ABSTRACT

Stylistics rests on the apparently sound premise that since literature as verbal art has for its medium language, linguistics, which is the science of language, ought to be able to provide the most valid and objective insights into the literary work of art. However it would seem that mention of stylistics in literary circles often evokes skepticism or distrust. This study is mainly concerned with examining why stylistics, based on a seemingly irrefutable logical proposition, has failed to offer itself as a valid heuristic tool. Taking this essential problem as its point of departure, this study attempts to formulate a viable theoretical framework which could yield valid results and offers a practical analysis informed by this theoretical framework. The four major novels of Hemingway have been stylistically interpreted, the primary interpretative strategy consisting of relating purely formal features to aspects of narrative technique, the most likely integrating interface between formal features and aesthetic impact in narrative fiction.

Chapter 1 surveys the main trends in stylistics and presents the theoretical framework. Chapter 2 is a brief description of the methods adopted while chapter 3 is mainly a detailed analysis of narrative technique, this chapter forming the background for the stylistic study proper. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the formal patterns at the sentence and clause levels, while chapter 5, which is a detailed analysis of the finite clause, forms the core of the study; chapter 6 is a brief functional analysis of the group level. Chapter 7 is the conclusion.