

FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS DOCUMENT (LETTERS) IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: *This research paper examines the functional-semantic features of English formal business texts with a focus on lexical, grammatical and stylistic features. It investigates how these linguistic elements, including specialised vocabulary, modal verbs, passive voice and grammatical structures, contribute to achieving formality, professionalism and accuracy in formal business communication. A comprehensive categorization system is developed to cover the different categories of business letters, facilitating understanding of the diverse purposes and forms of communication.*

Key words: *business documents (letters), functional style, stylistic norm, business (formal) correspondence, officialism.*

Аннотация: *В этой научной статье объясняются функциональные значения официальных английских деловых текстов, посвященных словарю, грамматике и характеристикам стиля. Мы исследуем, как эти лингвистические элементы, в том числе профессиональный словарь, модальные глаголы, пассивные отложения и грамматические структуры, способствуют достижению процедур, профессионализма и точности в формальном бизнес-общении. Была разработана комплексная система классификации, которая охватывает деловые письма в разных категориях, которые способствуют пониманию различных целей и форм общения.*

Ключевые слова: *деловые документы (письма), функциональный стиль, стилистическая норма, деловая (официальная) переписка, официальность.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu tadqiqot ishida ingliz tilidagi rasmiy biznes matnlarining leksik, grammatik va stilistik xususiyatlariga e'tibor qaratgan holda funktsional-semantik xususiyatlar ko'rib chiqiladi. U ushbu lingvistik elementlar, jumladan maxsus lug'at, modal fe'llar, passiv ovoz va grammatik tuzilmalar rasmiy ishbilarmonlik muloqotida rasmiyatchilik, professionallik va aniqlikka erishishga qanday hissa qo'shishini o'rganadi. Ishbilarmonlik xatlarining turli toifalarini qamrab olish uchun keng qamrovli turkumlash tizimi ishlab chiqilgan bo'lib, u turli maqsadlar va aloqa shakllarini tushunishga yordam beradi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *ish hujjatlari (xatlar), funksional uslub, stilistik me'yor, ish (rasmiy) yozishmalar, rasmiylik.*

There are many definitions of functional style in linguistics, which are interpreted differently by different authors. I.V.Arnold gives the following definition: ‘Functional styles are subsystems of language, each of which has its own specific features in lexicon, phraseology, syntactic constructions, and sometimes in phonetics. The emergence and existence of functional styles is conditioned by the specific conditions of communication in different spheres of human activity’ [Arnold, 2002, p. 384]. M.N.Kozhina, a leading expert on

functional stylistics of the Russian language, believes that ‘functional style is a peculiar character of speech or another of its social varieties, corresponding to a certain sphere of social activity and correlative to it form of consciousness, created by the peculiarities of functioning in this sphere of language means and specific speech organisation, creating a certain general stylistic colouring’ [Kozhina, 1983, p. 384]. Professor Brandes and others define it as follows: ‘functional style is a functional system, a system of internal, hidden relations and connections of phenomena, in which the functions of purpose and impact of a verbal work are manifested. Outside this system, the specified functions of a speech work are not realised’ [Brandes & others, 2003, p. 30]. A well-known Russian English scholar

All these numerous definitions are united, first of all, by taking into account the extra-linguistic factor when singling out functional styles. It is the goals and objectives of communication in a particular sphere of communication that determine the choice of linguistic means. Dictionaries give the following definition of functional style: ‘Functional style is a variety of literary language, due to the difference of functions performed by the language in a particular sphere of communication. The concept of ‘functional style’ is central, basic in the differential division of the literary language, a kind of reference point for such concepts correlating with the style, such as substyle, speech genre, functional style sphere. The compositional and speech structure of the texts of a functional style (i.e. the totality of linguistic elements in their relation to each other and to the compositional structure of the texts most characteristic of a given variety of literary language) is determined by the communicative intentions of the creators of texts, the conditions of communication and other style-forming factors.

The specificity of a particular functional style consists in the peculiarities of the ratio, ways and methods of combining and combining linguistic means (which in other styles can be presented in other combinations), their specialised use; based on the definition of the Linguistic Encyclopaedic Dictionary, functional style is considered ‘as a variety of literary language, in which the language acts in one or another socially significant sphere of social and speech practice of people and the features of which are conditioned by the peculiarities of communication in this sphere’, since it is the situation and sphere of communication that sets the definition of those or other means of expression characteristic of a particular functional style.

In his article ‘Languages of communication and functional styles (in their relation to the text)’ G.V. Vekshin defines style and functional style in particular. G.V. Vekshin gives a definition of style and functional style in particular. Style is not only a scientific term, but also one of the key cultural concepts. As such, the idea of style is the property of the general linguistic, national cultural consciousness. Among the native speakers of a language there is an idea of style as a complex of special, specific for a person or a collective forms and principles of behaviour in typical circumstances of communication. ‘Style’ cannot be spoken (they say “in the language”), but it can be used, spoken “in style”; style is a form of “presentation” of language as meaning, its “presentation”. Style cannot be non-alternative, it is not inherent in subjects and objects that do not make a choice or are not subject to it, and is always the result of creative processing or transformation of the source material [Dolinin, 1987, p. 303]. The

closest synonym for the word style is manner. The same essentially the same ideas underlie the linguistic understanding of the nature of style [Vekshin, 2002, p. 36]. Functional style is traditionally considered to be one of the varieties of style. Its allocation is conditioned by two circumstances: 1) functional styles are styles characteristic of the whole linguistic collective, not only of individual native speakers or groups;

2) functional style is that which is associated with those areas and realised in those areas of people's activity in which all the bearers of culture are involved in one way or another. In other words, functional in the language is that which is dictated by the applicability of speech not just to ‘certain’ but to typical, universal in its nature circumstances of communication and communicative roles, is addressed to those spheres of life that concern everyone - everyday life (relations with loved ones), official and political activity (relations with authority), scientific and cognitive activity (relations, in a broad sense, with nature), aesthetic and religious activity (art and faith as ‘relations with eternity’).

In our opinion, this definition of functional style is the most complete and comprehensive, where all possible extra-linguistic factors are taken into account. Functional styles are characterised by stylistic meaning and stylistic norm. Under ‘stylistic meaning’ is understood the stylistic characteristic of a linguistic element, the additional stylistic information that is layered on its lexical and grammatical meaning. Stylistic meaning includes three components: functional component, normative component, expressive component. The functional component indicates the functional stylistic colouring of a linguistic element, i.e. its use in a particular sphere of communication. Here are some typical examples of the verb to go in German: to go (neuter) - to drag ones feet (colloquial) - to shift (formal-business). The normative component indicates the normative stylistic colouring of a linguistic element - its relation to the literary norm. It is accepted to distinguish six normative levels: pompous, refined, neutral, literary and colloquial, roughly colloquial.

Let us consider an example: to run away (neutr.), to take to one's heels (roughly colloquial), retreat (pompous), to absquatulate (literary colloquial). The expressive component indicates the emotional-expressive colouring of a linguistic element, its ability to express various emotional-expressive shades, to carry the function of evaluative.

Some linguistic elements have a stable emotional-expressive evaluation, which is fixed in dictionaries. Others acquire evaluative value depending on the situation of communication and the speaker's attitude to the named object or phenomenon. If one of the components of meaning is marked, the linguistic unit has a positive stylistic meaning, if all three components are neutral, the linguistic unit has zero stylistic meaning. The stylistic meaning assigned to a unit in the language system is regarded as its absolute meaning. The stylistic meaning acquired by a unit in a particular context is contextual. The stylistic meaning of a linguistic unit determines the sphere of its use, its combinability with other linguistic units. Unmotivated use of linguistic units with different stylistic meanings in one utterance can violate the style of speech or even break up communication: the vice-president was gaping at the stage (instead of looking).

Stylistic norms in the broad sense are understood as obligatory regularities of selection and organisation of both stylistically neutral and stylistically marked linguistic norms in

integral systems of the mode of expression and text types of all communicative spheres without exception. We are talking about linguistic stylistic norms as a system-forming (paradigmatic) codified set of lexical, grammatical and phonetic means of expression, which are associated with a particular functional stylistic system. Stylistic norms, both in the narrow and broad sense clearly show the change of time and at the same time the close connection of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. This case can be illustrated on the example of the use of periphrasis for the first person singular noun, which is denoted by the speaker/writer himself. Vocabulary composition, depending on its belonging to spoken or written speech, is divided into: - stylistically undifferentiated vocabulary - words and expressions that are used and understood by native speakers of German in all communicative spheres and situations, and - stylistically differentiated vocabulary; - words and expressions, the possibilities of using which are limited by certain internal and external linguistic factors.

Let's move on to the classification of functional styles in English. It should be noted that scholars have no consensus on how to classify styles. In our opinion, the most accurate and adequate is the classification of styles set out by Professor M.N.Brandes: official business style, style of science and technology, newspaper-publicistic style, style of everyday communication [Brandes, 2003, p. 36].

Functional styles are very diverse, they solve different tasks, function in different spheres of activity and situations of communication, are characterised by their own distinctive features, and are formalised by lexical, grammatical and syntactic means typical for each style. For example, the scientific style is characterised by the use of special and terminological vocabulary, graphic information, clear definition of concepts and phenomena, strict logicity and consistency of presentation, complicated syntax. The business style is characterised by professional terminology, precise definition of expressions and words used, cliched language means. The main feature of the newspaper-publicistic style is its informativeness and expressiveness. The main feature of colloquial speech is its casualness, unpreparedness. It is characterised by lexical heterogeneity, use of colloquial and common words, simplified syntax, emotional and expressive evaluation, facial expressions and gestures. Among the book styles of speech a special place is occupied by the official business style, which is characteristic of legal, administrative and social activities.

For such a phenomenon as speech culture, the official business style is very important because it is used to draw up documents and business papers concerning state tasks, court cases and diplomatic communication. It is characterised by closedness, stability of many speech turns, specific vocabulary and special syntactic turns. Documents written in the official-business manner are compact and filled with clichés and language stamps. These are international treaties, state decrees and acts, legal laws and court rulings, various statutes and official correspondence, as well as other types of business papers, which are characterised by accuracy of presentation and language standard.

The official business style serves the spheres of activity designed to regulate relations between people, institutions, countries, between citizens and the state. The main sub-styles of this style include: administrative, legal, diplomatic, military sub-styles. Each style performs its specific tasks and functions and is characterised by its own distinctive features. Functional

features of the official business style are as follows: objectivity, imperative, dryness, accuracy, impersonality, clarity, lack of imagery and emotionality. The official business style carries the function of duty and officialism. The main speech genres of the official business style are: government resolutions, decrees, laws in the sphere of governmental activity; diplomatic negotiations, memoranda, notes protocols in the sphere of international relations; regulations, codes in the field of jurisprudence; trade and commercial agreements, commercial correspondence in trade and economy; military regulations, orders, instructions in the sphere of military life; business correspondence, acts, minutes of meetings, orders, announcements in official institutions; official written correspondence in the sphere of military life; official correspondence in the sphere of business; official correspondence in the sphere of business; official correspondence in the sphere of business; official correspondence in the field of international relations [Brandes, 2003, p. 39].

The official business style is realised by the following linguistic means: modal verbs (would you be so kind, We should also be obliged), verbs of command (I insist on,), inducement (we kindly ask you to, We request you to), impersonal constructions (Referring to our telephone conversation). Typical lexical means of formal business style design are the following: functionally coloured vocabulary (to restrain, to interrogate), terms and terminologised word combinations (terms of payment, to establish business relationships), stable turns and clichés (In reply to your letter dated), collective nouns (information), nouns expressing aggregate unity (nuclear weapons), verbal nouns (development), verbs in the form of passive voice, indefinite-personal pronoun ‘man’, clericalisms, ‘clerical’ adverbs (relatively, rather). Let's consider the characteristic features of the official business style of English, where 3 varieties are distinguished - the style of official documents, the style of business correspondence (Business English), the style of legal documents. As a special kind of business speech in modern English language the language of military documents is distinguished: orders, regulations, reports, etc [Galperin, 1958, p. 431].

The purpose of every document written in a formal business style is to reach a certain agreement in matters of policy, trade, offers of services, etc. Any document should provide full clarity of the essence of the matter, express the main conditions that both contracting parties undertake to observe. Language functions are only communicative and volunative. Letters of recommendation, letters of resignation, reprimands, etc. are written in the language of business correspondence. The business correspondence style is characterised by an abundance of stereotypical language units (clichés, stamps): I beg to inform you, with a view to, to expire, etc. Such phraseological combinations and individual words - terms can be found in reports, statutes, laws, notes, and each area has its own specific terminology. For example, in business documents of financial and economic nature such terms as extra revenue; taxable capacities; liability to profit tax are found. In diplomatic terminology: high contracting parties; to ratify an agreement; memorandum; pact; protectorate; extraterritorial status; plenipotentiary and others. In legal documents such terms and combinations as: The international court of justice; casting vote; judicial organ; to deal with a case; summary procedure; a body of judges; to hear a case; as laid down in; on the proposal of the court; recommendation of.

Diplomatic language is characterised by the use of a certain number of Latin and French words and expressions, which have received a kind of terminological colouring in the language of diplomatic documents. The most frequent words and expressions are: *persona grata*; *persona nongrata*; *pro tempore*; *the quorum*; *conditio sine qua non*; *status quo*; *mutatis mutandis*, etc. The common feature of the diplomatic language is the presence of the following words and expressions. Common to all varieties of business style is the presence of all kinds of abbreviations, acronyms, compound abbreviations, etc. For example, M.P. (Member of Parliament); P.M. (Prime Minister); U.N. (United Nations); R&D (United Nations); P.M. (Prime Minister); U.N. (United Nations Development Programme). (United Nations); R&D (Research and Development); START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty). As for the syntactic features of business speech, the most common are long sentences, extended periods with an extremely extensive system of conjunctions. Sometimes a single sentence covers all the terms of the agreement that predetermine the relationship and that may arise as a result of the realisation of the relationship. The complex syntax of business documents is historically explicable. The links between sentences reflect, as we know, the real connections between the concepts being expressed. This connection is particularly clear in the presence of appropriate conjunctions defining the nature of the connection. The dot was usually used when the connection between the parts of an utterance was interrupted.

In addition to clichédness, the official business style is characterised by terminology. In the process of terminology formation there are two main tendencies - formation of abbreviations and creation of terms-word combinations (*cash in hand*, *cash on delivery*, *on cash*, *prompt cash*). Job titles - the head of the credit department, sales manager, production manager, CEO (Chief Executive Officer). Simple common sentences prevail - target or conditions. The length is not limited, gerunds, infinitives, participial turns are frequent. Noun attributive word combinations predominate. There are many component nominative groups (*to force down price*), predicative units in the passive voice. I.R. Galperin notes that the main purpose of business speech is to reach an agreement between two or more interested parties. This predetermines the characteristic features of the language of this style [Galperin, 1958, p. 433].

Among the peculiarities stand out: -specific terminology and phraseology;

-traditional means of expression;) use of words in the basic subject-logical meanings;

-absence of figurative means (metaphors, metonymy, etc.);

-use of emotionally coloured vocabulary as formulas of address, conditional designations of request, refusal, conclusion, etc.

Among the syntactic features of business speech I.R.Galperin singles out long sentences, extended periods with an extremely branched system of allied connection. This is explained by the fact that the connections between sentences reflect the real connections between the expressed concepts. Business correspondence, regardless of its purpose and level, should meet the following five requirements: .Clarity (clearness); .Completeness (completeness); .Courtesy (courtesy); .Literacy (correctness). It should be remembered that any letter is a message (address to) the respondent. If the respondent does not understand its meaning, he or she will naturally not be able to respond to it correctly. In order to ensure the clarity and

comprehensibility of the letter, it is necessary to find the most appropriate words and expressions that reveal the essence of what you want to say.

It is not only words and expressions that matter, but also punctuation, length of sentences, construction (internal structure) of the sentence itself, where the order of words also carries a semantic load, as well as division into paragraphs (paragraphs). It should be added that in business correspondence the sentences should be as short as possible. At the same time, though, it should be remembered that a solid set of short, chopped phrases makes an undesirable impression (the so-called staccato effect). The language and sentence structure should correspond to the intellectual and educational level of the addressee.

Conciseness (brevity). As it is known, the problem for any business person (businessman) is lack of time and in this connection he always welcomes everything that saves him both time and energy. In this regard, the best letter for a business person will be the one, when reading which he quickly grasps its meaning. Thus, clarity of words and grammatical structure are complemented by brevity (conciseness) of the letter itself. Brevity implies the exclusion of all secondary details, repetitions and long turns of speech from the content of the letter. At the same time, one should not oversimplify the letter to the detriment of completeness, which may be interpreted as impoliteness and tactlessness. The basic facts of the case should not be ignored, as well as all those expressions and turns of phrase that emphasise the courtesy, cordiality and good will of the writer.

Completeness. Completeness should never be sacrificed for brevity. All of the writer's main thoughts and considerations should be stated in the letter. In order not to miss anything, before writing a letter, an outline of the points that should be reflected in the message is made. After the draft is made, it is checked once again to make sure that everything that was intended is reflected. If something has been forgotten, it is added additionally. Sometimes, in order not to break the integrity and logical structure of the letter, a post-scriptum (P.S.) is given, which provides additional information, including information not directly related to the content of the letter.

The analysis showed that all business correspondence letters contain proper names, precedent vocabulary; terminology in the texts of these letters was quite common; business letters are characterised by unemotional character (emotionally coloured vocabulary was observed only in letters where the author wanted to express his feelings towards the recipient of the letter. These are such letters as a letter of gratitude, a letter of advertisement). Letters with different communicative intentions have their common and different clichéd expressions, which is a distinctive feature for each of the intents. In total, we analysed 120 letters of different intents, of which 38 letters belong to the communicative intention - inducement to action, which in percentage ratio was - 31.6% of the analysed material; 31 letters - informing (25.8%); 27 letters - complaining (22.5%); communicative intentions of refusal, consent, evasion and gratitude have equal percentage ratio and constitute 10% of the letters analysed by us, which is actually equal to 12 letters for each of these communicative intentions.

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