

## Functional-stylistic registers in the English language

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### Abstract

This paper is dedicated to examining, studying, analyzing, and comparing the definitions of the key linguistic categories of "functional style" and "register", presented in English-language discourse. There were analyzed classical works by the Russian linguists and program works of Western scholars as well. According to the results of the research, it was found that in a general sense the terms "register" and "functional style" practically do not overlap. The notion of "register" is used by English and Russian researchers in different ways: the first interpret the selection of lexical and grammatical means, while the other consider the method, communication style, or perception. Moreover, there is only one aspect in which the definitions of the term "functional style" partially correspond: the style is understood to be the expressive means of language. These findings can be beneficial for both linguists and specialists. Due to all of the mentioned above, it becomes obvious that there is a need for scientific discussions, and for standardization of the terminological apparatus, or at least specification of the range of problems that need to be conceptualized.

**Keywords:** functional-stylistic, registers, examining, studying, analyzing, and comparing

### Introduction

The terms "functional style", "register", "functional variant", "functional variety", "functional type (of speech)", "constructive-stylistic vector" are the subject for discussion and each of the researchers offers their own idea for the concept in linguistic science. From the above, let us analyze the correlation between the concepts of functional style and register; FS represents "a socially conscious, functionally determined, internally integrated combination of ways of use, choice and complex of means of linguistic communication in a certain nationwide language, aligned with similar methods of expression, designed to realize other goals, perform other functions in the framework of language social practice of this or that nation" [4, 60]; Functional style is a category of the literary national language belonging to the whole linguistic society, whereas as individual style is a phenomenon belonging to the sphere of individual language use. FS is prescriptive and obligatory, while individual style is arbitrary and optional, it develops in the mainstream of some functional style, but not vice versa [10, 75]; Functional style is defined as "the variation of literary speech, performing a specific function in communication" [11, 86]; Functional style is a system of interrelated language means, performing a specific communication purpose. Thus, functional style can be considered the result of a specific task set by the speaker" [3, 28]. There are a huge number of views on the classification of this style.

### Main Part

Generally, the following FS are distinguished in English (I.R. Halperin's classification): scientific prose style or scientific style, official style, newspaper style, media style and literary style. Also D. Ashurova referring to P. Halperin believes that there are five FS: newspaper style, official style, journalistic style, artistic style, scientific style. I.V. Naer assumes that this classification can be supplemented

by technical, professional, and religious styles [9]. In accordance with I. V. Arnold, colloquial, poetic, business, and oratorical styles are perceived as a separate category. [1, 201]. The following typology of FS with regard to the basic functions of language was proposed by academic V. Vinogradov: household-domestic (communicative function); household-business, official-documentary and scientific (informative function); publicistic and fiction (influential function) [3, 6]. The following FS are considered by V.A. Kukharenko: scientific, official-business, journalistic, newspaper, and fiction. By N.G. Blokhin, there are five basic FS: scientific, official-business, journalistic, literary, and colloquial. Although, unlike V.A. Kuharenko, he gives a type of colloquial style and adds newspaper style as part of the publicistic style [8, 185].

Despite the lack of agreement among FS researchers on the principles of their distinguishing and structuring, the preferred viewpoint is the one according to which five main FS are emphasized in the functional-stylistic layer of the linguistic system: scientific, formal-business, literary, newspaper, and colloquial [13]. (fig.1)

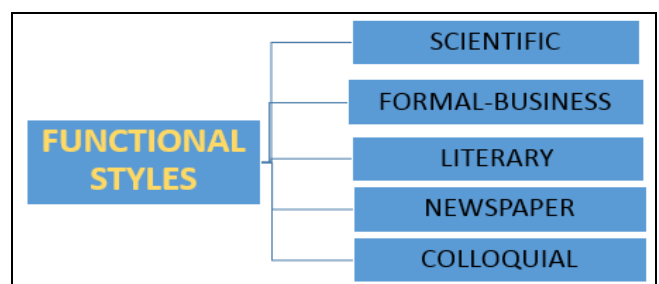


Fig 1

Having analyzed in detail, the concepts and typologies of FS, in our opinion, it is necessary to consider the relevant concepts of FS and register, as there is very little overlap

between the terms "register" and "functional style". However, it should be emphasized that the choice of register in different types of speech situations is called "situational variability". It is necessary to emphasize that context makes a huge contribution to language variation in sociolinguistics largely in the same way as it contributes to meaning in pragmatics. Register and style are major components of sociolinguistic context and determine how language users apply the linguistic means at their disposal, whether in relation to the content of speech, the nature of the audience, the means of presentation, or the mode of expression.

Such sociolinguistic varieties of language, do not intersect in terms of definition. Therefore, the various styles or registers are considered "functional" varieties of language because they are based on sociolinguistic needs. Consequently, a register is a linguistic variation considered suitable to be used in a particular speech situation. (Kortmann 2005: 255f). There is also Crystal and Davy's (1969) view of register that it is "haphazardly" unfolded as an overgeneralized means of language function and form. In other words, register is a term being used to cover a wide range of styles of language use. The continuum of its placement perhaps convinces us that it is used without creating boundaries for it. Sometimes the term "Functional Style" is also used to refer to situational variation. Nevertheless, it also includes variation in grammatical structures. It is less predictable and more dependent on personal preferences than register (Kortmann 2005: 256). Moreover, this term most clearly expresses the ontology of discourse and its style affiliation to one or another register. Hence, there is a certain distinction between register and FS. Both are associated with certain speech situations, but while register often refers to the specific vocabulary chosen and expected depending on the specific speech situation, but FS refers to grammatical variation. Additionally, there is a polemic between the concepts of register and genre. In the English literature, the concepts of "genre" and "register" are often used synonymously due to the fact that in both cases researchers consider the situational context to determine them. For example, the components of a situation that M. Halliday calls register: field (what happens), direction (who is involved), and modality (what role speech plays) (15, 31), E. Davitt has deliberately referred to genre. D. Bieber and S. Conrad discuss the differences between register and genre, emphasizing the proximity of these concepts. They define register as a kind of utterance (text) conditioned by situational context and communicative tasks: "the description of register covers three main components: situational context, linguistic features and functional relations between the first two components". D. Bieber and S. Conrad believe that the linguistic means typical of a particular genre appear only once in the text, precisely in this local structure, while the markers of the register are distributed throughout the text. In this regard, genre can be determined only by analyzing the entire text, and register by the example of its passages.

It is worth noting that linguistics has contributed towards the study of register and identifies several major registers that are represented: in spoken, written communication, religion, newspaper, legislation, science, politics, commerce, industry, sports, mathematics, metrology, literary and authorial style, advertising, sports play, medicine, as well as shopping. The register combines within itself the situational conditions of communication, oral or written types, and the

role structure of communication. Also, register combines situational conditions of communication, oral or written forms, and role structure of contact. There is a distinction between the register of oral informal conversation, scientific lecture, church service, legal documents, advertising, and commercial correspondence. (D. Kristol, D. Davis, J. Fëpc, V. Naer). It is important to note that scholars in Western linguistics widely apply the term register. From the standpoint of Ferguson (1977, p. 212), register functions in a given language and a given speech community with a corresponding and set of structural features. Precisely these norms set a given community apart from others as a whole. Ferguson's thought is more sociocultural, for he distinguishes and relates the linguistic features of the text to the cultural traits of the people. When we observe the use of language in different situations, following Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens (1964), we see disparities in what language is chosen as appropriate for different types of situations" (p. 87). It is in this sense that Gregory and Carroll (1978) describe register as an example of language in action" with peculiar index markers of language forms. The visual structures of texts containing common features are the realization of register norms (pp. 64-67). For Gregory and Carroll, register is the expression of the differences of language in some degree of social parameters.

#### **The stylistic manifestation of register, by Halliday (1978), is summarized as follows**

A specific feature foregrounded will only be so if it is related to the meaning of the text as a whole. This connection is functional: if a particular function of language contributes to the overall meaning of a work by its emphasis, this function does so by the power and means of its own meaning in the language - via the linguistic function from which its meaning is derived. If the function is relevant to our interpretation of the work, the extraction will seem reasoned" (p. 112). This point refers to the fact that every text with semantic resources is constructed with a particular pattern of style. In this way, register as understood by linguists is a functional variation of language (in terms of usage), a semantic concept that means configurations of meaning that are typical for specific situational sets of field, modus and tonality <sup>[16]</sup>. The notion of "register" is used by English and Russian researchers in different ways: the former interpret the selection of lexical and grammatical means, the latter consider the way, the model of presentation of the message or its perception. The number of registers that a person uses is greater than the number of FS and less stipulated by the speaker's activity. In certain registers a person never performs the role of an author, in them a person always appears as a passive and functions only as a receiver of information (for example, in advertisements) or as a source of information. In many registers, a person's activity-passivity is significantly influenced by the professional factor. Therefore, we think it is essential to consider researchers' opinions concerning the notion of register. So, Hymes (1974) believes that register is related to a specific textual atmosphere in which language functions can be derived. In this respect, register helps analysts to differentiate between genre typologies. Perhaps this is what prompted Martin (1993) to define register as derived from the semantic resources of genre geography. As Martin notes, it is the level where the descriptions of the linguistic features (or configurations) of texts deploy. Following Firth

(1968), Halliday (1978), and Martin (1993), Lemke (1985) introduce a register of five possibilities of paradigmatic system, limited semantic capacity, typology of contextual situation, linguistic systems for particular purposes, and expression of connotational relations (pp. 276-279). Hence Halliday (1978) notes that the linguist needs to ask the question, "What kinds of situational factors determine which of the selections in a linguistic system? (p. 32) in order to understand the concept of register in its axes.

In the interpretation of the scientist P. Enquist, the register is a category of style that corresponds to dissimilar social roles of the speaker <sup>[12, 45]</sup>. According to J. Fers, register is a "restricted language", or in other words, a variant of language that is used in a certain sphere of activity. According to I. W. Arnold, the definition of register includes not only the oral form: "The register combines the situational structure of communication, the oral or written form, and the role content of communication" <sup>[1]</sup>. M. Manser and S. Kirstis <sup>[17]</sup> interpret register as "a variant or level of language use that is determined by the degree of formality and choice of lexemes, pronunciation, and syntax according to communicative purpose, social context, and position of the user." E. P. Shubin defines registers as classes of acts of language communication and distinguishes directed and non-directed registers. Such division of communicative registers promote distinction of types of a speech situation from the point of view of participants/non-participants of the act of a speech statement. According to V. Naer, "register" are forms of variability of language based on the factor of the situation. Researcher K. Pike defines the term register as a multidimensional perception, being a unit of description of speech on the level of discourse (text + social context) <sup>[18]</sup>. As H. Leach says, the conditions for dividing speech into registers "lie in a more or less unanalyzable sense of what is appropriate in a given situation." <sup>[19, 136]</sup>

In 1961 M. Juice offers a typology of registers according to the degree of formalization, in accordance with what the scientist distinguishes between static, formal, consultative, informal and personal registers. M. Halliday in the process of analyzing this problem identified the following basic register typologies: "field" (field of activity), "tonality" (tenor) and "mode" <sup>[15]</sup>. In addition, the registers of English business communication include: *socializing, contracts and business documents, business meetings and negotiating, and presentations*. R. Glaser singles out five registers: *frozen; formal; consultative; casual; intimate*. By G. Zolotova's theory, five communicative registers are identified: *reproductive, informative and generative - in monologue, reactional and intentional in dialogue* (fig. 2) <sup>[7, 397]</sup>.

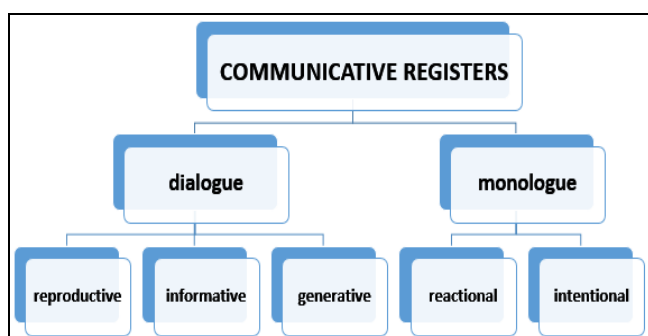


Fig 2

Developing the plot line of communicative registers, the scientist emphasizes the generative, intentional, reactive types, encouraging the recipient to certain actions, evaluative reactions to situational speech, as well as the relationship of information with its multifunctional nature. As we noted above RD based on its essential characteristic has a communicative orientation, which in turn has a unified nature and can be applied in different style registers, such as reproductive register informs about the observed. The next register is informative, which informs about what the speaker knows. As for the generative register of language summarizes the message, tying it to universal knowledge. The intentional register of language stimulates the recipient to action. The reactive register of language displays an evaluative response to the speech situation <sup>[7, 68]</sup>. It should be highlighted that the communicative register can be represented in neutral and formal backgrounds, ranging in intensity and non-intensity, and informal backgrounds.

### Conclusion

Thus, RD is displayed in the communicative-formal register (intensive/non-intensive), which divides the factual advertising message explicit unemotional, brevity, denotativeness and formal conciseness. As the object of our study, in this case, we analyzed short advertising texts without connotative coloring of informational character.

Another major register of AD, in our opinion, is communicative-informal. Besides, it differs sharply from the formal subtype in its genre specificity, so in order to give the RD expressiveness, emotionality, explicitness, all kinds of stylistic marked units at all levels of language are being used. The stylistically distinguished vocabulary predominates in given AD of an expanded nature, having a pronounced colloquial component, with numerous explicit and implicit references to the target audience. A hybrid RD fragments have been analyzed here, i.e. heterogeneity in the advertising message, including in the same segment the contamination of colloquial, literary, publicity and scientific style. However, it should be noted, the divergence of heterogeneity, i.e. each of the named styles has no single solution, as by nature it is impossible to meet a clearly outlined and not blurred separate register. Each of the named registers, somewhere will overlap, having similar features or vice versa. Also distinguished is the communicative-neutral register, characterized by informality (indifference), which is one of the indicators of text styling. In this type of register there are no deviations from strictly formal and informal types. Given type of RD, in our study, is not of great interest, because RD in the communicative perspective has a one-sided orientation, which does not give the opportunity for a comprehensive, generally accepted cognitive and stylistic analysis.

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