



# Stylistics of the English Language 7

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# Morphological Expressive Means Outline

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- Paradigmatic and syntagmatic morphology
- Transposition
- Paradigmatic morphology:
  - nouns
  - verbs
  - articles
  - pronouns
  - adjectives
  - adverbs
- Syntagmatic morphology: parallelism

# Morphological Expressive Means

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- Paradigmatic Morphology: the categories of number, case, tense, gender, person, mood – transposition - **deviation from norm**
- Syntagmatic Morphology: the repetition of morphemes, the recurrence of morphological meanings – **parallelism**

# Paradigmatic morphology: Transposition

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- To **transpose** means
  - To alter the position of
  - To put into a different order [Collins]

# Transposition

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- Transposition is a basic strategy in the manipulation of discourse for rhetorical purposes, along with addition, subtraction, and substitution, and occurs on many levels

[Dr.Burton, BYU,  
<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/Figures/M/metaplasma.htm>]



# Transposition

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- a grammatical metaphor
- takes place when the traditional signifier gets substituted by a deviant contextual signifier, its emotional, evaluative, expressive or stylistic connotations being realized at the expense of violating usual grammar rules

[adapted from Arnold, 2010, 191]

# Transposition Example: Personification

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- when natural phenomena, objects, animals are endowed with human feelings, thoughts:  
“The college dreamed on – awake. He (Amory) felt a nervous excitement that might have been the very throb of its slow heart.”

[F.S.Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise]

# Transposition in Nouns: the change of lexico-grammatical group

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"Love is a place"

**love** is a place  
& through this place of  
love move  
(with brightness of peace)  
all places

**yes** is a world  
& in this world of  
yes live  
(skillfully curled)  
all worlds

-e.e.cummings-





## Transposition in Adjectives: the change of lexico-grammatical group

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- Come on, Lovely!
- Do it for me, please, Fearless!

# Paradigmatic Morphology - Nouns:

## Category of Number

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- when the plural ending is attached to a holophrase for humorous effect:

“One I-am-sorry-for-you is worth twenty I-told-you-so’s.” [from Арнольд 2010]

- when the plural ending is attached to an uncountable noun to lend flair and expressivity (hyperbolic plural):

“But where are the snows of yesteryear?”

[F.Villon, from Арнольд 2010]

“You look so dreadfully close. Still waters run deep. I feel you’ve got a secret life full of terrific things.” [J. Lindsay, ‘A Local Habitation’, ch. 10]

# Nouns:

## Category of Number

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- when the singular noun is used instead of an appropriate plural form to make the statement elevated (generalised, symbolic) :

“The full streams feed on flower of rushes,  
Ripe grasses trammel (catch) a travelling foot,  
The faint fresh flame of the young year  
flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;  
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,  
And the oat (oat flute) is heard above the lyre,  
And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes  
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.”

[Atalanta in Calydon by A.C.Swinburne]

# Nouns:

## Category of Case

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- when the genitive suffix is attached to a word expression or a clause:

She's the boy I used to go out with's mother.

[J.Bailey 1952, from Arnold 2010]

# Gerunds:

## Category of Number

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- grammar rules of using gerund can be violated for a particular stylistic purpose (expressivity):

‘There was a perceptible intake of breath and some reckless head-turning. But Hunt, like the other masters, allowed Adrian special status. When the rest of us tried provocation, it was dismissed as puerile cynicism – something else we would grow out of. Adrian’s provocations were somehow welcomed as awkward searchings after truth.’

[Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending*  
(2011)]

# Gerunds: Category of Number

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“CHARTERIS (*on the hearthrug, turning to face her*):

Action, my dear! Marriage!! In that she must believe. She won't be convinced by anything short of it, because, you see, I have had some tremendous philanderings before and have gone back to her after them.”

[The Philanderer by George Bernard Shaw]

# Gerund: Transposition

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- there can be observed the process of transposition from nouns to verbs resulting in the gerund used for expressive purposes:

“Bertie: Really? Kinging? Kinging is a precarious business! Where is the Tsar of Russia? Where is Cousin Wilhelm?”

[The King's Speech (2010), a historical drama film]

# Verbs:

## Category of Tense


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- the historic(al)/dramatic/narrative present refers to the employment of the present tense when narrating past events in order to foreground them:

“Two weeks before Christmas Malachy and I come home from school in a heavy rain and when we push in the door we find the kitchen empty. The table and chairs and trunk are gone and the fire is dead in the grate. The Pope is still there and that means we haven't moved again. Dad would never move without the Pope.”

[McCourt, Angela's Ashes]






## Verbs: Category of Tense

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- the continuous forms are often used to add expressiveness as they convey emotions and feelings of the speakers:

“Some days, when I wake, before I move, I pretend to myself. I think I’ve got away. I’m stepping off a plane into a different climate where warm, spicy breezes blow your clothes against your thighs. I’m walking so lightly and easily that it feels like flying.”

[Helen Dunmore, *You stayed awake with me*]



## Verbs: Category of Tense

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- the use of continuous forms to express surprise, annoyance, criticism, disapproval:

“Women kill me. They really do. I don't mean I'm oversexed or anything like that – although I am quite sexy. I just like them, I mean. They are always leaving their goddamn bags out in the middle of the aisle.”

[Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*]

## Verbs: Category of Tense

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- the use of colloquial verbal forms 'ain't' and 'I says', 'He say' to mark the social background of the speaker:

"I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the gentleman."


[B.Shaw, Pygmalion]

"He act like he can't stand me no more.  
Say I'm evil an always up to no good. "

[The Colour Purple by Alice Walker, p.13]

- omission of the auxiliary in colloquial forms:

"He done it all right."



## Verbs: Category of Tense

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- the use of emphatic “do”:
  - ‘I do know him.’
  - ‘He does look smart.’
  - ‘Do stop calling me baby in public!’

# Verbs:

## Category of Tense

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- the use of present verb forms (looking as the author's remarks) to convey the atmosphere of a play (often for humorous effect):

“CUTHBERTSON (*coming forward and confronting him*):

Don't play the fool with me, Charteris: I'm too old a hand to be amused by it. I ask you, seriously, what's the matter?

CHARTERIS:

I tell you, seriously, I'm the matter, Julia wants to marry me: I want to marry Grace. I came here tonight to sweetheart Grace. **Enter** Julia. Alarums and excursions. **Exit** Grace. **Enter** you and Craven. Subterfuges and excuses. **Exeunt** Craven and Julia. And here we are. That's the whole story. Sleep over it. Good night. (*He leaves.*)”

[The Philanderer by George Bernard Shaw]

# Verbs:


## Archaic Person Forms

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- the use of archaic forms to elevate the utterance/to convey the ambience of a particular historical epoch/to mark the speech as dialectal:

“How terrible it must be for her to attend this service for Mrs Wright whose baby had survived... and while the Padre was speaking the Collector accompanied his words with a silent, sympathetic prayer for Mrs Bennett: "O God, whose ways are hidden and thy works most wonderful, who **makest** nothing in vain, and **lovest** all that thou **hast** made, Comfort this thy servant whose heart is sore smitten and oppressed...”

[J.G.Farrel, The Siege of Krishnapur]




## Verbs: Archaic Person Forms

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- to quote/make references to the Bible:

“And do we not read in the first chapter of the sacred book of Genesis that God made the beast of the earth after his kind, the cattle after their kind, and every living thing that creepeth upon the earth after their kind, and God saw that it was good?”

[A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters by J.Barnes, p,81]



# Verbs:

## Archaic Person Forms

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- to make humorous remarks:  
“All thou needest to know is that such archaic pronouns and verb forms maketh their way into literature every now and again. Simply recognize these words as archaic language when thou spottest them, enough to decode their meaning. I see no need to try and learn how to write or speak them; thy worries art unfounded. ”

[J.R. at [ell.stackexchange.com](http://ell.stackexchange.com)]





# Modal Verbs

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- modal verbs convey the attitude of the speaker to the utterance, so they are often stylistically marked:

“And Death Shall Have No Dominion”

[ Dylan Thomas, 1914-1953]

# Modal Verbs

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- the modal verb **may** sometimes can express the idea of a wish:

“If pain must come, may it come quickly. Because I have a life to live, and I need to live it in the best way possible. If he has to make a choice, may he make it now. Then I will either wait for him or forget him.”

[Paulo Coelho]

# Articles: Functions

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- the indefinite article can be used with a proper name

- to make a statement informal:

“He was engaged to be married to **a** Miss Hubbard” [S. Maugham, from Arnold 2010]

- to add evaluation:

“I do not claim to be **a** Caruso.”

“Elisabeth was **a** Tudor.” [from Arnold 2010]

"So I just want to say *this* to the Congress: **An** America that buys much more than they sell year in and year out is **an** America that is facing economic and military disaster.“

[Congressman James A. Traficant, 1998]

# Articles: Functions

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- in case of enumeration the indefinite article can be repeated to add emphasis:

“Under the low sky the grass shone with a brilliant, an almost artificial sheen.”

[C.P.Snow, from Arnold 2010]

# Articles: Functions

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The indefinite article can be unexpectedly used with gerunds or pronouns to mark the sentence as expressive and emotionally-loaded:

“And what they played was warm, sunny, yet there was just a faint chill – a something, what was it? – not sadness – no, not sadness – a something that made you want to sing.”

[K.Mansfield, Miss Brill]

# Articles: Functions

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- the definite article is used with proper names to lend expressivity to the utterance:  
“Know my partner? Old Robinson.  
Yes, the Robinson. Don’t you know?  
The notorious Robinson.”

[J.Conrad, Lord Jim, from Arnold 2010]

# Pronouns

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- the use of “one” instead of “I” to create an abstract generalised image of a person:

“If one knew,” he wondered, “the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? If one reached what they called the heart of the matter?”

[G.Green, The Heart of the Matter, from Arnold 2010]

# Pronouns

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- the use of the third person pronouns instead of “I/We” adds an idea of a glance from the outside:

“The only people we’ll risk meeting are ourselves. There they go. They race past without a glance. All they are thinking about is the next stile, the next field(...). They stare, their faces blank and bright, not registering us.”

[H.Dunmore, You stayed awake with me]

“I do not want to write; I want to live. What does she mean by that? It’s hard for me to say.”

[K.Mansfield, from Arnold 2010]



# Pronouns

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the case of personification (the use of ‘he’/‘she’ for inanimate objects) and depersonification (the use of ‘it’ for animate objects):

“France sent her representative to the conference.”

[from Znamenskaya 2005]

“O, Lord!” He involuntarily ejaculated as the incredibly dilapidated figure appeared in the light. It stopped; it uncovered pale gums, and long upper teeth in a malevolent grin. – “Is there anything wrong with me, Mister Mate?” it asked.”

[J.Conrad, from Charleston 1960]

# Pronouns

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- the use of archaic forms (thou, thee, thy/thine, thyself) lends sublimity/familiarity/humour to the utterance:

“When he walked with long strides along the garden walk of his little country parsonage, he would sometimes ask himself the question: "Why has God done this?" And he would dwell on this continually, putting himself in the place of God, and he almost invariably found an answer. He would never have cried out in an outburst of pious humility: "Thy ways, O Lord, are past finding out.”

[Clair de Lune

by Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)]

# Pronouns

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- the use of Pluralis Majestatis (the use of ‘we’ in royal edicts) and Pluralis Modestiae (‘we’ instead of ‘I’ in scientific prose)

“We bid you all farewell.” “We, Henry VIII, ...”

“We (the author of the article) think this has something to do with the development of the genes.” “We have come to the conclusion that...”

# Pronouns

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- indefinite pronouns are often employed to form a deliberately vague/indirect or incomplete statement (to understate the picture/feeling):

‘They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be **something!**’

[Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*]



# Pronouns

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- demonstrative pronouns can be used to mark the attitude of the speaker, to make the statement emotionally loaded:

“These lawyers! Only think of it!”

“That husband of yours!”

# Pronouns

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- personal pronoun “we” instead of “you” can be used to convey the condescending, approving, indulging or ironic attitude of the speaker (maternal or paternal feeling):

“We are so good today!”

“We are so irresistible today!”

# Pronouns

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- third person pronouns can be used to create suspense (the figure of cataphora):

“Why do we envy *him*, the bankrupt man?”

[John Updike, *Hugging the Shore*, 1984]

“After *she* declared herself ‘broken, betrayed, at bay, really low’ in another organ yesterday, I’m not sure the Diary should even mention poor **Bel Mooney**’s name.”

[*The Guardian*, August 9, 1994]

“Students (not unlike yourselves) compelled to buy paperback copies of *his* novels - notably the first, *Travel Light*, though there has lately been some academic interest in *his* more surreal and ‘existential’ and perhaps even ‘anarchist’ second novel, *Brother Pig* - or encountering some essay from *When the Saints* in a shiny heavy anthology of mid-century literature costing \$12.50, imagine that **Henry Bech**, like thousands less famous than he, is rich. He is not.”

[John Updike, “Rich in Russia”, 1970]

# Conjunctions

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- the use of conjunctions can be stylistically marked, for example, they can reinforce the meaning of the statement and lend expressivity:

“[But you can believe this and still insist that love is our only hope.]

It’s our only hope even if it fails us,  
although it fails us, because it fails us.”

[J.Barnes, A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters, p.296]





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Thank you for your attention

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