

UDC 81'38:81'42

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2412-933X/2026-XXVI-18>

GRAPHOSTYLISTICS IN ENGLISH POETRY

Morozova Halyna

Senior Lecturer at the World Literature Department

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4939-3197

The article examines graphostylistics as a linguistically relevant level of stylistic organisation in English poetry. While traditional linguistic stylistics has focused primarily on phonological, lexical, grammatical, and semantic levels, the graphic dimension of written language has often been marginalised or treated as secondary. This study argues that graphic form constitutes a systematic set of stylistic means that actively participate in meaning construction and textual organisation in poetic discourse.

The research adopts a linguistically grounded approach to graphostylistics, treating graphic features not as isolated visual effects or instances of formal experimentation, but as structured devices that interact with other stylistic levels. The analysis draws on poetic texts representing different historical stages of English poetry, including early pattern poetry, modernist experimentation, and postmodern poetic practice. Particular attention is paid to such graphostylistic means as lineation, spacing, punctuation, and page layout.

The results demonstrate that graphostylistic devices perform a range of semantic and pragmatic functions, including the regulation of reading pace, the foregrounding, and the disruption of linear textual progression. The analysis shows that iconic spatial organisation, syntactic fragmentation, and non-standard page orientation represent recurrent and functionally distinct models of graphostylistic organisation. These models reveal stable patterns of interaction between graphic form and verbal language as opposed to purely author-specific strategies.

The study confirms that graphostylistics should be treated as an integral component of stylistic analysis within the linguistics of text. The article contributes to the expansion of linguistic stylistics by clarifying the status of graphostylistic means and demonstrating their functional role in English poetry. Additionally, it provides a framework for further research into graphic organisation in poetic and literary discourse.

Key words: *graphostylistics, English poetry, poetic text, graphic organization, stylistic levels, visual foregrounding, textual organization, stylistics of text.*

Морозова Галина

старший викладач кафедри світової літератури

Київський столичний університет імені Бориса Грінченка

ГРАФОСТИЛІСТИКА В АНГЛОМОВНІЙ ПОЕЗІЇ

У статті розглянуто графостилістику як лінгвістично релевантний рівень стилістичної організації англійського поетичного тексту. У межах традиційної лінгвістичної стилістики основна увага зазвичай приділяється фонологічному, лексичному, граматичному та семантичному рівням, тоді як графічна форма письмового мовлення часто трактується як допоміжна або технічна. Запропоноване дослідження обґрунтовує положення про те, що графічна організація поетичного тексту становить системний комплекс стилістичних засобів, які беруть безпосередню участь у формуванні смислу та організації читання.

Дослідження ґрунтується на лінгвістичному підході до аналізу графостилістичних засобів і розглядає їх не як ізольовані візуальні ефекти чи прояви формального експерименту, а як структурно значущі елементи, що взаємодіють з лексичним і синтаксичним рівнями тексту. Матеріалом аналізу слугують поетичні тексти різних історичних періодів англійської поезії, що дозволяє простежити еволюцію графостилістичних стратегій.

У результаті аналізу встановлено, що такі графостилістичні засоби, як лінійність і розміщення рядків, просторові розриви, нестандартна пунктуація та організація сторінки, виконують низку семантичних і прагматичних функцій. Вони регулюють темп читання, зумовлюють сегментацію тексту та можуть порушувати лінійну послідовність сприйняття. Виокремлено кілька стійких моделей графостилістичної організації, зокрема іконічне просторове структурування, синтаксичну фрагментацію та радикальну трансформацію орієнтації тексту на сторінці. Отримані результати підтверджують доцільність включення графостилістики до системи лінгвістичного аналізу поетичного тексту та окреслюють перспективи подальших досліджень графічної організації літературного дискурсу.

Ключові слова: *графостилістика, англійська поезія, поетичний текст, графічна організація, стилістичні рівні, стилістичне виокремлення, організація тексту.*

Introduction. In linguistic stylistics, written texts are traditionally analysed on a set of interrelated levels that include phonological, lexical, grammatical, and semantic. While all these levels are interrelated and equally important to stylistic analysis, the visual arrangement of a written text is usually treated as a secondary quality, especially within linguistically oriented studies. In poetry, however, graphic form is an equally important carrier of information along with lexical, grammatical, etc. The graphic form of the text is not only a neutral carrier of the content. It is also a valuable resource that contributes to textual meaning and influences the interpretive process and the reader's understanding. Spacing, punctuation, lineation, font, and arrangement on the page contribute to meaning alongside lexical and grammatical constructions, especially in poetic discourse.

This article addresses this issue by looking into graphostylistics and its specific set of stylistic means that create the graphical level of written language. This study examines graphic stylistic features of English poetry, identifying linguistically relevant devices that create a visual effect and its interaction with other levels of text analysis. English poetry provides a vast field of study for such an analysis and demonstrates many possible means of graphostylistics, from its early forms to modern poetic practices. The material for the article includes poetic texts with vivid visual organisation.

The aim of the article is to define the place of graphostylistics within the system of stylistic devices and to demonstrate its functional role in English poetic texts from a linguistic perspective. The article seeks to clarify the status of graphostylistic means by distinguishing them from broader notions of visual poetry and situating them within the framework of linguistic stylistics. The novelty of the study lies in its systematic treatment of graphostylistics as a linguistically grounded category and in its focus on the interaction between graphic form and other stylistic levels in English poetry. By doing so, the article contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how visual encoding operates as an integral component of poetic language and expands the analytical toolkit of linguistic stylistics in relation to written literary discourse.

Literature Overview. In linguistic stylistics, the analysis of written texts has traditionally been based on a multi-level model that includes phonological, lexical, grammatical, and semantic levels. In this framework, the visual form of written language has often been regarded as secondary. It served mainly as a technical means of transmitting the text rather than as a stylistically meaningful resource. Nevertheless, a growing body of linguistic and semiotic

research demonstrates that graphic form constitutes an integral part of written language organisation and may perform distinct stylistic functions, particularly in literary discourse.

A linguistic foundation for the analysis of graphic form is provided by studies of writing systems and graphology. Crystal defines graphology as a component of linguistic description that includes spelling, punctuation, and layout conventions, emphasising that graphic variation may carry stylistic and communicative significance [2, pp. 248–252]. Coulmas approaches writing not simply as a representation of speech. According to him, it is an autonomous semiotic system, with its own structural principles and meaning-making potential [1, pp. 1–7]. From this perspective, graphic form can be understood as a linguistically significant domain of analysis, rather than being reduced to a technical tool or an aesthetic supplement.

The graphological level within stylistic analysis has been further developed in works on linguistic stylistics. Leech explicitly recognises graphology as one of the levels at which stylistic deviation and foregrounding may occur, particularly in poetic texts where visual arrangement interacts with verbal meaning [6, pp. 39–41]. This position is reinforced by later stylistic frameworks, which emphasise that textual meaning emerges from the interaction of multiple linguistic levels, including those encoded visually [11, pp. 51–53; 6, pp. 18–21]. Wales's terminological overview further consolidates this perspective by defining graphological and typographic features as legitimate stylistic means within linguistic stylistics as opposed to marginal textual ornaments [12, pp. 181–183].

The semiotic dimension of graphic form has been explored in studies situated at the intersection of linguistics and poetics. Poetic texts are complex semiotic structures in which spatial organisation and visual patterning function alongside verbal signs to produce meaning. Developing this line of inquiry, Elleström introduces the concept of visual iconicity, arguing that visual features in poetic texts may establish motivated relations between form and meaning without collapsing poetry into purely visual art [4, pp. 439–445]. This distinction is particularly important for maintaining a linguistically grounded approach to graphostylistics and for differentiating it from broader notions of visual or concrete poetry.

Multimodal theory provides an additional perspective for analysing the role of graphic form in written texts. Kress conceptualises written discourse as a multimodal ensemble in which layout, spacing, and typographic choices interact with verbal language to construct meaning [7, pp. 79–83]. Although multimodality is frequently applied to contemporary media texts, its principles are also applicable to poetic discourse, where graphic form has long functioned as a stylistic resource rather than a mere visual embellishment.

The material and historical dimensions of textual form are foregrounded in research on textuality and media. McGann demonstrates that visual presentation is inseparable from interpretation and states that textual meaning is shaped by the material conditions of textual production and transmission [9, pp. 3–7]. In a related vein, Perloff emphasises the increasing significance of graphic and typographic strategies in modern and postmodern poetry, situating them within broader changes in poetic form and media environments [10, pp. 3–6]. While these approaches provide important insights into the medial and cultural dimensions of graphic form, they do not consistently address its status within the system of linguistic stylistic devices.

Against this background, the present study adopts a linguistically grounded perspective on graphostylistics and focuses on the functional role of graphostylistic means in English poetry. The analysis is directed towards identifying recurrent types of graphic organisation and clarifying their interaction with other stylistic levels of the poetic text. This approach allows graphostylistics to be examined as a distinct set of stylistic devices operating within linguistic stylistics, rather than as an exclusively literary, visual, or media-oriented phenomenon.

of text fragments interrupts linear reading and foregrounds the graphic dimension of poetic organisation. In this case, spacing functions as a graphostylistic device that restructures syntactic processing and delays semantic integration, demonstrating the interaction between graphic and syntactic levels within the poetic text (see Figure 2).

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**Fig. 2. Example of graphostylistic spatial organisation
in e. e. cummings's poetry [3, p. 351]**

Beyond individual authorial practices, spatial organisation in poetic texts demonstrates a broader stylistic function by establishing patterns of visual segmentation that interact with syntactic and rhythmic structures. Such graphostylistic configurations prepare the ground for other forms of graphic deviation, including unconventional punctuation practices, which further modulate reading pace and interpretative segmentation.

Punctuation and its non-standard uses also serve as a graphostylistic device. It regulates reading pace and interpretative segmentation. From a semiotic perspective, such practices confirm that visual features in poetry function as meaningful signs rather than neutral carriers of verbal content.

In postmodern poetry, graphostylistic organisation often extends beyond traditional poetic conventions by disrupting linear modes of reading. Susan Howe's poetic practice exemplifies this tendency through fragmented layout, list-like structures, disrupted spatial alignment, and non-standard page orientation. In *Concordance*, the visual organisation of the text imitates lexicographic and archival forms. They simultaneously undermine the principles of coherence and order. This strategy corresponds to what Elleström defines as visual iconicity, where graphic

form establishes motivated relations with meaning without transforming the poetic text into visual art [4, pp. 439–445].

A more radical example of this graphostylistic strategy can be found in *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, where parts of the poetic text are printed upside down, requiring the reader to physically reorient the page in order to access verbal meaning (see Figure 3) [5, p. 6]. This deliberate inversion brings the graphic level of organisation to the foreground and temporarily disrupts linear syntactic processing. Visual disruption thus precedes semantic interpretation and restructures the reading process itself, demonstrating that graphic form operates not as a supplement to verbal meaning but as a primary organising principle of the poetic text.

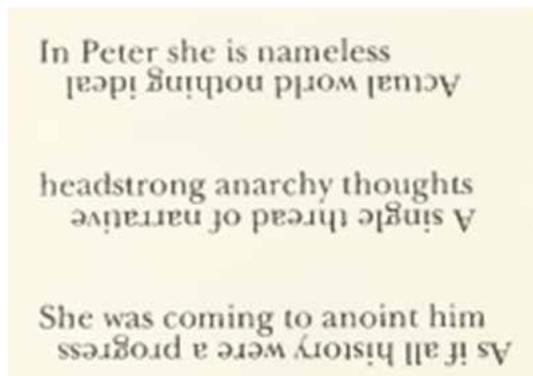


Fig. 3. Graphostylistic disruption of page orientation in Susan Howe's *The Nonconformist's Memorial* [5, p. 6]

The observed patterns confirm that graphostylistic devices can be grouped into recurrent types according to their dominant functions, including iconic structuring, syntactic foregrounding, and documentary or list-based organisation. These types reflect different models in which graphic form interacts with other stylistic levels. As McGann argues, textual meaning cannot be separated from the material and visual conditions in which a text is presented [9, pp. 3–7]. This view is further reinforced by Perloff's analysis of graphic experimentation in modern and postmodern poetry [10, pp. 3–6].

From the perspective of text stylistics, the results show that graphic organisation functions as a meaningful level of stylistic analysis. Graphostylistic means contribute to textual cohesion, foregrounding, and interpretative guidance, shaping the reader's engagement with the poetic text. Consequently, graphostylistics should be regarded as an integral component of stylistic organisation in English poetry, rather than as a phenomenon.

Conclusions. The analysis presented in the article highlights the systematic role of graphic organisation in English poetic texts. The examined material shows that such features as lineation, spacing, punctuation, and page layout actively participate in the structuring of poetic texts by shaping reading trajectories and organising textual segmentation. These graphic elements do not function independently. Instead, they interact closely with lexical and syntactic patterns, contributing to stylistic foregrounding and influencing the dynamics of interpretation.

The study further demonstrates that graphostylistic organisation in English poetry develops through a range of recurrent models, including iconic spatial arrangement, syntactic fragmentation, and the disruption of conventional page orientation. These models reflect different strategies of organising poetic texts and reveal stable patterns in the interaction between graphic form and verbal language.

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Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 19.11.2025
Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 10.12.2025
Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 17.03.2026