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Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation

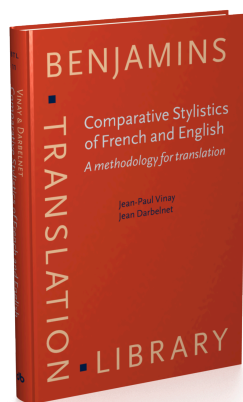
Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet

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Comparative Stylistics of French and English

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Volume 11

Comparative Stylistics of French and English. A methodology for translation
by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet

Comparative Stylistics of French and English

A methodology for translation

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Envoi

Seul survivant de notre fraternelle équipe, c'est à moi que revient l'honneur de souhaiter bon vent et heureux atterrage à cette traduction, fruit du travail d'orfèvre de mon collègue, J. C. Sager. Grâce à lui et à ses disciples, puisse la stylistique du français et de l'anglais connaître un nouveau printemps dans ce siècle qui vient, où l'échange des idées reposera pour une grande part sur le travail des traducteurs.

Jean-Paul Vinay
Victoria, C.B., 30 septembre 1995
en la fête de Saint-Jérôme

Editors' Note

The translation into English of a French text book some 40 years after its first publication is a rare event in the field of linguistics; a precedent that springs to mind, toutes choses égales d'ailleurs, is the translation of Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique*, which was published 44 years after its first French edition, and as a result remained terra incognita for students in the English-speaking world. The regular reprints of the *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* in 1966, 1972, 1973, 1977 (2nd ed.) 1984, and 1987 (3rd ed.) both in France and Canada prove its continued and unique position as a link between the disciplines of comparative stylistics, grammar and translation. At a time when textbooks have an increasingly shorter lifespan, the lasting use of the 'Vinay & Darbelnet', a household word to many teachers of French-English translation, requires an explanation which will also serve to justify the present translation and new edition.

With the publication of *Stylistique Comparée du français et de l'anglais* in 1958 — simultaneously by Didier in Paris and Beauchemin in Montreal — the authors broke new ground in comparative studies and at the same time rendered an invaluable service to translation studies and teaching. By providing the daily practice of translation teaching with a theoretical framework which combines grammar with pragmatics and stylistics, they laid the foundation for the emancipation of translator training courses and their recognition as full university degrees with a substantial formal academic content.

Besides being a mine of French-English correspondences, equivalences and translation examples, which have been extended and revised in this edition, the book pursues several interesting strands of development which this new edition highlights by a re-structured content and a few additions.

The enlarged first chapter now has two major sections, the first laying the theoretical foundation for the comparative stylistic discussions of the subsequent chapters, the second, presenting the methods of translation which provide the points of view of analysis for the other chapters which in turn fully examine and exemplify these seven approaches.

Chapters 2-4 progress from contrastive discussions of the individual items of the lexicon to syntactic structures and the full message. Simultaneously these chapters demonstrate the application of different methods of translation in growing complexity from literal translation to adaptation.

While, as the title suggests, the book is essentially concerned with contrasting the stylistic features of English and French, its continued popularity is in large measure due to its clear presentation and generous exemplification of a succession of methods of translation. Over the years, the 'Vinay & Darbelnet' has come to be seen by many people — the authors stress this in various references in the text — as a **METHODOLOGY OF TRANSLATION**, a dimension which is now reflected in the subtitle and the consistently contrastive presentation of the examples.

There is yet another aspect which makes a translation and new edition interesting. At a time when linguistic fashion changes every decade, it is fascinating to observe that, despite some changes in terminology, the authors' classification and systematic presentation of translation methods has withstood the test of time. Because of their continued topicality, the original concepts and terminology have been fully preserved and only in a few cases, where it appeared useful, have comments been provided in the glossary.

When this book was written comparative stylistics was a new subject and courses which concentrated on teaching translation skills were relatively rare and new. The available literature in the field of applied translation studies and stylistics was far from abundant as can be seen in the references the authors were able to cite in support of their ideas and arguments.

Since this time the literature on practical aspects of translation has grown apace, especially in the last decade, and the literature concerned with particular aspects of language usage has changed many of the older perceptions of language behaviour. In order to account for this evolution the editors have decided to attach to each chapter a list of books in English and French for further reading. Full details of these books are given in the bibliography where the reader will find the whole range of texts which can be said to constitute the background to, and the continued concern with, the approach to translation presented by the authors, thus giving a rich panorama of the literature on applied stylistics and French-English translation studies written during this century.

The task of re-editing this book could not have been undertaken without the active participation of Emeritus Professor Jean-Paul Vinay, whose

constant encouragement and close reading of the manuscript proved invaluable and will ensure the continued attraction of this book. His assurances and our own reading of the late Jean Darbelnet's writings have convinced us that the original co-author would also have welcomed this new edition.

J.C. Sager & M.-J. Hamel
Manchester, January 1995

Translator's acknowledgements

I am much indebted to Emeritus Professor Jean-Paul Vinay for the interest he has taken in this enterprise and the many important indications he has given me to make this translation suitable for the English reader of today. I also remember with gratitude the various conversations with the late Jean Darbelnet who first encouraged me to look more closely at this book.

Two of my former students Jane Armitage and Nicky Clough have provided pre-translations for several sections. Their enthusiasm has ensured that this project went speedily ahead and I am grateful for their assistance.

I should like to thank Dr Liam Murray for his advice on the glossary and the detailed checking of sections of the manuscript. Any remaining errors are mine.

J.C.Sager
Manchester, December 1994

