

The Analysis of Churchill's Speech Germany's Invasion of Russia from the Perspective of Stylistics

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ABSTRACT: Speech is an important part of English stylistics, especially the speech delivered by politicians. They use many kinds of methods to convey their political purpose. In this thesis, the author selects Churchill's speech at the moment when Hitler attacked and invaded Russia. In the speech, Churchill uses many kinds of rhetorical devices to illustrate the importance of the rhetorical devices to speech, which could make speech more powerful and attractive.

KEYWORD: speech; rhetorical devices; stylistics

1 INTRODUCTION

There are many kinds of literary stylistics, including poem, novel, news scientific text and speech. And speech is an indispensable part in the literary stylistics, especially the political speech. They use various ways of expression to organize their speech draft, making their opinions accepted by the listeners. Thus, they can achieve the purpose and intention. In this chapter, the author introduces the background of Churchill and his works and the literature review.

1.1 *The background of Churchill and his works*

Winston Churchill is an outstanding politician and elocutionist. He was born into a noble family in Britain. He graduated from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In 1900, Churchill was elected as the senator of conservative party of the Great Britain. He was appointed as the Business Secretary, Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty, Minister of Munitions, Secretary of State for Air and many other important duties. What's more, he is also an excellent writer. In 1953, he was awarded for the Nobel Prize of Literature for "he is proficient for the art of history and biography as well as these addresses fighting for loft human value." Churchill has high literature attainments, which make the hundreds of speeches remarkable. Therefore, he was listed as one of the most outstanding orators over the last one hundred years.

He has many famous speeches, such as *Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat* in May, 1940, *We Shall Fight*

on the Beaches in June, 1940, and *Never Despair* in March, 1955 and many others. However, this speech draft of *Germany's Invasion of Russian* has the most striking background. From December of 1940 to June of 1941, Hitler has controlled 14 countries of Europe, i.e. Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Denmark and so on. On the morning of 22nd, June of 1941, Nazi had a surprise attack to Russia. At evening, Churchill delivered this speech to the whole Britain people. In this speech, Churchill convinced all the Britain people to fight against the Nazi regime by reasoning them with passion and moving them with emotion. And Churchill encourages all the manpower and material resources to help Russia with his political wisdom and language enchantment, in order to destroy the Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime.

1.2 *Literature review*

There are many articles to talk about the speech from various perspective, such as *Analysis of Rhetorical Devices in Churchill's Speech on Hitler's Invasion of the U.S.S.R* (Li Huiqin, 2012), *Contrastive Study of Political Speech and Academic Speech* (Wang Hongyang, 2007), and *Analysis of the Genre Features from Perspective of Linguistics* (Ding Qiuyun, 2011). They analyze the speech from the perspective of pure rhetorical devices, such as repetition and parallelism. They also analyze the difference between political speech and academic speech from the perspective of content and purpose. What's more, they analyze the speech from the perspective of linguistics, such as the genre features

of lexicon, syntax and rhetoric devices. In this thesis, the author analyzes the political speech of Churchill in June, 1941—*Germany's Invasion of Russia* from the perspective of stylistics.

2 STYLISTICS

English stylistics has developed on the basis of traditional rhetoric which may be traced back to Aristotle's time. (Wang Shouyuan, 2000) Here, I will analyze Churchill's speech *Germany's Invasion of Russia* from the three following aspects.

2.1 Phonetic patterning

In English, phonemes may be patterned in different ways. The most important types of patterning in *Germany's Invasion of Russia* are: alliteration and onomatopoeia. Now they will be discussed each respectively.

2.1.1 Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant cluster in stressed syllables. The use of alliteration in speech is emphatic in effect, though we may not be very conscious of them. Consider the examples below:

(1) "I see also the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts."

In the example, alliteration is used to link words that are similar in feeling or thought. The repeated /d/ sound echoes the sense or meaning conveyed by "dull, drilled, docile". It helps to create a heavy and indignant mood. By the use of alliteration, Churchill vividly depicts the image of the Nazi soldiers. They are like the Nazi war machine without any humanity. Where they goes, where there is an hideous, horrible, and miserable slaughter. This implies the intention to kill of the dull-looking Nazi soldiers and the danger of people in Russia.

(2) "But now I have to declare the decision of His Majesty's Government--and I feel sure it is a decision in which the great Dominion will, in due course, concur--for we must speak at once, without a day's delay."

The alliteration calls attention to the words "declare", "decision", "Dominion", "a day's delay", and "course, concur" which carry the alliteration, thus giving great emphasis these words. What Churchill is trying to convey here is not only the musical effect, but also the urgency and resolution that England will help Russia defeat Hitler.

2.1.2 Onomatopoeia

The term onomatopoeia is ambiguous and can be interpreted in several different ways. Here, it refers

to the use of words formed in imitation of the natural sounds associated with the object or action involved. The sounds make us hear as well as see what are described. Consider the example in Churchill's speech *Germany's Invasion of Russia*.

(3) "I see advancing upon all this in hideous onslaught the Nazi war machine, with its clanking, heel-clicking, dandified Prussian officers..."

The literal meaning of "clanking" is to make a loud sound like pieces of metal hitting each other. Here, it refers to the hitting sound from the swords and knives on the Prussian soldiers. And "heel-clicking" means a short sharp sound from shoes. Here, it refers to the shoes of the Prussian soldiers. Churchill uses onomatopoeia to vividly describe the well-equipped Prussian soldiers, which shows their strength to the Russians. It seems to bring the audiences into the horrible and bloody atmosphere and the audiences seems to have witnessed the Russians in an abyss of suffering. The use of "clanking" and "heel-clicking" inspire the passion of the British to help the Russians defeat the Nazi.

2.2 Lexical Devices

At the lexical level, there are two important devices for speech. There are simile and metaphor, both of which manifest the vividness of the speech and encourage the hearts of the audiences.

2.2.1 Metaphor

It is associated, as Leech points out, with a particular rule of transference which may be called the "metaphoric rule" (1969:151). That is, the figurative meaning is derived from the literal meaning or it is, as it were, the literal meaning. Now, here are some examples in *Germany's Invasion of Russia*.

There are three elements in a metaphor. The most generally accepted terms for the most explicitly stated elements are those introduced by I. A. Richards (1936): tenor (for the literal meaning) and vehicle (for the figurative meaning). The element that is not overtly stated is what Leech terms the ground (of comparison), i.e. the likeness perceived between the tenor and the vehicle. Leech points out that every metaphor is implicitly of the form "X is like Y in respect of Z" (X is the tenor, Y is the vehicle and Z is the ground) (1969:151).

(4) "...until with God's help we have rid the earth of his shadow and liberated its peoples from his yoke."

The "shadow" and "yoke" refers to the Hitler's power of devil. In dictionaries, "shadow" and "yoke" are not defined as the Hitler's power of devil. We can, therefore, only interpret them with recourse to the "metaphoric rule". It makes people seem to see the power of Hitler as the shadow covering the world. Thus it creates a horrible atmosphere and helps people make resolution to eradicate the Nazi.

In this example, “shadow” and “yoke” are tenors, Hitler’s power is the vehicle, and horror can most probably be taken to be the ground. The use of this metaphor, as can be clearly seen, vividly reveals cruelty and ferocious aggression of Hitler.

(5) “The Russian danger is therefore our danger, and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free people in every quarter of the globe.”

“Hearth and home” means the floor at the bottom of a fireplace, which usually refers to the home and family life. Here, the “hearth and home” is tenor, “Russia” is vehicle, and warm and pleasant atmosphere is ground. The use of metaphor makes people image the warmth of the family life. They are fighting for this warm and comfortable family. Therefore, it can turn the abstract nation into a concrete object, inspiring people’s will to fight for the nation.

2.2.2 Simile

Simile is one of the lexical devices used to convey the similarity. In the speech of *Germany’s Invasion of Russia*, there is a significant simile.

(6) “I see also the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts.”

Churchill uses simile here, comparing the Hun soldiery to the locusts, because they have the same characteristic—to spread destruction.

2.3 Syntactic overregularity

Syntactic overregularity in literature is revealed mainly in the repetition of certain linguistic units of a text and in parallelism, where some features vary while others are kept constant. Here are some examples in *Germany’s Invasion of Russia*, which makes the speech sound more powerful and passionate.

2.3.1 Repetition

All the overregular features in literature are, in some sense, repetitious. The term repetition, therefore, is restricted to mean the case of exact copying of a certain previous unit in a text, such as a word, phrase or even a sentence (Leech, 1996). It makes the speech powerful and readable, which is the indispensable part in speech. In *Germany’s Invasion of Russia*, there are several examples. Churchill uses repetition to emphasize the importance of combating German and the resolution to have the victory.

(7) “This is no time to moralize on the follies of counties and governments which have allowed themselves to be struck down one by one, when by united action they could have *saved* themselves and *saved* the world from this catastrophe.”

The text repeats the word “saved” for two times, which makes the speech more powerful, emphasizing the importance and urgency to combat Nazi together.

(8) “We have but one aim and one single, irrevocable purpose..... From this nothing will turn us—nothing.”

The repeated emergence of “one” and “nothing” demonstrate the resolution of Churchill to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime.

(9) “The Russian *danger* is therefore our *danger*, and the *danger* of the United States, just as the *cause* of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the *cause* of free men and free people in every quarter of the globe.”

The repeated appearance of “danger” and “cause” makes listeners feel the destruction faced by themselves, their nation and the whole world again. If they want the freedom and happiness, they have to boycott to the Nazi regime, no matter where they come from. Only by doing so, they can make a success.

2.3.2 Parallelism

Parallelism means exact repetition in equivalent positions. It differs from simple repetition in that the identity dose not extend to absolute duplication. It “requires some variable feature of the pattern—some contrasting elements which are ‘parallel’ with respect to their position in the pattern” (Leech, 1969:66)

Parallelism was employed so much so that in made the language elaborate, the rhyme and the rhythm harmonious, tones convincing, and touching and moving in emotions.

Winston Churchill is undoubtedly an outstanding politician and elocutionist. This rhetoric device has been thoroughly employed in the speech.

(10) “I see the Russian soldiers standing... I see them guarding...I see the ten thousand villages of Russian...I see advancing upon this in hideous onslaught the Nazi war machine...I see also the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery...I see the German bombers and fighters in the sky, till smarting from...”

In this text, Churchill uses parallelism of “I see” six times, seeming to bring people to the Russian battlefield with the flash of canons and the ringing of swords: the Russian soldiers stand on the threshold of their native land, guarding the field which their fathers have tilled from time immemorial. They are guarding their homes where mothers and wives pray for the safety of their loved ones, the return of the breadwinner, of their champion, of their protector. There were still primordial human joys, where maidens laugh and children play. They had a happy life. However, under the cruel oppression of Nazi, all of this would disappear. The dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like

a swarm of crawling locusts.(Churchill,1941) The use of parallelism makes people seem to be personally on the scene, arousing the strong desire to help Russian. Even after dozens of years, people are still filled with indignation when they read the speech again. They still hate the atrocity of the Nazi and show their sympathy for Russian.

At the next paragraph, the author applied two examples of parallelism—— “We will never” for twice and “We shall” for three times.

(11) “We will never parley, we will never negotiate with Hitler or any of his gang”

(12) “We shall fight him by land, we shall fight him by sea, we shall fight him in the air, until with God’s help we have rid the earth of his shadow and liberated its peoples from his yoke.”

The above use of parallelism makes the resolution of Churchill to fight to death with Nazi.

3 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the author analyzes Churchill’s speech *Germany’s Invasion of Russia* in June, 1941 from the perspective of stylistics, including the phonemic patterning, rhetorical devices and syntactic overregularity. The speech draft can be regarded as classic work both in the statements and the expressions, especially the application of the rhetorical devices and other ways. All of the stylistics make the speech draft powerful and convincing. It is admitted that Churchill’s speech play a significant role in the battle of fighting against

Nazi. First, from the perspective of phonetic patterning, they should apply to the alliteration and onomatopoeia, which could create a musical effect and strengthen the opinions of the text. Second, from the lexical devices, they should use simile and metaphor or other devices to express their opinions, making the thoughts more specific and imaginative. Finally, from the perspective of syntactical overregularity, they should use repetition and parallelism to express their strong emotions and desires.

This thesis also has some limitations. Since the author herself is a beginner on stylistics, her study of Churchill’s speech *Germany’s Invasion of Russia* may not be authoritative and deep enough. And limited by time, space and references, there must be a lot left to be achieved.

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