

The Major Concepts of Stylistics. Style as a Linguistic Phenomenon.

Lecture 2



Conceptions of style



Style

a specific characteristic
of a human activity
presupposing some
choice within the
system of accepted
norms, a way, a mode,
a manner of fulfilling
some activity

K.A. Dolinin



Characteristics of style



1. a set of characteristics by which we distinguish one author from another, one social group, trend, period, etc. from another

2. something belonging to the **plane of expression**



What is style in language?

Language - a vehicle of human communication (some kind of activity).

Style – a manner of conducting this activity.

Style in linguistics

- aesthetic function and emotional colouring of language
- EMs and SDs of language
- synonymous ways of expressing the same idea
- individual manner of using language

Style as a decoration of language

Style and language – 2 separate bodies.

Style – like a trimming to a dress.

Style as a technique of expression

Style – an ability to write clearly, correctly and in an interesting manner.

Style in the utilitarian sense, can be taught.

Style as a literary genre

Classical style, realistic style, the style of Romanticism, etc.

Is applied to different types of literary works – fable, novel, ballad, etc.

Style depending on the aim of communication

Functional style

A system of interrelated language means which serves **a definite aim** of communication

The problem of the norm. Deviations from the norm

Style is a product of individual choices and patterns of choices among linguistic possibilities.

S. Chatman

What is the norm?

1. the invariant of the norm (an abstraction: phonetic, lexical, grammar and spelling rules of a language)
2. its variants (realized in concrete texts)

Norm

a set of stable language means which are recognized by the language community as a model or standard

Two opposite points of view

Style reveals
itself through
variations
within the limits
of the norm.

Anything that can be
labelled as “stylistic”
is already a deviation
from the established
norm.

Style is deviations.

(Enkvist)

Deviations

non-expressive

anomalies which
are found in the
speech of
children,
foreigners and
people with
mental disorders

e.g. *a books, me speaks*

expressive

deliberate,
motivated
violations,
producing a
specific effect,
often creating
an image

e.g. *two wives ago,
it was an I who*

Rule – restriction – violation

1. every countable noun can take -s in plural and be used with an article
1. mass and abstract nouns are used with the \emptyset article and have no plural form
1. violation

1. a book – books

2. sand, water

sands (a vast amount, the sands of Sahara)

the waters of the Pacific

3. footsteps on the sand of war

The Foregrounding Theory

Foregrounding – an ability of a verbal element to obtain extra significance in a given context.

Prague School of Structural Linguistics

Russian formalists – Y. Tynyanov, R. Jacobson, B. Tomashevsky, V. Shklovsky

Theory of text structuring

- Underlining main ideas
- Dividing text into paragraphs (slow perception of an unbroken text)
- Headlines help to focus on main ideas

Types of Foregrounding

1. Coupling
2. Convergence
3. Defeated Expectancy (Low Predictability)
4. Salient Feature (Strong Position)

Coupling

a deliberate repetition of similar elements
in similar positions

R. Jacobson: parallel constructions.

S. Levin: universal character of coupling.

Coupling on every level of language

- phonetic – rhyme, alliteration, assonance
- lexical – synonyms, antonyms, derivatives, words belonging to one semantic field
- syntactical – anaphora, epiphora, polysyndeton

So long as men can breathe and eyes can
see,

So long lives this and this gives life to me.

W. Shakespeare

Lend your money and lose your friend.

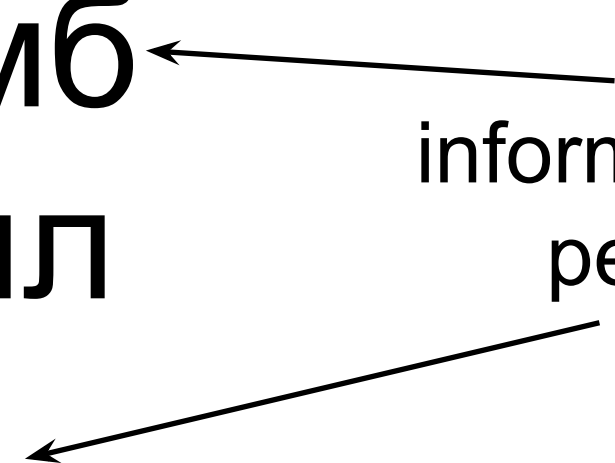
Convergence

accumulation of SDs promoting the same
idea, motive

Defeated Expectancy

Some element of the text receives prominence due to the interruption in the pattern of predictability.

Колумб ← 2
открыл informational
окно peaks



Information peaks and recessions agree with organization of human attention

Talk all you like about automatic ovens and electric dishwashers, there's nothing you can have around the house as useful as a ***husband***.

Чем ***меньше*** женщину мы любим, тем ***лучше*** нравимся мы ей.

А.С. Пушкин «Евгений Онегин» Глава IV.

Semi-marked structures

a variety of defeated expectancy
associated with deviation from the
grammatical and lexical norms

N. Chomsky: gradation of grammatical norm



Marked

Semi- marked

Unmarked

are generated according to grammar rules of a given language

grammatically incorrect sentences. Don't exist in a language, can't be generated according to its rules

Semi-marked structures

structures that deviate from the established rules of grammar and require special interpretation

- are a linguistic basis for tropes and SDs

- low predictivness

- a source of expressing limitless number of vivid images (structures are vague and allow different interpretations)

- compression

Colourless green ideas sleep
furiously.

N. Chomsky

Strong position

- headline
- beginning of the text
- final episode

Thank you!

