




Lecture 9. Functional Styles of the English Language

3 main definitions of the notion 'style' :

- **A variety of the national language traditionally used in one of the socially identifiable spheres of life that is characterized by a particular set of linguistic features, including vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.**

From this point of view the most broad and well known subdivision in many national languages today usually describes these varieties as *neutral, literary (high) and colloquial (low)*: e.g. Cockney, upper-class, educated English.


- **Generally accepted linguistic identity of oral and written units of discourse, such as public speech, a lecture, a friendly letter, a newspaper article, etc.** Such units demonstrate style not only in a special choice of linguistic means but in their very arrangement, i. e. composition of a speech act, that creates a category of text marked by oratory, scientific, familiar or publicist style.
- **Individual manner of expression determined by personal factors, such as educational background, professional experience, sense of humour, etc.:** e.g. personal style of communication, the style of Pushkin's early poetry.



A **functional style** is a system of interrelated language means, which serve a definite aim in communication.

Each functional style is a relatively stable system at the given stage in the development of the literary language, but it changes, from one period to another.

The development of each style is predetermined by the changes in the norms of Standard English. It is influenced by changing social conditions, the progress of science and the development of cultural life in the country.



Professor Arnold defines FS as “a system of expressive means peculiar to a specific sphere of communication” (I.V. Arnold “Stylistics of Modern English”).

She singles out **4 styles:**

poetic style,

scientific style,

newspaper style,


colloquial style



I.R. Galperin distinguishes the following major functional styles:

- 1) The language of scientific prose
- 2) The language of official documents
- 3) The language of publicist literature
- 4) The language of newspapers
- 5) The language of belle-letters

Professor Galperin differs from many other scholars in his views on functional styles because **he includes in his classification only the written variety of the language.**




In 1960 the book “Stylistics of the English language” by **M.D. Kuznetz and J.M. Skrebnev** appeared. The varieties distinguished by these authors included:

1. Literary or Bookish Style:

- a) publicist style;
- b) scientific (technological) style;
- c) official documents.

2. Free (“Colloquial”) Style:

- a) literary colloquial style;
- b) familiar colloquial style.



One of the relatively recent books on stylistics is the handbook by **A.N. Morokhovsky** and his co-authors “Stylistics of the English language”.

They distinguish:

1. Official business style;
2. Scientific–professional style;
3. Publicist style;
4. Literary colloquial style;
5. Familiar colloquial style.

D. Crystal suggests the following subdivision of styles:

Regional varieties of English reflect the geographical origin of the language used by the speaker: Lancashire variety, Canadian English, Cockney, etc.

Social variations testify to the speaker's family, education, social status background: upper class and non-upper class, a political activist, a member of the proletariat, a *Times* reader, etc.

Occupational styles present quite a big group that includes the following types: a) religious English; b) scientific English; c) legal English; d) plain (official) English; e) political English; f) news media English.

Restricted English includes very tightly constrained uses of language when little or no linguistic variation is permitted: a) knitwrite in books on knitting; b) cookwrite in recipe books; c) congratulatory messages; d) newspaper announcements; e) newspaper headlines; f) sports casting scores; g) air speak, the language of air traffic control; h) emergency speak, the language for the emergency services; i) e-mail variety, etc.

Individual variation involves types of speech that arise from the speaker's personal differences meaning such features as physique, interests, personality, experience and so on.

The Belles – Lettres Style.

Functions: aesthetic, educational, informational, entertaining, evaluative.

Stylistic peculiarities of this style are:

- 1) imagery,
- 2) unity of artistic form and contents,
- 3) completeness and integrity,
- 4) artistic imagery produced by speech concreteness,
- 5) emotionality and evaluation.

Sub-styles of the Belles-Lettres Style: poetry, prose, drama.

Poetic genres are: ballad, ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, epigram, etc.

Genres in prose: a story, a novel, etc.

Genres in drama: comedy, tragedy, drama, etc.

Language means of the belles-lettres style are:

Phonetic means – sound repetition, onomatopoeia, alliteration, consonance, dissonance, euphony.

Rhyme and metre in poetry, rhythm in prose.

Vocabulary – unlimited choice of vocabulary (including non-literary means, jargon and slang words), the use of figures of speech or lexical stylistic devices.

Grammatical means: in morphology a variety and wealth of stylistic effects of morphological forms and categories; in syntax a variety and wealth of syntactical constructions, colloquial speech stylization.



Means of expressive syntax: inversion, parallelism, antithesis, etc.

Compositional textual devices (three-part compositional canon – introduction, the main part and the ending with a more complex model of prologue and epilogue), deviations from the canon and their stylistic importance.

The system of stylistic devices: systemic use of imagery - metaphors, metonymies, epithets, similes, hyperboles, litotes, puns, oxymorons, zeugmas, different repetitions.

Scientific Style.

The main function: rational cognition and linguistic presentation of the dynamics of thinking.

Sub-styles and genres: scientific style proper (thesis, abstract of thesis, monograph, article, report, abstract of a report...), popular scientific (an article, annotations, review, etc.).

"Sub-languages": law, political, medical, economic, technical, computer, linguistic, etc.

Scientific Style.

Types of presentation: description and argumentation.

Peculiarities of scientific communication:
planned, prepared, delayed in time
communication (except for lectures and reports).

Style-forming features: great role of tradition in the use of language means, objective and non-categorical presentation, specific means of expression, restrictions in the use of evaluation, emotional language means, absence of imagery.

Scientific Style.

Language means of the scientific style are:

- ***Lexical means*** - specialized scientific terminology, the use of nouns and verbs in abstract meanings, special reference words, scientific phraseology, peculiarities in word- building (standard suffixes and prefixes, mainly of Greek and Latin origin: – tele-, morpho-, philo-, -ism, etc.)
- ***Grammatical means:*** the predominance of nouns over verbs; the use of prepositional “of-phrases” to substitute the genitive case; wide use of the Passive Voice, Indefinite Tenses, numerous conjunctions (not merely... but also, whether ... or both... and, as...as).
- ***Syntactical means:*** priority of full, logically correct, regular syntactical models, priority in the use of compound sentences, extensive use of Complex Object, Participial and Gerundial Constructions).

Scientific Style.

Composition of scientific text – the usual model is presented by the following scheme - a problem situation, idea, hypothesis, proof, conclusion, compositional speech forms of discussion, argumentation and description, conclusion.

Functional restrictions: objections to the use of non-literary vocabulary (slang words, vulgarisms) and scarce use of emotional vocabulary and phraseology, and stylistic devices (metaphors, metonymies, etc.), scarce use of “I-speaking”, limited use of incomplete and one-member sentences.

Publicist Style.

The main function: manipulative (impact producing), propaganda, popularization, education, analysis and criticism, entertainment.

Stylistic features: interchange of standard and expressiveness, explicit evaluation, impressive character, stylistic effects of "novelty", advertising, neutral or formal manner of presentation, generalization, the use of arguments.

Publicist Style.

Substyles and genres: publicist style proper (articles, essays, sketches, travelogues, memoirs), political propaganda (slogans, leaflets, proclamations), newspapers style (editorial (leader) article, brief news, or news columns, report, interview, reportage), oratory (*speeches, parliamentary debates, TV discussions*), TV and radio journalese, publicist cinematography (documentary, news-reel, etc.).

New publicist genres: talk-show, reality-show, role-play show, game-show, debates, TV poll, TV commentary, new types of information programs.

Newspaper Style.

Newspaper genres: editorial (leading article), newsreel, brief news report, reportage, interview, essay, title, topical satire, advertisement.

Graphic means: wide use of graphic means - change of prints, word-arts, italics, various graphic symbols (asterisks, etc.) as well as elements of compositional arrangement such as columns, titles, subtitles, parts and paragraphs.

Language means of publicist style:

Vocabulary: priority of neutral and bookish vocabulary, wide use of proper and geographical names, abundance of statistics, facts and data, means of evaluation, neologisms, social political terminology, loan-words and international words, words and word-combinations of other styles (especially, conversational), terminology.

Newspaper Style.

Means of imagery to increase expressiveness (trite metaphors, metonymies, personification, metaphorical paraphrases, metaphorical use of terminology).

Newspaper terms: newspaper vocabulary and clichés, decomposition of phraseological units.

Grammatical means: in morphology the use of the singular number of nouns in their collective meaning, plural number for the definition of generalization. Wide use of declarative sentences. The use of questions, exclamatory sentences.

Means of expressive syntax: inversions, parallelism, antithesis, gradation, compositional and textual means: canonized three-part structure of publicist texts, the principle of “pyramid” and its effects in the composition of modern newspaper text, the use of compositional (foregrounding) devices.

Official Style (The Style of Official Documents).

The main function: regulative.

Substyles and genres: the style of law documents (laws, legislative acts, codes, instructions, orders), the style of official documents (applications, references, protocols, questionnaires, profiles, autobiographies, agreements, contracts), the style of diplomatic documents (agreements, pacts, communiqués, note, memoranda, declarations).

Stylistic features: non-personal character, precision, standard, imperative and prescriptive nature.

Specific features of the official style: templet (pattern) text composition, speech standard and stereotyped ways of expression and arrangement of the language means (cliches, standard vocabulary).

Official Style.

Language means: graphic means: wide use of graphic means - change of the print, italics, the use of graphic delimitation means - various graphic symbols (asterisks, lines, patterns, etc.).

Lexical means: repetitions, the use of constructions with archaic elements, wide spread of vocabulary units, expressing obligation, absence of subjective emotional appraisal.

Official Style.

Grammatical means: nominal character, wide use of the genitive case, different forms of expressing imperative, absence of the first and second person presentation and correlated pronouns, the use of collective nouns for the expression of impersonality.

Compositional devices: the patterned structure of texts of all the genres and substyles, declarative, ascertaining nature, neglect of narration and discussion.

Colloquial (Conversational) Style.

The main function is communication.

Extra-linguistic features: informality, spontaneous character of speech, interpersonal contact and direct involvement in the process of communication.

Stylistic features: familiarity, ellipsis, concrete character of speech, interruption and logical inconsistency of the speech, emotiveness.

Secondary stylistic features: idiomatic and pattern character, “personal” type of speech presentation. Oral and written (epistolary) varieties. Two forms of speech: dialogue and monologue.

Colloquial (Conversational) Style.

Substyles and genres: literary conversational style (talks, conversations, interviews), familiar-conversational style (communication between family members, friends, intimate communication, children's talk), low colloquial (quarrels, abuse, scandal, insult).

Language peculiarities: high activity of non-bookish means of the language, incomplete constructions, weak syntactic connections between the parts of a syntactic structure, active use of means of verbal imagery, means of expressing subjective appraisal, emotional and expressive means at all the levels, patterned speech, specific phraseology, personal forms.

Colloquial (Conversational) Style.

Language means: phonetic means: intensive modification of sounds in fluent speech, positional changes: reduction of vowels in unstressed syllables. *Complete reduction:* **apokopa** (the drop of the final consonant or final part of the word), **synkopa** (the drop of a vowel or several sounds in other positions).

Wealth and variety of intonation patterns (rhythm, tempo, timbre, melody peculiarities).

Vocabulary: conversational vocabulary, wide use of non-literary vocabulary, expressive-emotional vocabulary, the use of stylistic devices.

Grammatical means: frequent use of pronouns and particles, wealth and variety of aspect and tense form of a verb; ellipsis, priority of short sentences, wide use of expressive constructions, exclamatory sentences.