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Recognizing a Distinct Functional Style for Religious Texts: Implications for Linguistic Research

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of functional styles in language and suggests that a distinct functional style should be recognized for religious texts, as supported by many linguists worldwide and in Uzbekistan. The study aims to identify the characteristic aspects of this style and how it differs from other functional styles. The authors used a literature review approach to examine existing research on religious linguistics and functional styles. The findings indicate that religious texts possess unique linguistic features that differentiate them from other styles, and thus, it is necessary to study them as a separate functional style. The implications of this study are significant, as it emphasizes the importance of recognizing the religious style in linguistic research and provides a foundation for further exploration of this style in language.

Highlights:

The article suggests recognizing a distinct functional style for religious texts, which differs from existing styles.

The study emphasizes the unique linguistic features of religious texts, which require separate examination.

The need for recognizing the religious style in linguistic research is highlighted, based on existing ideas in world linguistics.

Introduction.

Today, the fact that religious books, newspapers, and magazines are being published in the Uzbek language, and religious TV and radio broadcasts show that the modern Uzbek literary language is being used for religious purposes. Of course, such religious texts use a special vocabulary and a specific language. Religious texts have distinctive phonetic and grammatical features. At this point, the problem arises: which style do the religious texts belong to? Texts related to religious activities have been classified as either scientific or literary. Most of the world's linguists agree with this point of view. But today there are some opinions in linguistics that classify religious texts under a separate functional style, and this requires giving a certain opinion about the religious style of the Uzbek language.

Emergence of functional styles in linguistics

It is known that people use different words, terms, phrases in different situations. The appropriate speech for one situation may not be suitable for another. A single situation can be expressed by different linguistic means depending on the purpose of the speech and the situation. The use of language for different purposes ensures the creation of different types of speech, and this is studied in linguistics as speech styles. The functional characteristics of the language are inextricably linked with the various tasks of linguistic tools.

According to M. Mukarramov, functional styles are related to extralinguistic factors and depend on them. Extralinguistic factors include the purpose and function of communication, the content of communication, the scope of communication, the form of speech (written or oral speech, dialogic or monologic speech). Functional styles arise as a result of these factors, and one type of speech is distinguished from another by its stylistic signs. [1]

In world linguistics, the first ideas about functional styles were formed in the 20th century and were later developed and supplemented. At that very period, opinions were expressed about functional styles, and theories related to this direction began to be formed in Uzbek linguistics too. Also, although the distinction between the functional styles of speech began in this period, the first thoughts about the stylistic signs of words were given in the scientific literature on terminology. S. Usmonov points out that the word usually has "emotional colour". According to the author, the word is characterized by its use in certain types of speech (in ordinary speech, journalistic texts, poetry, scientific works, public speeches, office papers, etc.), in other words, it also has a stylistic sign (or "passport"). [2] These ideas represent the acquisition of stylistic features of words and are considered the first points before the classification of functional styles.

In 20th century linguistics, functional styles were studied by a number of linguists such as V. P. Murat, T. G. Vinokur, A. I. Efimov, A. N. Gvozdev, R. A. Budagov. These linguists suggested that functional styles be divided into 4 to 7 and the functional styles were named differently.

It is no secret that after many debates, five functional styles have been recognized by the majority of linguists in the world, and researches on these issues have been carried out in every linguistic field. The current Uzbek literary language also has five functional styles: 1) colloquial style; 2) literary style; 3) scientific style; 4) style of formal communication; 5) publicistic style.

The need for the separation of 6 th functional style

Functional styles exist within speech, constantly develop and improve, and influence the development of language. The linguist N. Mahmudov points out that the texts are the main source of survival, existence, preservation, and refinement of functional styles because the types of texts differ according to styles. It can be said that functional styles are a mirror of language development and speech perfection, which goes harmoniously with the development of society. It is difficult to explain the gradual improvement of the language without considering the existence of functional styles and the fact that they have taken a precise form. [3] Therefore, texts serve as a basis for the development and improvement of functional styles. It should be noted here that as long as there is a religious belief, as long as there are citizens engaged in religious activities, scientists and scholars who create religious works, as long as religious texts of different genres are created, there is a need to distinguish their specific stylistic features. In this regard, scientific views about a religious functional style in world linguistics seem to have meaning, and at the same time, the opinions about the sixth style expressed by specialists in the field seem to be justified in a certain sense.

Russian linguist I. Galperin, who conducted research on functional styles in English linguistics, writes that there are five functional styles in English. They are belles-lettres style typical for drama, poetic and prose literary works, publicistic functional style (this style includes oratory, essays and articles in newspapers and magazines), newspaper functional style (brief news items, advertisements and announcements, headlines, the editorial), scientific prose style (exact sciences, humanitarian sciences, popular-science prose) and official documents functional style (author included in this style business documents, official papers with legal content, diplomatic and

military texts). The author did not specify the colloquial style as a separate style but expressed the opinion that the folklore language can be studied separately as an independent style. Also, the researcher emphasized that the above-mentioned functional styles should be studied again, which ones are primary, which ones are secondary, which ones are mandatory and which ones are optional. The linguist's opinion about the fact that the functional styles are not strictly limited, and the speech styles can be studied again and supplemented, is a hint that some new styles can be distinguished during the gradual development of the language. S. Karimov admits that changes in the development of styles correspond to the historical process of the development of nations. [4]

Language is always in motion, always changing. All layers of the language (phonetic, lexical, morphological, syntactic) expand and improve over the years. As a result of the development of society, new concepts can be added to the language in the form of new linguistic units. Or units that have been used for years may become obsolete over time. This is considered a natural indicator, a characteristic of the language. As a result, language tools related to a certain style serve to improve the literary language.

The same point can be made about speech styles. As language changes, speech styles may expand or narrow. Therefore, while researching speech styles, some styles may be combined with others or new functional styles may be suggested. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to study all characteristic aspects of speech styles.

First ideas about religious functional style

Most of the linguists who have conducted research on religious linguistics write that a separate functional style should be distinguished for religious texts. Scientist A.K. Gadomsky, who studied the issue of religious language in Russian and Polish languages in various aspects, writes that the religious style should be included as an independent style to the list of functional styles.[5] In life, depending on the content of the social activity, there are some changes in the composition of functional styles. A process of differentiation takes place between functional styles and specialization in areas.

Researches on the distinction of religious functional style in world philology have been carried out mainly in Russian and Polish linguistics. Linguists such as O.A. Prokhvatilova, I.M. Golberg, A.K.Gadomsky, M.Voytak, Yu.Mistrik, O.A.Krylova, A.A.Busel, S.A.Gosteeva emphasize the existence of a religious functional style and study its specific features. [6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14] [15][16][17]

“ Birth ” of religious functional style

It is recognized that the term “religious style” appeared for the first time simultaneously in 1992 in the articles by Yu. Mistryk “Religiozniy stil” (“Religious style”) and M. Voytak “O zarozhdenii religioznogo stilya v polskom yazyke” (“On the birth of religious style in the Polish language”). Accordingly, there is a view that the first ideas about the religious style were expressed in Polish linguistics. However, the term “religious style” was brought into scientific life in 1982 by Uzbek linguists.[18] Later, Russian linguists became interested in the study of religious style, and now Russian and Polish linguists are leading the way in the study of religious style.

The religious functional style in the former Soviet Union

The history of the existence of the world of languages shows that the development of the language has always depended on the attitude of the political system to the national language. When the state's attitude towards the language is positive, the development of the language has accelerated, and when the state has a negative attitude towards the language, the development of the language has slowed down or almost stopped, it has even become a dead language.

It is acknowledged by most linguists that under the influence of the atheistic system that prevailed during the former Soviet Union, linguists of the countries included in it did not express any thoughts about the religious style until 1992. In his article, Russian linguist A.A. Busel talks about the role of the religious style in the modern Russian literary language, its similarities and differences with other functional styles. In this article, the author shows that the religious style is a relatively young style, that the functional style existed until 1917, then it was still preserved, and it began to develop as an independent style after the 90s. [16] Other Russian linguists consider 1917-1988 as a period of sharp crisis in the history of the Slavic Church. [19]

Further developments in the separation of religious functional style

In his article, L.P. Krysin states that in the existing classification of functional styles, there is no stylistic variety that serves the religious layer, and he emphasizes that the style of religious preaching should be recognized as an independent style among the functional styles of the Russian literary language.[12] In 1996, this same linguist wrote about the religious preaching style and its place in the functional stylistic paradigm of the modern Russian literary language and expressed the opinion that the religious sermon style consists of several genres, which is a scientific and theoretical basis for recognizing this style as a functional style.[13]

I.M. Golberg conducts research on the religious preaching style of the Russian literary language and studies the spiritual concepts of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the dissertation, the author proposes to distinguish the style of religious preaching that serves the religious layer in the system of functional styles of the modern Russian literary language.[7] Another researcher O.A. Krylova also mentions in her research that there is a church liturgical style in the modern Russian language.[14][15]

O.A. Prokhvatilova points out that the religious style is interconnected with extralinguistic factors and lists the following features that form the religious style: 1) all forms of communication are characteristic for the religious sphere of communication: general, mass, personal communication, as well as its special form - hypercommunication; 2) there is a special type of "speaker-listener" relationship in religious communication; 3) dialogism characteristic of a monologic religious text; 4) for educational and didactic purposes, the function of conveying information and influence is embodied in the texts of the religious style; 5) two-language system - a stylistic dominant characteristic of the religious style, which shows the synthesis of elements of the Old Church Slavic Russian language and the modern Russian language.[6]

Another linguist S.A. Gosteeva wrote an article about the role of the religious sermon style in modern mass media.[17]

While researching Arabicisms related to the Russian language, O.Aleksandrova classifies them according to functional styles. In his research, the scientist mentions six styles, including the religious style, on an equal footing with other functional styles. He recognizes words such as *nur*, *barakat*, *akhirat*, which have been assimilated into the Russian language, as "the main lexical units that create a (religious) style". [20]

According to researches, it has been found out that the terms "religious preaching style" and "religious style" are used in Russian linguistics. In Polish linguistics, the term "religious style" is used. At the same time, some linguists used the term "religious style of the church". Naming one style with several different terms indicates that the ideas about the religious style have been "born" recently and developed, the features that define the religious style as an independent style, and the genres of the religious style have not yet been fully studied.

Development of religious functional style in Uzbek linguistics

Even in Uzbek linguistics, the view that the religious speech style can be included among the other functional styles is not an opinion expressed in linguistics today. Such a view has been formed in linguistics a long time ago. In scientific literature, the term "religious style" was already used by U. Tursunov and B.Orinboev.[18] Professor S. Karimov emphasizes the existence of a religious style among other styles in the languages of the Turkic peoples.[4] M. Umarchodjaev writes that in addition to functional styles recognized in linguistics, all languages, including Uzbek, have a religious functional style with its own phonetic, lexical, grammatical, stylistic and other features.[21][22]

Religious texts and functional styles

Religious texts differ from other types of texts according to their stylistic features and functions. M.Qurbonova and M.Yo'ldoshev recognized that one factor in defining text types is the functional style of speech and the authors classified the texts into scientific texts, literary texts, official texts, and publicistic texts. This classification was made from the point of view of the functional styles present in the language, and did not comment on the religious texts. However, current opinions and comments about the existence of a religious functional style in linguistics have created the need to study religious texts from the point of view of functional styles.

According to linguists, the style should meet the following criteria in order to show its functional characteristics: 1) the environment of use (the environment combines the situation of communication, the addressor and the addressee, thematic); 2) the purpose of communication; 3) isolated language features (phonetic, lexical, morphological, syntactic, phraseological, emotional-evaluation); 4) ownership of specific forms (genres). If we evaluate based on these criteria, we observe that religious texts do not fully correspond to any of the five functional styles in the Uzbek language and differ from other types of texts.

Religious texts and literary style

The literary style of the Uzbek language was studied by Suyun Karimov in a monographic plan, and the linguist admits that the breadth of the coverage of the language material, the participation of all the lexical-grammatical units in the national language, and the elements of other functional styles, and their service to perform an important task - the aesthetic function it is the main feature of the literary style.[4] Literary texts include prose and poetic works, texts created to give the reader artistic and aesthetic pleasure. Description of artistic texts, linguopoetic features of artistic texts, and linguistic analysis of artistic texts was studied by Marufjon Yo'ldoshev.[23] It is fact that imagery and figurativeness are leading in artistic texts. There is figurativeness and imagery in the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadiths, which are considered sacred religious texts, as well as in religious stories and narrations. With this, religious texts can show the characteristics of the literary style. However, in such texts, religious emotionality, expressiveness, and directive acts of speech take precedence over imagery. At the same time, it is possible to approach the text created in an artistic style creatively, but this approach is not possible for religious texts. In a religious speech, every expressed opinion must be proved and substantiated. As the source of information in religious texts is based on facts, they do not have textures typical of literary texts. Also, in religious texts, representational features lead and have a strong influence on belief. Religious text and its creation require special knowledge and skills. Literary texts, especially prose and poetic texts, are written and created only by experts in this field. When writing such texts, the readership is intended.

Religious texts and scientific style

The scientific text has its own genres, the creation of which requires the author to have certain knowledge and skills. Religious texts too are not created by just any person, they are created by religious experts whose knowledge and skills are important for creating a religious text.

The language of scientific works is often intended for specialists in a particular field. The purpose and function of scientific speech are to consist of scientific communication: the informants are scientists, the recipients are highly educated people; and the form of communication can be written or oral. As a result of these factors, a scientific style is formed and distinguished from other types of speech. It is for this reason that religious texts are not included in the scope of the scientific style. Because religious texts are intended not only for specialists in a certain field but also for the general public.

Religious texts and colloquial style

Nor can we say that religious texts belong to the colloquial style. Because religious texts are related to both spoken and written speech. Also, while the colloquial style is generally considered informal, spoken texts of religious style are relatively formal.

Religious texts and the style of formal communication

The style of formal communication is the style of formal documents and the formal style of oral or written speech. Religious texts also contain instructions on human life and lifestyle, which is proof that religious texts should not be included in the official style.

Religious texts and publicistic style

The publicistic style is close to religious texts in that it is intended for the general public. But the main goal of publicistic style is to convey information. In the religious speech, as mentioned above, emotionality and directiveness prevail. In addition, the creative and innovative feature is considered a feature that distinguishes publicistic style from other styles. But religious texts do not have innovative features, a new approach to religious texts is not possible. No matter how many centuries ago the sacred religious texts and hadiths were created, their judgment is valid today. It is for this reason that historicity is dominant in religious texts.

Conclusion

Language is always in alteration, as languages develop, the functional styles can also be differentiated from a linguistic point of view. In the current Uzbek literary language, as in many other languages, five functional styles have been recognized: 1) colloquial style; 2) literary style; 3) scientific style; 4) style of formal communication; 5) publicistic style. But religious texts differ from the existing five functional style texts by a number of features, which functional style religious texts belong to is still in question. There are ideas about the existence of religious functional style in world linguistics and therefore it is appropriate to study religious texts from the point of view of the religious style recognized by world linguists.

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