



THE CONCEPT OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE

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Abstract. *This article examines the concept of functional style as a variety of the literary language that serves specific spheres of human activity and is characterized by distinctive linguistic features. Historical and modern approaches to the classification of styles are discussed, highlighting their main functions and characteristics. Special attention is given to the traditional styles of the Russian language: scientific, official-business, publicistic, literary-artistic, and colloquial. The role of functional styles in ensuring effective communication and speech culture is emphasized.*

Keywords: *functional style, language style, speech culture, scientific style, publicistic style, official-business style, literary-artistic style, colloquial style, communicative function.*

Functional Style is a historically developed variety of the literary language used in a specific sphere of social life, characterized by particular features in the choice of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. In other words, a functional style represents the implementation of language in specific communicative conditions.

Main Functional Styles. In modern linguistics, several functional styles are traditionally distinguished:

Scientific style – used in scientific and educational fields. It is characterized by logic, consistency, and the use of terminology.

Official-business style – used in legal, administrative, and business documentation. It is distinguished by standardization, precision of formulations, and strict structure.



Publicistic style – serves mass media and oratory speech. Its main goal is to influence the listener or reader, combining informativeness and emotionality.

Literary-artistic style – realized in literary works. It features imagery, emotional richness, and authorial individuality.

Colloquial style – used in everyday informal communication. It is marked by simplicity, freedom of phrase construction, and the use of emotionally colored vocabulary.

The Importance of Functional Styles. Functional styles ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of communication. Each performs a specific task: scientific style conveys knowledge; official-business style regulates social relations; publicistic style shapes public opinion; literary-artistic style affects feelings and imagination; colloquial style serves free communication.

Functional Styles of the Russian Language. The concept of "style" is multifaceted. It appears in art (an artist's individual style, painting techniques, styles of historical periods such as Baroque or Classicism), in literary studies (style of a particular work or genre), psychology (lifestyle styles), philosophy, and linguistics, allowing researchers to view style as an "interdisciplinary category of the humanities" (O.E. Pavlovskaya). Generally, "style" indicates a distinctive feature of a particular activity or its result, motivated by personal choice.

Let's focus on the linguistic notion of style. Language style is understood as a variety of language used in typical social situations (in everyday life, official-business sphere, etc.) and distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics (e.g., official-business, scientific styles). Style in linguistics also refers to



individual speech peculiarities. Thus, style is less a purely linguistic and more a sociolinguistic phenomenon, reflecting social consciousness and expressed through the choice and variation of language means depending on the sphere of language use (science, business, etc.). This perspective allows expanding the scope of "style" to include categories such as internet style or religious style, reflecting emerging or intensifying language spheres.

The social component of style suggests that style is historically changeable. For example, in Aristotle's and Cicero's time, style in ancient rhetoric referred to the selective principle of constructing oratorical or poetic speech, choosing means optimal for persuasion and harmony of sound. In Russia, during M.V. Lomonosov's time, style was seen not as an expedient way of speaking but as styles of bookish speech: high, middle, and low. In the 20th century, with the study of the language-speech dichotomy, concepts of "language styles" and "speech styles" were distinguished—living speech realizes language's potential, but language consciousness holds ideas about functional styles.

Currently, most linguists recognize four styles: three bookish (official-business, scientific, publicistic) and colloquial style (or spoken speech).

The classification of a fifth style—literary-artistic—is debated due to its ability to mimic other styles based on authorial intent. This highlights the style-forming nature of literary-artistic speech, which cannot be said of scientific or business speech. Disagreements about this style stem from whether it belongs to literary studies or linguistics.

For convenience, the following classical scheme of styles in linguistics is accepted:

(Here you can insert a diagram or list if needed)

Additionally, oratory style relates to oral speech but overlaps with written styles; epistolary style resembles official-business and literary styles, etc. If styles



are counted according to communication spheres, there could be up to 12 styles (V.A. Avrorin).

Modern linguistics mostly divides styles by functional criteria—based on the function they perform in communication or professional activity. The main social functions of language are communication, conveying information, and influencing the audience. According to academician V.V. Vinogradov, styles can be grouped by social functions: everyday style (communication), official-business, documentary, scientific (information), publicistic and literary (influence).

Functional Style. A functional style is a variety of bookish language typical for a specific sphere of human activity, characterized by particular linguistic means. Each functional style is realized in speech genres. Traditionally, modern Russian distinguishes four bookish functional styles: scientific, publicistic, official-business, literary-artistic.

Scientific style serves science, technology, and education. It conveys objective information about nature, humans, and society; proves its truth, novelty, and value; activates logical thinking; and interests non-specialists. Its goal is to communicate and explain scientific results, usually in monologue form. Features include clarity, precision, strict logic, wide use of terms and abstract vocabulary, preference for words in direct meanings, and relatively complex syntax. Emotional-expressive vocabulary is absent. Sentences are mostly narrative with straightforward word order.

Official-business style serves legal, governmental, administrative, and commercial fields within and between states. It satisfies society's need for official documentation of acts, political life, administrative, and business relations between legal and natural persons. The goal is information transmission, usually in



monologue. It is characterized by precision, impersonality, dryness, high standardization, and numerous set phrases.

Publicistic style is used in various social spheres: mass media (including electronic), politics, public organizations. Its goal is to influence the listener's or reader's mind and feelings, shaping public opinion. Features include the use of expressive and evaluative vocabulary amid neutral language and figurative expressive means.

Literary-artistic style serves aesthetic communication and verbal artistic works. Its main feature is the contextual transformation of concept-words into image-words expressing the author's thought. The goal is to affect the reader's feelings and imagination. This leads to a strive for fresh images, original expressions, and broad use of expressive, emotionally colored language means. Artistic speech is the highest form of creative language use, marked by authorial individuality that can identify the writer by language analysis.

Colloquial style serves informal communication, mainly oral. It features many repetitions, question-answer form, concreteness, expressiveness, subjective attitude. It includes dialectal, socially limited words (professional jargon, slang), and emotionally expressive vocabulary.

Each functional style has its features of literary norm realization, distinguished by pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, morphology, and syntax. Teaching stylistic richness and preventing speech errors is central to speech culture.

Every functional style comprises a set of genre varieties. In each style, linguistic features (use of parts of speech, noun cases, verb tenses, sentence types and lengths), vocabulary (terms, professionalisms, bureaucratism, colloquialisms, abstract or concrete words), and text construction follow the dominant principle of speech organization in that style.



Dominant of business style: maximum precision and unambiguity, resulting in verbosity, prohibition of pronouns substitution, long sentences with many clarifying constructions, special terms, and standardized constructions including forms to be filled.

Dominant of scientific style: conceptual precision with logically emphasized speech. Its accuracy is more abstract than business style's.

Dominant of publicistic style: social evaluation. Includes fact selection, evaluative words, newspaper labels, expressive syntax.

Dominant of colloquial style: minimal concern for form, leading to phonetic indistinctness, lexical imprecision, wide pronoun use, elliptical syntax, etc. The legitimacy of isolating the literary-artistic style among functional styles is debatable. The language of literary works absorbs other functional styles and lacks specific linguistic markers, performing a special aesthetic function. However, artistic speech uses only certain features of other styles, used aesthetically rather than their original communicative function. Literary-artistic speech represents a functional style serving an aesthetic sphere.

Dominant of artistic style: imagery and aesthetic importance of every element, abundant tropes, striving for freshness, special expressive means like rhythm, rhyme, and harmonic speech organization.

Styles should be considered in speech culture study as they affect communicative qualities. Communication essentially occurs not in the language as a whole but in one of its functional styles.

A particular utterance or entire work may represent a functional style not necessarily in a pure form but as a multi-layered stylistic phenomenon, resulting from style interaction.

Conclusion. Functional styles are a vital element of literary language, ensuring adequate interaction among people in various social spheres. Each style has its own



dominant and system of linguistic means allowing specific communicative tasks: from conveying objective knowledge to affecting feelings and emotions. Their study is important for developing speech culture, as mastering stylistic features promotes accuracy, expressiveness, and communication effectiveness.

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