IQRO JURNALI , IQRO JOURNAL, ИКРО ЖУРНАЛИ
ISSN:2181-4341| wordlyknowledge.uz/index.php/iqro
Volume 24. Issue 01. Oktabr, 2026

UDC 81'38:81'42

COGNITIVE STYLISTICS AND THE INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPANSION OF MODERN STYLISTIC THEORY

Khudoybergenova Nozimakhon Bakhtiyorovna
teacher,
Uzbekistan State World Languages University,
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23230519

Abstract. This article reveals cognitive stylistics as an interdisciplinary field that extends the analytical resources of classical stylistics through the integration of cognitive linguistics, text theory, and reader-oriented approaches. The paper argues that cognitive stylistics should be viewed not as a replacement for traditional stylistics, but as its conceptual continuation in conditions where language is studied in close relation to mental representation, interpretation, and contextual knowledge. Particular attention is paid to the distinction between cognitive stylistics and cognitive poetics, the role of conceptual metaphor, foregrounding, inference, figure-ground organization, and schematic knowledge in text processing, as well as the applicability of the cognitive-stylistic model to both literary and non-literary discourse. The article concludes that cognitive stylistics provides a productive framework for explaining how linguistic choices activate conceptual structures and shape meaning in communication.

Keywords: cognitive stylistics, stylistic theory, cognitive poetics, text interpretation, conceptual metaphor, foregrounding, inference, mental representation, discourse analysis.

The development of cognitive linguistics has changed the methodological landscape of contemporary language studies and has made it possible to reconsider many established assumptions in stylistics. Classical stylistics produced valuable descriptions of expressive means, functional styles, and text organization, yet its explanatory resources were often concentrated on linguistic form as an autonomous object. Cognitive stylistics emerged when scholars began to ask not only how a text is organized, but also how it is processed, interpreted, and mentally structured by a reader or listener. In this sense, the field reflects a broader shift in modern linguistics toward anthropocentric and interdisciplinary models of inquiry (6, pp. 39-40).

Cognitive stylistics should therefore be understood as an extension rather than a negation of traditional stylistics. The classical tradition remains indispensable because it offers the descriptive categories through which stylistically marked forms can be identified. However, description alone does not fully explain why a specific linguistic choice is salient, emotionally powerful, or interpretively productive. Cognitive stylistics complements earlier approaches by connecting textual patterning with conceptualization, inferencing, attention, memory, and background knowledge. It studies stylistic effect as a result of interaction between the verbal form of a text and the cognitive activity of its recipient (5, pp. ix-x).

The publication of Metaphors We Live By transformed the status of metaphor by showing that it is not merely an ornamental device, but a basic mechanism of thought that structures

experience and guides interpretation (2, pp. 3-6). This idea had major consequences for stylistics. If metaphor is conceptual before it is decorative, then stylistic analysis must examine the cognitive models that motivate figurative language. The same principle applies to metonymy, image schemas, and conceptual blending: stylistic choices are meaningful because they activate organized knowledge structures rather than isolated lexical deviations.

In addition, cognitive stylistics investigates how readers build coherent interpretations through inference. A text never contains all of its meanings in explicit form; instead, it guides the recipient toward contextually supported conclusions. Such guidance depends on schemas, frames, prototypes, and figure-ground relations that help organize textual information. From this perspective, stylistic analysis is not limited to identifying tropes or syntactic patterns. It also examines how linguistic structure directs attention, distributes given and new information, and shapes the hierarchy of what is cognitively central or peripheral in discourse. This is one of the reasons why cognitive stylistics is relevant not only to literary criticism but also to discourse analysis and pragmatics.

The interdisciplinary value of the field lies precisely in this explanatory breadth. Cognitive stylistics draws on linguistics, psychology, narratology, rhetoric, and theories of reading, yet it remains anchored in close textual analysis. Such a balance is important. If stylistics ignores cognition, it risks reducing meaning to observable form; if it ignores language, it risks becoming speculative. The strongest cognitive-stylistic studies preserve detailed linguistic evidence while interpreting it through models of conceptual processing. This methodological balance can be seen in work that combines lexical, syntactic, and discourse analysis with attention to viewpoint, mental spaces, and readerly expectations (1, p. 8; 6, pp. 39-40).

A further advantage of the cognitive-stylistic perspective is its applicability to contemporary communicative practices. Modern discourse is multimodal, ideologically charged, and often designed to manage attention. Advertising, digital media, political messaging, and academic communication all rely on stylistic selection to frame reality in particular ways. Cognitive stylistics helps explain how such framing works by showing how language activates culturally shared models, values, and interpretive shortcuts. In this respect, the field has practical significance: it offers tools for analyzing not only aesthetic effect but also persuasion, evaluation, and the strategic organization of knowledge in public discourse.

In sum, cognitive stylistics may be defined as a dynamically developing branch of linguistics that broadens the aims of stylistic inquiry by linking linguistic form with conceptual structure and interpretive activity. Its importance lies in the fact that it preserves the achievements of classical stylistics while giving them a deeper explanatory basis. By integrating the study of textual form with the study of cognition, it makes it possible to account for how meaning emerges, why stylistic choices matter, and how texts influence perception across different communicative environments. For contemporary linguistic theory, this synthesis is not a temporary trend but a necessary stage in the further development of stylistic science.

References

1. Ashurova, D. U. (2005). Stylistics of text in the cognitive aspect. Fan.
2. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago Press.

3. Luzina, L. G. (2000). Cognitive stylistics and the prospects of modern stylistic theory. Philological Sciences, (4), 45-52.
4. Molchanova, G. G. (2007). Cognitive stylistics of text. Higher School of Economics.
5. Semino, E., & Culpeper, J. (Eds.). (2002). Cognitive stylistics: Language and cognition in text analysis. John Benjamins.
6. Simpson, P. (2004). Stylistics: A resource book for students. Routledge.
7. Stockwell, P. (2002). Cognitive poetics: An introduction. Routledge.