

# **THE THEORY OF FUNCTIONAL STYLES**

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1. THE NOTION OF STYLE IN FUNCTIONAL  
STYLISTICS

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2. STYLE, NORM, FUNCTION

3. LANGUAGE VARIETIES

4. AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE  
SYSTEMS

## D.CRYSTAL

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- 1) 'style' refers to the distinctive characteristics of some single author's use of language ('Wordsworth's style', 'the style of the mature Shakespeare')
- 2) 'style' refers to groups of literary figures ('the style of Augustan poetry')
- 3) 'style' is a concept which is applicable to the language as a whole

# T.A.ZNAMENSKAYA

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- 1) A variety of the national language traditionally used in one of the socially identifiable spheres of life that is characterised by a particular set of linguistic features, including vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.
- 2) Generally accepted linguistic identity of oral and written units of discourse, such as public speech, a lecture, a friendly letter, a newspaper article, etc.
- 3) Individual manner of expression determined by personal factors, such as educational background, professional experience, sense of humour, etc.

# THE LITERARY NORM

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Any national language uses the notion of '**correct language**' which involves conformity to the grammatical, lexical and phonetic standards accepted as normative in this society. The favoured variety is usually a version of the standard written language, especially as encountered in literature or in the formal spoken language that most closely reflects literary style. It is presented in dictionaries, grammars and other official manuals.

# THE LITERARY NORM

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The language system provides and determines the general rules of usage of its elements.

The **norm** is the actual use of these provisions by individual speakers under specific conditions of communication.

Individual use of the language implies a personal selection of linguistic means on all levels. When this use conforms to the general laws of the language this use will coincide with what is called the literary norm of the national language.

# IS THE LITERARY NORM A HOMOGENEOUS ENTITY?

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The literary norm is not a homogeneous and calcified entity. It varies due to a number of factors, such as regional, social, situational, personal, etc.

The norm will be dictated by the social roles of the participants of communication, their age and family or other relations. An important role in the selection of this or that variety of the norm belongs to the purpose of the utterance, or its function. Informal language on a formal occasion is as inappropriate as formal language on an informal occasion.

# THE NORM VARIATION

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The norm of the language implies various realisations of the language structure that are sometimes called its subsystems, registers or varieties.

Functional styles are subsystems of the language and represent varieties of the norm of the national language. Their evolution and development has been determined by the specific factors of communication in various spheres of human activity. Each of them is characterised by its own parameters in vocabulary usage, syntactical expression, phraseology, etc.



# LANGUAGE VARIETIES

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“The English language is not a single, homogenous, stable entity: it is a complex mixture of varying structures. Variety in the English language is an inevitable product of language development.”  
(D.Crystal)

# LANGUAGE VARIETIES

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The English language can be seen as a complex of situationally-conditioned, standardized sets of linguistic variations: these can be referred to as varieties of the language.

There can be pointed out the following varieties:

- regional**
- social**
- occupational**

# REGIONAL VARIETY

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English is considered mother tongue in the UK, US, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Caribbean nations. In Canada and South Africa English is one of the two native languages. Speakers of these countries use different kinds of English in different areas within these countries. These are regional varieties of English that are sometimes called regional dialects.

# SOCIAL VARIETY

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The social background of individuals may have a powerful effect on the kind of language they use. One and the same person may belong to different social groups and perform different social roles. A person may at the same time be described as 'a parent', 'a wife', 'an architect', 'a feminist', 'a senior citizen', 'a member of Parliament', 'an amateur sculptor', 'a theatre-goer'; the possibilities may be endless.

Any of these identities can have consequences for the kind of language we use. In many ways our pronunciation, choice of words and constructions, general strategy of communication are defined by the age, sex and socio-economic aspects.

# OCCUPATIONAL VARIETY

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Any professional field could serve as an illustration of occupational linguistic identity. There are no class distinctions here. Factory workers have to master a special glossary of technical terms and administrative vocabulary (*seniority labels, term of service, severance pay, fringe benefits, safety regulation*) in order to carry out professional communication. To fulfil their tasks they develop jargon and professional slang, which set them apart from outsiders. The more specialised the occupation and the more senior or professional the position the more technical the language.

# AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE SYSTEMS

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I. R. Galperin in his books on English Stylistics distinguishes 5 functional styles which can be further subdivided into several substyles:

## **1. The Belles-Lettres Style:**

- poetry;
- emotive prose;
- the language of the drama.

## **2. Publicist Style:**

- oratory and speeches;
- the essay;
- articles.

# **AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE SYSTEMS**

## **3. Newspaper Style:**

- brief news items;
- headlines;
- advertisements and announcements;
- the editorial.

## **4. Scientific Prose Style.**

## **5. The Style of Official documents:**

- business documents;
- legal documents;
- the language of diplomacy;
- military documents.

# AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE SYSTEMS

In 1960 the book «Stylistics of the English Language» by **M. D. Kuznetz** and **Y. M. Skrebnev** appeared. The book was a kind of brief outline of stylistic problems. The styles and their varieties distinguished by these authors included:

## **1. Literary or Bookish Style:**

- publicist style;
- scientific (technological) style;
- official documents.

## **2. Colloquial Style:**

- literary colloquial style;
- familiar colloquial style.



# AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE SYSTEMS

I. **V. Arnold** in «Stylistics of Modern English» presents the following classification:

## **1. Colloquial Styles:**

- literary colloquial;
- familiar colloquial;
- common colloquial.

## **2. Literary Bookish Styles:**

- scientific;
- official documents;
- publicist (newspaper);
- oratorical;
- poetic.

# AN OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE SYSTEMS

Another classification of functional styles was offered by **A. N. Morokhovsky** and his co-authors **O. P. Vorobyova, N. I. Liknosherst** and **Z. V. Timoshenko**:

- Official business style.
- Scientific-professional style.
- Publicist style.
- Literary colloquial style.
- Familiar colloquial style.

# TEXT 1

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It has long been known that when exposed to light under suitable conditions of temperature and moisture, the green parts of plants use carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen to it. These exchanges are the opposite of those, which occur in respiration. The process is called photosynthesis. In photosynthesis, carbohydrates are synthesized from carbon dioxide and water by the chloroplasts of plant cells in the presence of light. Oxygen is the product of the reaction. For each molecule of carbon dioxide used, one molecule of oxygen is released. A summary chemical equation for photosynthesis is:



## TEXT 2

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### **Wal-Mart told to raise German prices**

Wal-Mart's European expansion plans suffered their second blow in a week as the German competition authority ordered the retailer to raise key prices in its German hypermarkets.

## TEXT 3

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In your letter of July, 15<sup>th</sup> you advise us of the problem of finding skilled personnel. In this connection we wish to state that only about

12 per cent of skilled workforce is engaged in minor industrial activity associated with servicing the city's growth.

We enclose herewith a schedule of the work and the work progress report thereon and we wish to state that among considerations influencing the selection of sites is the desire to maintain residential amenity.

We wish to state that several specialized industries have been established in terms of article 3 of the said contract.