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Introduction

Language users almost always have a choice when it comes to describing objects and states of affairs in reality. For instance, a glass filled for fifty per cent can be 'half full' or 'half empty', people who oppose a political leader can be characterized as 'freedom fighters' or as 'rebels', and while some politicians metaphorically describe the European Union as 'one big family', other politicians choose to characterize this association of countries as 'a bottomless pit'. This kind of alternative wording is a matter of *style*: a term used when the language user has alternative formulations at his disposal with which to characterize a phenomenon or state of affairs in reality.

Numerous experiments have shown that stylistic variants are not interchangeable semantically. They produce different effects. For instance, it has often been studied what the actual effect is of describing a phenomenon from either a positive or a negative perspective. Time and again, what emerges is that the image that language users have of the phenomenon concerned is affected by the phrasing that is adopted. Thus, a driving school that has a 'pass rate of 75%' is viewed as more attractive than a driving school with a 'fail rate of 25%'. Beef that is '25% fat' is rated as more negative in terms of quality and flavour, for instance, than is beef that is '75% lean'. Similarly, an operation with a 'success rate of 50%' is taken into consideration sooner than an operation with a 'failure rate of 50%'.

This doctoral thesis focuses on a form of stylistic investigation named 'linguistic stylistics'. This form of stylistics does not involve experiments; rather, it is made plausible, on the basis of linguistic analysis, that stylistic choices create particular effects. More specifically, linguistic stylistics is aimed at establishing links between the 'micro-' and 'macrolevel' of a text, i.e. causal connections are established between specific linguistic choices *in* a text, and a general impression that this text as a whole creates in readers or listeners.

A brief example may clarify matters. On 28 January 2013 Prime Minister Mark Rutte held a televised speech following the statement by Queen Beatrix in which she announced her abdication. Rutte started his speech thus:

> Queen Beatrix has just announced her abdication. At this special moment for the Queen and for our country, I first want to express my *deep* respect and admiration. Respect and admiration for the *exceptional* dedication that the Queen has shown to the Netherlands and its people for *over 30 years*. Since her investiture in 1980, she has worked *with heart and soul* for Dutch society. Visibly and steadfastly and with *tremendous* energy. That is why the speech she has just delivered evokes feelings of *great* warmth and gratitude throughout the Kingdom. (…).(Rutte 2013; italics by MvL)

On Flemish television, commentator Sandra van der Putten expressed her opinion of Rutte's speech that the latter had heaped 'high praise' on the queen. This general impression at the 'macrolevel' of the speech as a whole seems partly to have been created by specific lexical choices at the textual 'microlevel'. To reinforce his point,

Rutte frequently used adjectives and adverbs with an intensifying function (cf. the phrases in italics). If Rutte had used no, or hardly any, intensifiers at the textual microlevel, the macrolevel impression of the speech as a whole, to the effect that Rutte lavished 'high praise' on the queen, would have been less strong.

Objective and structure of the book

Linguistic-stylistic research boasts a rich tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world. To this day, however, Dutch discourse studies has barely adopted this form of text analysis. The general objective of this thesis is to argue and demonstrate that a linguistic-stylistic approach is fruitful for analysing Dutch discourse as well. The central question in this thesis is:

- How can general impressions of a text be accounted for in systematic ways through choices made at the level of words and clauses?

In order to answer this question, a method of analysis is developed and subsequently applied to three case studies with parliamentary speeches at the main object of study. This thesis thus not only provides methodical tools for linguistic-stylistic research but also offers insight into numerous stylistic choices on the part of politicians, and into the (presumed) effects of these choices. Similarly, a large number of stylistic phenomena is discussed that have so far received very little attention in the analysis of political discourse.

Following an introductory chapter that, among other things, clarifies the research objective, **chapter 2** describes various methodological principles of linguistic-stylistic research. Upon these principles a method of analysis is developed for the systematic investigation of how stylistic devices at the microlevel of a text contribute to an impression (determined on independent grounds) at the macrolevel of that text.

Chapters 3 to 5 present the case studies, focusing on another aspect of the above-mentioned method for each case study. The methodological aspect central to **chapter 3** concerns the use of a *checklist* listing numerous stylistic devices. The use of such a checklist has been suggested several times, but this suggestion has hardly been taken up in the practice of stylistic analysis. Chapter 3, then, puts the idea to the test: to what extent is a checklist a valuable tool for linguistic-stylistic analysis? The case studies here are the speeches that Geert Wilders (PVV, the Dutch Party for Freedom) and Ella Vogelaar (PvdA, the Dutch Labour Party) gave during the so-called 'Bonkers Debate' ['Knettergek-debat'] (2007). Analysis of media opinions about the two politicians shows that the manner of speech adopted by Wilders and Vogelaar came across as 'clear' and 'woolly', respectively. The checklist reveals numerous stylistic devices that contribute to these macrolevel impressions – including stylistic devices that to this day have received scant attention in the analysis of political discourse. The stylistic devices discussed in this chapter are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Stylistic features in the speeches by Wilders and Vogelaar that go to create the impression of a 'clear' or 'woolly' manner of speech, respectively (see chapter 3).

Stylistic features	**Section**
Intensifiers and mitigators	3.3.2.1
Concrete or abstract nouns	3.3.2.2
Nominalisations	3.3.2.3
Definiteness or indefiniteness	3.3.2.4
Clear or unclear discourse anaphors	3.3.2.5
Complex or non-complex sentences a. sentence length b. presence or absence of sub-clauses c. degrees of embedding	3.3.2.6
Presence or absence of complementation	3.3.2.7
Parallelism and anaphora	3.3.2.8
Metaphor	3.3.2.9

Methodologically speaking, the central question of **chapter 4** is how to establish connections between the micro- and macrolevel. The case studies concern the speeches by Geert Wilders and Alexander Pechtold (D66, Democrats '66) during the general political debate of 2008 and 2009. Here, the macrolevel for the stylistic analysis is more complex than it was in chapter 3. It is argued that in the Lower Chamber politicians need to adopt a certain stance towards two heterogeneous, functionally distinct types of audiences: their fellow politicians and 'the public at large'. Analysis of media opinions shows that in their speeches Geert Wilders and Alexander Pechtold gave the impression of adopting different stances towards these two types of audiences. Wilders came across as a 'political outsider' who kept himself aloof from his colleagues in The Hague, and as a politician who as a 'man of the people' was close to society. Alexander Pechtold came across as an 'insider' in the Dutch Parliament who kept a certain distance from society. Application of the method developed in chapter 2 reveals numerous stylistic devices at the textual microlevel that are likely to contribute to these macrolevel impressions (for an overview, cf. Table 2). Again, stylistic devices are discussed that so far have received scant attention in the analysis of political discourse.

Chapter 5 investigates a diachronic corpus of 47 parliamentary speeches to find out, at the textual microlevel, any stylistic change has occurred in Wilders's speeches – something frequently suggested by the media. For this purpose I investigate a little-studied grammatical-stylistic phenomenon which emerged as a feature of Wilders's manner of speech in chapter 3: the presence or absence of complementation. It is shown that over the years a change has taken place in the extent to which Wilders makes use of this more or less covert stylistic device, and I argue that this change serves as an indication that at the macrolevel of his speeches Wilders has over the years been offering less room for discussion. Methodologically speaking, this chapter focuses on quantifying stylistic devices.

In **chapter 6** the central research question is answered, as I present the main findings of this thesis. These findings will be examined in more detail below.

Table 2. Stylistic features in the speeches by Wilders and Pechtold that contribute to the impression of the two politicians adopting different attitudes towards their fellow politicians in The Hague and the public at large (see chapter 4).

Stylistic features	**Pertinent to attitude to which type of public?**	**Section**
Designations for colleagues: neutral or pejorative	fellow politicians	4.3.2.1
Addressing colleagues in the second or third person	fellow politicians	4.3.2.2
Absence or presence of references to the electorate	the public at large	4.3.2.3
Sentence structure: presenting voters as subject, complement or adjunct	the public at large	4.3.2.4
Referring to the electorate in combination with a verb of cognition, perception or emotion	the public at large	4.3.2.5
Jargon: with or without explanation	both types of audience	4.3.2.6
Concrete or abstract usage a. concrete or abstract words b. nominalisations c. presenting individuals as representative of a larger group d. telling details e. quotations	both types of audience	4.3.2.7
Presence or absence of narrative passages	both types of audience	4.3.2.8
Explicating inferences: yes or no	both types of audience	4.3.2.9
Inclusive/exclusive ‘we’	both types of audience	4.3.2.10

Overview of the main general findings

From a methodological point of view, the stylistic analyses in chapters 3 to 5 demonstrate that the analyst is faced with four tasks when conducting linguistic-stylistic analysis:

- determining the nature of the impression(s) created at the macrolevel of a text;
- identifying stylistic features at the microlevel of a text;
- quantifying stylistic features at the microlevel of a text;
- establishing connections between microlevel stylistic features and macrolevel impressions.

The order in which these tasks cross the analyst’s path is not always the same for every stylistic analysis. For instance, determining an intersubjective impression at the macrolevel may form the starting point of a stylistic analysis (cf. chapters 3 and 4) but

it need not (cf. chapter 5). Similarly, establishing connections between the micro- and macrolevel may follow the quantification of stylistic devices but could also precede it (cf. section 2.3.1). However, the possible variation in the sequence of these tasks does not alter the fact that the analyst is sooner or later confronted with each of the above-mentioned four tasks as he carries out linguistic-stylistic analysis. Answering the main question of this thesis thus implies finding an answer to the question how the analyst should proceed when executing these tasks.

Determining the nature of the impression(s) created at macrolevel
It is not unusual in linguistic stylistics for the analyst to first formulate his own general impression of the text to be analysed and to then study what microlevel stylistic features contribute to that impression. This approach is not without its problems: there is a risk of the macrolevel impression being the analyst's own private opinion which he subsequently confirms by means of the text's stylistic devices. The case studies in this thesis demonstrate that the analyst may get round this problem by using media judgements. These can provide macrolevel impressions with an *inter*subjective underpinning.

Identifying stylistic features
As stated, this thesis discusses numerous stylistic features that have to this day received but scant attention in the analysis of political discourse. This is no coincidence; rather, it is a direct result of the method adopted to identify a text's stylistic features. This method is characterized by two methodological principles: *using a checklist*, and *working comparatively*.

The use of a checklist is innovative. Its use has a few times been proposed in stylistics but as stated these proposals have barely been acted upon in analytical practice. The case studies in chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate that this is a serious shortcoming: the use of a checklist (in the manner described in section 2.3) ought to be more widespread.

A checklist's added value lies in its heuristic function: the list helps find stylistic devices that could otherwise easily be overlooked. Firstly, the analyst is 'forced' by the checklist to include a wide *variation* of stylistic devices in his analysis. The importance of this is illustrated well by the case study in chapter 4. Stylistic studies investigating how politicians position themselves with respect to others usually target choices in forms of address and/or pronouns. Yet, as chapter 4 shows, forms of address and pronouns merely constitute two out of *many* stylistic devices that contribute to a greater or lesser aloofness/closeness. The fact that chapter 4 also discusses all kinds of other stylistic choices is a direct consequence of the method used: analysing a wide variety of stylistic devices is inherent in using a checklist (in the manner described in section 2.3).

Secondly, the checklist also automatically directs the analyst's attention to *grammatical*-stylistic features. Relatively little attention is given, in the analysis of political discourse, to such stylistic devices. If the field of grammar receives any attention at all, analyses are often limited to nominalisation, the passive voice, and

transitivity (cf. chapter 3). This thesis shows that *other* grammatical-stylistic features such as sentence complexity, presenting information in subject, complement or adjunct position, and the use or absence of complementation, are very much worth analysing as well. Going through the checklist systematically helps trace grammatical-stylistic features like these: the list makes explicit that stylistic features occur at all 'levels' of a text – including the grammatical level.

The checklist is, therefore, an important tool with which to identify stylistic devices; its use is of added value. Even so, the list is not a panacea. Going through the checklist systematically *reduces* the risk of overlooking pertinent stylistic devices but it cannot remove this risk completely. For one thing, the checklist is not exhaustive: a complete list would result in an instrument whose length would make it unmanageable in analytical practice (cf. section 2.2.2). The fact that chapters 3 and 4 identify stylistic devices that do not appear in the checklist yet prove worth analysing raises the question whether, and if so, how, the balance between 'stylistic wealth' and 'practical feasibility' of the checklist used can be improved. This is a matter for future research.

The case studies in this thesis further demonstrate that when identifying stylistic features in a text the analyst not only needs to be on the lookout for the *presence* of stylistic devices but also for their *absence*. For example, chapter 3 shows how Wilders's 'clear' manner of speech is partly a result of the absence of mitigators and complement constructions. Similarly, Wilders's aloofness towards his colleagues emerges as the result, partly, of his not engaging in direct dialogue, while Pechtold's relatively aloof stance towards the public at large can be traced in part to the absence of 'telling details' (cf. chapter 4).

Thus, style is not only a matter of *using* certain stylistic devices but, equally, of *avoiding a* particular kind of phrasing. For that reason it is important to not only use a checklist when identifying stylistic devices but also to proceed *by comparison*. For instance, the absence of mitigators and complement constructions from Wilders's language (cf. sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.7) only came to light because these stylistic devices frequently occur in Vogelaar's language, while Wilders's not engaging in dialogue was noted because Pechtold, by contrast, frequently does exactly this (cf. section 4.3.2.2), etc. In other words: the absence of stylistic devices from a text is more easily brought to light if the analyst compares this text another one. This manner of working reduces, as does systematic running through a checklist, the risk of the analyst overlooking pertinent stylistic devices.

Quantifying stylistic features

Adopting such a comparative approach is useful for another reason as well. It allows the analyst to interpret quantitative data in terms of relatively 'many' or 'few': by comparing texts the relative frequency of stylistic features can be determined. The point of comparison the analyst wishes to choose can be both synchronic (cf. chapters 3 and 4) and diachronic (cf. chapter 5) in nature.

Before the analyst can interpret frequency data in terms of relatively 'many' or 'few' he needs to *collect* these frequency data. For the mapping of textual patterns,

related disciplines such as stylometry and genre research (cf. section 1.2) have successfully been using computer programs that can automatically find all tokens of a word, word class or syntactical construction in a corpus. However, for purposes of stylistic analysis aimed at establishing connections between micro- and macrolevels this type of computer tools is of limited value: for the kind of stylistic analysis outlined here, quantifying stylistic features is mostly to be done by hand.

Computational tools are suited for counting features like 'nouns' or 'complement constructions', i.e. features that are distinguishable on formal criteria. However, as this thesis demonstrates, the linguistic-stylistic analyst is, in general, interested in more specific categories, usually of a *semantic* nature. Thus, he may want to know to what extent nouns are 'abstract' or 'concrete', or whether complement constructions 'give expression in the matrix sentence to the speaker's perspective', whether discourse anaphors are 'clear' or 'unclear', to what extent individuals are presented 'as representative of a larger group', etc. (cf. chapters 3 and 4). Such categories cannot be counted automatically by a computer program since mapping these categories requires interpretation. It transpires in chapter 5, for example, that the question whether the matrix sentence of complement constructions contains the speaker's perspective partly needs to be answered on the basis of sentence context. Such an example demonstrates that quantifying stylistic devices often also has a qualitative analytic component.

Establishing connections between micro- and macrolevels

It is inherent in the linguistic-stylistic approach that the analyst establishes causal connections between the microlevel presence or absence of stylistic devices and the macrolevel general impression on the basis of *linguistic analysis* (also cf. chapter 1). These claims about (presumed) effects of choices in formulation have an empirical basis: the analyst bases himself on the introspection of competent language users – not in the sense of his own individual intuition but in the sense of consensus between language users as to the effect of stylistic devices. In other words, as he interprets a choice of phrasing, the analyst refers to shared, *intersubjective* intuitions about the function of stylistic devices.

The empirical claims about effects of linguistic choices as made in linguistic-stylistic analysis could be complemented in two ways in follow-up research. First, it would be useful to conduct more comprehensive corpus-analytical research. For example, can other texts that create the impression of being 'woolly' at the macrolevel also be shown to contain the stylistic devices that were discussed in the analysis of Vogelaar's speech in chapter 3? And can other texts by Wilders that are independently assessable as breeding aloofness from fellow politicians be shown to include the stylistic devices from chapter 4? If this proves not to be the case, or hardly so, this could constitute a reason for theoretical innovations and/or for renewing the analysis of both the speeches discussed here and these other texts. Yet if it does prove to be the case, this would constitute further, 'converging' evidence for the claims made in this thesis as to the effects of the stylistic devices discussed.

A second valuable addition to the linguistic-stylistic approach is, obviously, experimental research. Can the claims about effects of linguistic choices be substantiated experimentally in follow-up research? An appropriate way to do this is to present groups of subjects with different text versions that only differ in their use of the stylistic feature under investigation (cf. the experiment of Fausey & Boroditsky 2010, discussed in section 1.1). Mutatis mutandis, the argument presented above as to the consequences of whether or not this evidence converges with other evidence applies here as well. A further topic for consideration would concern ways of testing effects of *combinations* of stylistic devices. After all, as I argue in this thesis, the manner in which macrolevel impressions arise is a complex one: macrolevel impressions are the result of the joint use of *numerous* stylistic devices, and of the *interplay* between these devices. The need to hold constant as many factors as possible in an experiment entails a restraint that does not have a bearing on the intersubjective-introspection method. It is also for this reason that a linguistic-stylistic approach constitutes an important and, indeed, essential component in the palette of empirical methods in stylistic research.

In conclusion

This thesis argues and demonstrates that a linguistic-stylistic approach is fruitful for analysing Dutch written discourse. Parliamentary speeches by Geert Wilders, Ella Vogelaar and Alexander Pechtold serve as case studies to this end. Although several reasons underlie the choice of these speeches, *other* texts, from other genres, could in principle have been used as well. Whether they are news items, press releases, letters bringing bad news, advertisement texts, etc.: all these texts create certain impressions at the macrolevel that could form starting points for linguistic-stylistic research (cf. the approach adopted in chapters 3 and 4). And in all these types of texts, any systematic use of particular microlevel stylistic devices raises the question what (presumed) effect this use has at the macrolevel (cf. chapter 5). This thesis shows how such connections between the micro- and macrolevel of a text can be established in systematic fashion.