale.** You –
- × **Ventnor.** Whenever I go. I have them now.
- × **Mrs Dale.** You – have them with you – now?
- × **Ventnor.** Why not? One never knows –

EDITH WHARTON: 'COPY: A DIALOGUE' (1900)

TEXT 1

- × Ventnor. Your letters.
- × Mrs Dale (*in a changed voice*). My letters – do you remember them?
- × Ventnor. When I don't, I reread them.
- × Mrs Dale (*incredulous*). You have them still?
- × Ventnor (*dejectedly*). You haven't mine, then?
- × Mrs Dale (*playfully*). Oh, you were a celebrity already. Of course I kept them! (*smiling*) Think what they are worth now! I always keep them locked up in my safe over there. (*She indicates a cabinet*)
- × Ventnor (*after a pause*). I always carry yours with me.
- × Mrs Dale (*laughing*). You –
- × Ventnor. Whenever I go. (*A longer pause. She looks at him fixedly*). I have them now.
- × Mrs Dale (*agitated*). You – have them with you – now?
- × Ventnor (*embarrassed*). Why not? One never knows –.

EDITH WHARTON: 'COPY: A DIALOGUE' (1900)

TEXT 2

- × Ventnor. Your letters.
- × Mrs Dale (*in a changed voice*). My letters – do you remember them?
- × Ventnor. When I don't, I reread them.
- × Mrs Dale (*incredulous*). You have them still?
- × Ventnor (*unguardedly*). You haven't mine, then?
- × Mrs Dale (*playfully*). Oh, you were a celebrity already. Of course I kept them! (*smiling*) Think what they are worth now! I always keep them locked up in my safe over there. (*She indicates a cabinet*)
- × Ventnor (*after a pause*). I always carry yours with me.
- × Mrs Dale (*laughing*). You –
- × Ventnor. Whenever I go. (*A longer pause. She looks at him fixedly*). I have them now.
- × Mrs Dale (*agitated*). You – have them with you – now?
- × Ventnor (*embarrassed*). Why not? One never knows.

EDITH WHARTON: 'COPY: A DIALOGUE' (1900)

- ✘ **Text 0:** Quite difficult to interpret.
- ✘ **Text 1:** The impression is that Ventnor is still hopelessly in love whilst Mrs Dale simply plays with him.
- ✘ **Text 2** (original version): The impression is that Ventnor is trying to deceive Mrs Dale who is caught unaware.
- ✘ In the process, readers discover that the purpose of Mr Vender's visit is to retrieve the love letters he wrote to Mrs Dale in order to use them in his memoirs.

CONCLUSIONS ON PVF

- ✘ paralinguistic encoding is to be regarded as a dynamic process,
- ✘ The analysis of short extracts shows that PVFs do not work at sentence but at discourse level.
- ✘ PVFs can be forward or backward pointing and apply to smaller or longer stretches of dialogue.
- ✘ A particular paralinguistic comment may remain active over a number of turns or simply apply to the chunk of DS it is attached to.
- ✘ From this perspective, a quantitative analysis is often insufficient and may very turn out to be misleading.

3. THE DYNAMICS OF CONVERSATION

- ✗ **Conversation Analysis** is based on *Politeness* Penelope Brown & Stephen Levinson (1987)
- ✗ Often criticised but still a major reference.
- ✗ Based on Erving Goffman's notion of FACE

- ✗ **FACE**: the public self-image of a person
- ✗ **POLITENESS**: the means employed to show awareness of another person's face.
- ✗ **FACE WANT**: people's expectations concerning their public self-image.
- ✗ **FACE THREATENING ACT**: Something said that represents a threat to one's expectations regarding self-image
- ✗ **FACE SAVING ACT**: Something said to lessen a possible threat.
- ✗
- ✗ It is expected that every speaker attempts to respect the FACE WANT of others. There are many ways of performing FACE SAVING ACTS.

NEGATIVE & POSITIVE FACE

- × **Negative face**
- × The need to be independent, to have freedom of action, not to be imposed upon by others
- × **Negative politeness** appeals to the negative face: to show deference, to emphasise the importance of the other's time or concern. It includes apology for imposition or interruption.
- × “Could you ...” modal
- × I'm sorry to bother you but ...
- × Might I ask (question)
- × It gives you interlocutor the opportunity to refuse without the same refusing effect.
- × Negative politeness is part of **DEFERENCE STRATEGY** (emphasis on independence).

NEGATIVE & POSITIVE FACE

× Positive face

- × The need to be accepted, liked, to be treated as a member of the same group. Need to be “connected”.
- × **Positive politeness** appeals to the positive face. You use Face saving acts concerned with solidarity, you emphasise the fact you want the same thing as the other person.
- × It is often preceded by some “getting to know you” talk. It is still risky (a refusal is possible).
- × Positive politeness is part of **SOLIDARITY STRATEGY**. Use of nicknames, shared dialect, slang + “we”, “let’s” including the interlocutor.

ON & OFF RECORD

✘ SAY SOMETHING OFF AND ON RECORD

- ✘ → **Off record statements** are not addressed: “I wonder where I put my pen ...” The other can act as if he hadn’t heard.
- ✘ → **On record statements** are addressed:
 - ✘ “ I haven’t got a pen”
 - ✘ → **Bald on record statements**: “Give me a pen”. Often though, it is followed by “**mitigating devices**” such as “please”, “would you” etc.