**From Leech, G. and M. Short, *Style in Fiction***

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**A CHECKLIST OF LINGUISTIC AND STYLISTIC CATEGORIES**

The categories are placed under four general headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context. Semantic categories are not listed separately, since it is easier to arrive at these through other categories; we shall, for example, use our lexical categories to find out how choice of words involves various types of meaning. Since the purpose of the list is heuristic, there is no harm in ‘mixing categories’ in this way. It is also in the nature of things that categories will overlap, so that the same feature may well be noted under different headings

*A: Lexical categories*

**1. GENERAL**. Is the vocabulary simple or complex? formal or colloquial? descriptive or evaluative? general or specific? How far does the writer make use of the emotive and other associations of words, as opposed to their referential meaning? Does the text contain idiomatic phrases, and if so, with what kind of dialect or register (iii) are these idioms associated? Is there any use of rare or specialized vocabulary? Are any particular morphological categories noteworthy *(e.g.*compound words, words with particular suffixes)? To what semantic fields. do words belong?

**2 NOUNS**. Are the nouns abstract or concrete? What kinds of abstract nouns occur *(e.g.*nouns referring to events, perceptions, processes, moralqualities, social qualities)? What use is made of proper names? collective nouns?

**3 ADJECTIVES**. Are the adjectives frequent? To what kinds of attribute do adjectives refer? physical? psychological? visual? auditory? color? referential? emotive? evaluative? etc. Are adjectives restrictive or non-restrictive? gradable or non— gradable? attributive or predicative?

**4 VERBS**. Do the verbs carry an important part of the meaning? Are they stative (referring to states) or dynamic (referring to actions, events, etc)? Do they 'refer' to movements, physical acts speech acts, psychological states or activities, perceptions, etc? Are they transitive, intransitive, linking (intensive), etc? Are they factive or non-factive (iv)?

**5 ADVERBS**. Are adverbs frequent? What semantic functions do they perform (manner, place, direction, time, degree, etc)? Is there any significant use of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as *so, therefore, however;*disjuncts such as *certainly, obviously, frankly)*(v)?

*B: Grammatical categories*

**1. SENTENCE TYPES**. Does the author use only statements (declarative sentences), or does he also use questions, commands, exclamations. or minor sentence types such as sentences with no verb)? If these other types are used, what is their function?

**2 SENTENCE COMPLEXITY**. Do sentences on the whole have a simple or a complex structure? What is the average sentence length (in number of words)? What is the ratio of dependent to independent clauses complexity vary strikingly from one sentence to another? Is complexity mainly due to (i) coordination, (ii) subordination, (iii) parataxis (juxtaposition of clauses or other equivalent structures)? In what parts of a sentence does complexity tend to occur? For instance, is there any notable occurrence of anticipatory structure (e.g. of complex subjects preceding the verbs, of dependent clauses preceding the subject of a main clause)?

**3 CLAUSE TYPES.** What types of dependent clause are favored: relative clauses, adverbial clauses, different types of nominal clauses (that—clauses, wh—clauses, etc)? Are reduced or non-finite clauses commonly used, and if so, of what type are they (infinitive clauses, —ing clauses, —ed clauses, verbless clauses)?

***4*CLAUSE STRUCTURE.** Is there anything significant about clause elements *(eg*frequency of objects, complements, adverbials; of transitive or intransitive verb constructions)? Are there any unusual orderings (initial adverbials, fronting of object or complement, etc)? Do special kinds of clause construction occur? (Such as those with preparatory *it*or *there)?*

**5 NOUN PHRASES.** Are they relatively simple or complex? Where does the complexity lie (in pre-modification by adjectives, nouns, etc, or in post-modification by prepositional phrases, relative clauses, etc)? Note occurrence of listings *(eg*sequences of adjectives), coordination, or apposition.

**6 VERB PHRASES.** Are there any significant departures from the use of the simple past tense? For example, notice occurrences and the functions of the present tense; of the progressive aspect *(eg was lying);*of the perfective aspect *(eg has/had appeared);*o modal auxiliaries *(eg can, must, would,*etc).

**7 OTHER PHRASE TYPES.** Is there anything to be said about other phrase types: prepositional phrases, adverb phrases adjective phrases?

**8 WORD CLASSES.** Having already considered major or lexical word classes, we may here consider minor word classes (‘function words’): prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, determiners, auxiliaries, interjections. Are particular words of these types used for particular effect (eg the definite or indefinite article; first person pronouns I, we, etc; demonstratives such as this and that; negative words such as not, nothing, no) ?

**9 GENERAL.** Note here whether any general types of grammatical construction are used to special effect *e.g.*comparative or superlative constructions; coordinative or listing constructions; parenthetical. constructions; appended or interpolated structures such as occur in casual speech. Do lists and co-ordinations *(e.g.*lists of nouns) tend to occur with two, three or more than three members?

*C: Figures of speech, etc*

***Here we consider the incidence of features which are fore-grounded by virtue of departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language code; for example, exploitation of regularities of formal patterning, or of deviations from the linguistic code. For identifying such features, the traditional figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are often useful categories****.*

**1 GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL SCHEMES.** Are there any cases of formal and structural repetition (anaphora, parallelism, etc) or of mirror—image patterns (chiasmus)? Is the rhetorical effect of these one of antithesis, reinforcement, climax, anticlimax, etc

**2 PHONOLOGICAL SCHEMES.** Are there any phonological pat­terns of rhyme ...alliteration, assonance, etc? Are there any salient rhythmical patterns? Do vowel and consonant sounds pattern or cluster in particular ways? How do these phonological features interact with meaning?

**3 TROPES.** Are there any obvious violations of, or departures from the linguistic code? For example, are there any neologisms (such as *Americanly)?*deviant lexical collocations (such as *portentous infants)?*semantic, syntactic, phonological, or graphological deviations?

Such deviations will often be the clue to special interpretations associated with traditional figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, irony ~t If such tropes occur, what kind of special interpretation is involved (eg metaphor can be classified as personifying, animizing, concretizing, synaesthetic, etc)? Because of its close connection with metaphor, simile may also be considered here. Does the text contain any similes, or similar constructions (eg ‘as if’ constructions)? What dissimilar semantic fields are related through simile?

***D: Context and cohesion***

Finally, we take a preliminary look at features which will be more fully dealt with in the following. Under COHESION ways in which one part of a text is linked to another are considered: for example, the wan which sentences are connected, This is the internal organization of the text. Under CONTEXT we consider the external relations of a text or a part of a text, seeing it as a discourse presupposing a social relation between its participants (author and reader; character and character, etc), and a sharing by participants of knowledge and assumptions.

**COHESION.** Does the text contain logical or other links between sentences *(eg*coordinating conjunctions, or linking adverbials)? Or does it tend to rely on implicit connections of meaning?

What sort of use is made of cross-reference by pronouns *(she, it, they,*etc)? by substitute forms *(do, so,*etc), or ellipsis? Alternatively, is any use made of elegant variation — the avoidance of repetition by the substitution of a descriptive phrase (as, for example, ‘the old lawyer’ or ‘her uncle’ may substitute for the repetition of an earlier ‘Mr. Jones’)?

Are meaning connections reinforced by repetition of words and phrases or by repeatedly using words from the same semantic field?

**CONTEXT.** Does the writer address the reader directly, or through the words or thoughts of some fictional character? What linguistic clues (first-person pronouns *I, me,*my, *mine)*are there of the addresser-addressee relationship? What attitude does the author imply towards his subject3 If a character’s words or thoughts are represented, is this done by direct quotation: direct speech), or by some other method (eg indirect speech. free indirect speech)? Are there significant changes of style according to who is supposedly speaking or thinking the words on the page?