

## PhR 2019 Philological Readings

### CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHOR'S INDIVIDUAL STYLE IN THE MODE OF TEXT FORMULATING

Evgenia A. Goncharova (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Moika 48, Saint-Petersburg, Russia,  
eagon@rambler.ru

#### *Abstract*

The article focuses on the problem of expressing the individual style of the author's linguistic persona in the system and structure of the text, which is closely connected to the current approach of contemporary linguistics based on various types of language functioning, as well as its role in formation and evolution of individual and social characteristics of human personality. Two oppositional alternatives of expressing the textual will of speech of the speaker and their individual style are interpreted; they are fulfilled through a corresponding mode of text formulating in the pragmatic and stylistic levels/segments of the text. Those alternative ways are discursive-conversational, or conventional-standard (speech behavior and text formation based on how "it is normally said" and individual-personalized, or subjective-personal (the pragmatic impetus of speech behaviour and text formulating is to "stand out". The analysis of the above mentioned levels/segments of the text is based on the center thesis of the discursive nature of author's individual style, which allows showing the dependency of content plane and expression of its relevant linguostylistic markers on the objective-thematic, motivational-strategic and functional-communicative "discursive projections" of the text. The analysis of text material based on this thesis helps to prove that the individual style in any form of its speech realization, as well as any text created by a linguistic persona, is unique and inimitable - even if the author is utterly adapted to the common norms of speech communication. Individual style is an organic component of any speech act which demonstrates "the textual competence" of the author and their skill to form the structure of the text regarding the "discursive projections" of the text in a particular communicative situation, according to their own cognitive and communicative experience.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Discourse, individual style, linguistic persona, mode of text formulating, text, will of speech.



## 1. Introduction

Modern linguistics assigns more and more to the studies of the "personal" aspect of language functioning and the processes of the mutual refinement of the language and the person as of its creator and creative user, which, with the use of the language, not only cognizes the world and communicates with others, but also advances both intellectually and emotionally. Having appeared in the late XX century, the theory of "linguistic persona", i.e. the study of a person being an individual and a member of a particular cultural and historic society, which is partly characterized by an active and "transforming" approach to the language, continues to broaden and deepen nowadays.

Owing to the stimuli taken from linguistics, stylistics, discourse studies, and the theory of speech and communication, the main provisions of the "linguistic persona" concept about the inseparable connection between the language processes with mental and cognitive activities as well as with communicative and verbal activity of a specific person and cultural and social communities of people are unfolded from textocentric positions. The latter is explained by the assumption that genesis and evolution of a human as a unique "language persona" are carried out with the help of creating, perceiving, interpreting and mental revision of "statements as the real units of speech communication" to one's own pragmatic advantage (Bakhtin, 1979a, p. 249), there text is the most cohesive implementation of statements in their cognitive, communicative and pragmatic aspects.

Bakhtin (1979a, p. 257) repeatedly stated that "We learn the mother-tongue - its vocabulary and grammatical system - not from dictionaries and textbooks, but from certain statements, which we can hear and can reproduce in real-life verbal communication with people around us". "Learning to speak means learning how to build up statements" (because we speak in statements, not in separate sentences, and moreover, not in separate words) (Bakhtin, 1979a, p. 257). For these reasons it is the text that, as a unit of verbal communication and verbal "representative of a person, serves as a basic element of scientific observation and accumulating data about the man not only for linguists, but also for the representatives of other human sciences, e.g. psychology, sociology, politology.

## 2. Problem Statement

The limits of the text, like the limits of any statement are determined "<...> by the *change of speech subjects*, i.e. the change of the speakers. <...> The change of speech subjects, marking the clear limits of the statement, can have different character and take various shapes in different fields of human activity and daily life, according to various functions of the language, various conditions and communicative situations" (Bakhtin, 1979a, p. 249-250). On this basis, from the positions of modern linguistic paradigm, it is possible to distinguish two immanently present images in content and expression planes of the text (there image is understood as a verbal expression of an idea in relation to some real phenomena. The first one is "the image of the language" used while creating the text, and the second one is "the image of the author", a verbal and cognitive subject, who has created the sign reality of the text. Each of the mentioned images is a complex discursively open systematic and structural formation, which can be correlated, on the one hand, to the system of corresponding language, and on the other hand to the "human system", i.e. combination of individual mental and psychological characteristics, proper for every

person, with the addition of social and functional peculiarities acquired in specific social, cultural and historical environment. In the process of purposeful speech activity of a linguistic persona to create cohesive speech acts and as a result of it, both images are partially included by their semantic and structural elements in the “text system” and define the build-up of its structure, being the objects to likely unconscious reception of a linguistic persona of a reader or a listener and to intended interpretation of a linguist researcher (Goncharova, 2012, p. 10-33).

### **3. Research Questions**

The individual style of a linguistic persona in the functioning of a speech subject, which creates a mode of text formulating, discursively projected to a communicative and pragmatic situation of interaction in accordance to cognitive and communicative experience of this subject.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The research is aimed at textual signals of explicit and implicit compositional and notional interaction in the text formulating mode (1) of discursive-typological or conventional-standard speech level with (2) individual personal or subjective-personalized speech level, which allow to estimate individual peculiarities of the author's linguistic persona's speech behaviour.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research is carried out with the use of hypothetico-deductive method, direct observation method and functional-semantic, linguostylistic and contextual methods of text analysis.

### **6. Findings**

#### **6.1. Indexing the image of the author's linguistic persona in the mode of text formulating**

The image of the author, addressing textual information to the recipient (a listener or a reader), is subjectified in the structure of the text by the “mode of text formulating” or style, which means the speaker’s individualized way to transpose language units from system of the language to the system of the text (Goncharova, 1999, p. 148). Changing along the shift of speech subjects, “the mode of text formulating”, or the style of text, also belongs to text delimiting signals in a particular discourse environment. As a “trace” of complex verbal and cognitive act of the author’s linguistic persona, fixed in the form of coherent textual structure, it helps the recipient perceive communicative and pragmatic settings and functions of this act in a social context of verbal communication, or in other words, acknowledge the author’s “will of speech” to engage one’s own “will of response” to it (Bakhtin, 1979a, p. 256).

Determinateness of text formulating mode by the author’s “will of speech” generates essential contentive and expressive characteristics of every coherent verbal statement, such as individuality, singularity and uniqueness, which, however, are completely unraveled both for the author and the recipient only within a situation and a chain of texts. From this perspective, the optimal way to define the

parameters of the speech subject's individual style might be studying the text and the mode of text formulating on their discursive level, as in the conditions of notional (dialectic) and dialogical interrelation of texts within limits of a specific field (Bakhtin, 1979b, p. 284). So, in the texts used inside of a singular social functional and communicative field (e.g. scientific, business, vernacular or literary) it is possible to establish common subjective-thematic, motivational-strategic or functional-communicative discursive projections, which are reflected in the authors' individual style and help the addressees get oriented in the process of verbal communication. Individual style (the mode of text formulating) as well as the text due to which individual style can exist, is "personal, singular and unique" (ibid, p. 283). It is an organic component of any verbal statement, and creating it for the author's linguistic persona means building up textual structure, which demonstrates the skill to pragmatically consider the discursive projections of the text in a particular communicative situation according to one's own cognitive and communicative experience.

Bearing in mind the notion of discursive projection of the text, it is possible to distinguish two pragmatic and stylistic verbal levels / segments in the structure of cohesive verbal statement. The two levels are very important for comprehending and interpreting the parameters of the linguistic persona's individual style, functioning as an active subject-author of the text in various communicative situations, and, one way or another, dependent on real conditions of verbal communication. They can be signed conventionally as (1) discursive-typological or conventional-standard pragmatic-stylistic verbal level/segment, and (2) individual-personal or subjective-personalized pragmatic-stylistic verbal level/segment of mode of text formulating.

At the basis of the mode of formulating the aforementioned textual segments, building up an oppositional pair according to how the individual style of linguistic persona is fulfilled, there are two different illocutionary forces of the author of the text. The first force is, generally speaking, the setting of linguistic persona, which creates the text in a particular communicative system within a society (with its own sum of communicative and pragmatic situations), or in the so-called discursive practice to (traditional) speech behavior, which is organized and carried out by the "so it is normally done" principle (Issers, 2015, p. 31). This kind of verbal behavior is provided, first of all, by the "textual competence" that the linguistic persona possesses. Textual competence is a skill of handling different texts according to the character of the communicative situation, one's own pragmatic requirements and the expectations of the supposed recipient (Hoffman, 2017, p. 11-14). An organic part of the textual competence is stylistic competence, because the skill to deal with texts means being able to form them in a pragmatically effective way.

The second illocutionary force involves, beyond that, individual verbal and cognitive innovativeness of the author of the text, their will to act differently from others while trying to achieve communicative aim (provided that the author has a decent grip of the norms of speech behavior and text formation in a certain kind of discursive practice). As a result, in the mode of text formulating there appear linguostylistic signals (author's neologisms, uncommon speech patterns, expressive means, modified grammatical and syntactical structures, etc.), indicating verbal and cognitive ingenuity and creativity of the author's linguistic persona. Those semantically and pragmatically enriched elements of content and expression planes provide occurring (along or within the socially established principles of

social verbal communication) and development of "new forms of communication in the given social and cultural reality", in case the abovementioned elements are caught up in the discourse and are repeated by other language speakers (Issers, 2015, 65).

## **6.2. Discursive-typological verbal level of the text as a parameter of author's linguistic persona's individual style**

Realization of discursive-typological or conventional-standard verbal level/segment in the structure of the text is determined by the author's speech behavior being based on "how it is commonly done", as it has been explained earlier. Linguistic persona needs this type of speech behavior, first of all, when producing texts to implement a personal verbal task, which is typical enough for other members of the society (looks for a new job, school or an accommodation; files an official complaint for an individual or a social service; elaborates about an event or their own action, etc.). Another kind of communicative pragmatic situations, which stimulate the linguistic persona to being set for commonly-accepted forms of textual build-up, may be the need to be optimally understood while sharing new information (to the speaker's mind) among some kind of intellectual and professional community of the author and recipient(s) of the text. For example, while writing a scientific or a social-political book, guide or so on.

During text formulating, similar communicative situations provoke the linguistic persona to follow certain sociocultural and functional-communicative norms, or *rules*, of speech behavior, keep to generally accepted requirements for building textual statements and disregard means and ways of individual verbal expression, avoiding uncommon lexical and semantic constructions and emotionally expressive modifications of grammatical structures. In such cases author's speech behavior significantly depends on conventional characteristics (prescribed by set sociocultural demands for the communicative aim, role correlation between communicants and so on) of the communicative situation itself, which is a part of whole pragmatic situation of verbal subject, which, in its turn, complies to the conditions of specific social discourse (fragment of discourse).

The main strategic parameter of linguistic persona's "speech will", expressed in discursive-typological or conventional-standard verbal level of the text, may be considered to be its *adaptability*, or *adjustability* to the conditions of discourse, or in other words, to the conditions in which the text is produced and perceived by others. So, for example, the author of a scientific text is aware that by creating such a text he engages in a collective retrospective and prospective process of cognition in a specific area of expertise. On that basis, even for all the freedom of building up own scientific ideas, the scientist can't avoid using basic lexico-semantic elements of conceptual apparatus of the corresponding scientific area, its common terminology, as well as creating new definitions and classifications taking into account already existing concepts and systems of ideas (even in case of their denial). Aside that, in most scientific genres (monograph, thesis, research paper, review, etc.) there are quite firm requirements for the compositional and architectonic structures of the text. For example, on the compositional and notional whole of any scientific text, from the reader's point of view, "strong positions" of the text (headline, introduction, summary, intermediate conclusions, opening and ending of certain (usually monothematic) paragraphs and so on) are standard in their contentive and formal implementation and are predictable to a certain extent.

This proves that conventional-standard or discursive-typological level / segment of the text plays constructive role while drawing out peculiarities of aimed verbal and cognitive behavior of the linguistic persona in the scientific discourse. Strategic plan and patterns of compositional and verbal construction of the studied textual segment ascribe it the character of a prototypic model of text production in the area of scientific verbal communication, while the texts created with a view of such a model can be characterized as "cogniotypical", which is presented in a certain similarity of ways of verbal actualization in the mode of formulation the author's image in the text (Pelevina, 2008, p. 6).

Knowledge of peculiarities proper to content and expression planes of (conventional-standard) scientific textual model is a part of "sociocultural memory" and it forms both linguistic personas of the scientist who creates a scientific paper and the reader of scientific literature. The capacity of such memory depends on duration and intensity of linguistic persona's presence in the discursive space of scientific communication, and on the number of produced and processed scientific texts.

It's essential to note, however, that the necessary orientation of text formulation mode to discursive-typological textual standard in the scientific discourse does not rule out individually preconditioned declensions from "specific verbal systematicity" of scientific style (Kozhina, 2003, p. 242).

Similar declensions are proper to, as a rule, to the individual style of extraordinary and / or outstanding scientists, who can sometimes exceed the limits of commonly accepted speech standards by means of intensifying author's expressiveness in the text structure, that is to say, increasing textual expressivity with the use of topically correct and notionally novel speculations, backed with authorly argumentation.

The main notional and pragmatic role, in these cases, belongs to the means of textual actualization of functional semantic and stylistic categories of "accentness" (Ivanova, 2003, p. 120-126) and "dialogueness" (Duskaeva, 2003, p. 130-139), which help the recipient (and the interpreting linguist) distinguish individual and personal markers of text formulating mode.

### **6.3. Subjective-personalized pragmatic-stylistic level of mode of text formulating**

As it has been repeatedly stated before, individual-personalized / subjective-personalized pragmatic and stylistic level in the mode of text formulating evidences that the author of the text, having the grip of the norms of social verbal behavior in a specific discursive space, at the same time, demonstrates the skill to creatively use the language as an instrument of individual expression and as a tool of unconventional topic disclosure and / or resolution of the problem posed in the text. In this verbal segment/level of the text the author's linguistic persona's individual style is reflected as realization of their *idiolect*, so is to say a unified "reserved" system of linguostylistic means and verbal preferences, which the author possesses to the limit of their intellectual capabilities, living and communicative experience (Fleischer, Michel, & Starke, 1993, p. 42; Lercher, 1980, p. 53).

The abovementioned verbal segment belongs to the primary factors of text production in literary-artistic communication, hereby being an indexical signal of the so-called "poetic style", at the basis of which there is the artist's individual-figural perception of the word of natural and real world and creation of their *own* (imaginary, fictional) world, which is unfolded to the reader in the systematic whole of word

imagery. Versatile artistic images per se are subjective, individual and unique - from the images of the characters and symbolic images of objects (e.g. the image of the solitary "steppe wolf" from the novel of the same name by H. Hesse; the image of the town in "Berlin Alexanderplatz" by A. Alfred Döblin) to singular figures of speech and formal language elements, involved to the stylistic context of a poetic text. They are the carcass of the whole construction in the individual-personified verbal level of a poetic text and they express its unique esthetic information.

Along that, being a part of "secondary, fictional reality", created by author's individual imagination, verbal imagery can variously correlate with "life-like reality" itself and with the personal "real world" of the reader (Schirova & Goncharova, 2018, p. 159-195). In natural discursive processes of reader's perception of a poetic text, verbal artistic images, characteristic for the individual personal verbal system of the author's linguistic persona (their idiolect) interact with each other and with other poetic images in the common space of national and world literature, composing an important part of social consciousness. For that they receive various semantic and pragmatic increments - both individual personal (through the prism of perception of a single reader and interpreter) and based on the condition of social consciousness in the given sociocultural reality. So, their individual-personal notional limits are somewhat extended and are given the character of certain temporary discursive dominants, changing according to cultural and historical context.

However, the individual and creative approach to the language and its expression in the mode of text formulating is not only possible in the literary and artistic communication, which is, by the definition, strategically connected with subjective-imaginary individual interpretation of the world. So, the discursive conditions of business communication significantly restrict the freedom of linguistic persona's verbal acts, prescribing quite strict rules of organizing texts for solving socially meaningful problems, which is expressed, among everything else, even in the obligatory phrasing for explicit denotation of the style of official documents. For instance, in modern German language within business communication there can be used more than 30 titles for various "application" texts, about twenty titles for "complaint, appeal" texts and so on (Komleva, 2014, p. 208), which the speech subject must choose in a relevant communicative situation. At the same time, socioverbal democratization, characteristic for our age, as well as the appearing of new, more "lively" and immediate forms of communication, especially the Internet, bring substantial shifts to the correlation between conventional and individual in many kinds of business texts, giving the discourse between an individual and the society some features of everyday casualness and individualized personness. Consequently, the role of subjective-personalized mode of text formulating as a means of expressing the author's egocentric pragmatic perspective of the world increases in the text structure (Goncharova, 2018, p. 132-135).

Let us illustrate, for example, how a linguistic persona creatively handles an "accommodation search notice": "Wir, zwei kleine und ganz brave Hunde und unser Frauchen suchen ganz dringend und so schnell wie möglich eine neue Bleibe. 1 - 2 Zimmer mit Balkon wären ideal! Wer etwas für uns hat, bitte hier melden!" (Abrosimova, 2019, p. 92).

The female author of the notice structures the mode of its formulating in an unconventional form of a prolonged rhetoric phrase with an extended zoominic metonymy: her two dogs speak on her behalf, referring to their owner in the third person (unser Frauchen). The whole text is a stylistic imitation of their

direct speech, strengthened with emotionally expressive lexical and grammatical elements (ganz dringend und so schnell wie möglich; ...wären ideal), and an exclamatory form of direct and indirect imperative. This kind of text formulating mode not only specifies the information about the announcer which is important for the prospective addressee (owning two pets), but also empowers persuasive-strategic plane of the text.

## 7. Conclusion

Discursive-typological or conventional-standard speech level/segment is predominantly present in the texts which are connected either with solving an author's practical personal and social problem, or with sharing an author's message containing some new subjective-intellectual or professionally-thematic information. This text formulating mode is based on the speech subject adaptation to cultural and historic and functional communicative speech behaviour norms, established in the given society.

Individual-personal / subjective-personalized textual level proves the creative language use to be a means of the author's communicative-pragmatic self-fulfillment, along which the highest possible activation of the linguistic persona's idiolect takes place.

Both compositional speech levels can be considered to be the exertion of the individual style of the author as a unique linguistic persona.

Overall, studying different kinds of texts as verbal and cognitive "representatives" of the author's linguistic persona who created them, makes it possible to differentiate two modes of formulating the texts: (1) with prevailing of discursive-typological or conventional-standard pragmatic-stylistic principles of building up textual structure and (2) accentuating individual-personal or subjective-personalized pragmatic-stylistic markers of speech subject's individual style. Both kinds of text formulating mode, being a form of "speech will" and author's linguistic persona's individual style, depend on subject-topical, motivational-strategic or functional-communicative discursive projections of the text and demonstrate the author's skill to adjust to the character of communicative situation owing to their cognitive and communicative experience. The first kind of text formulating mode appears from linguistic persona's speech will to act in a way that "is commonly approved" (consciously or unconsciously) adapting to unwritten norms of sociocultural verbal tradition in corresponding discursive space. The second kind of text formulating mode signals linguistic persona's speech will to "stand out", to show their individuality and relative independence from those norms, which, however, also comply to the character of discursive practice that the created text belongs to.

The aforementioned kinds of text formulating mode, as well as pragmatic-stylistic levels / segments of textual structure, appearing along them, which form an oppositional pair according to the way of verbal actualization of the author's "image", can be regarded as two sides - in any case one and only (the same as the text itself) linguistic persona's individual style.

## References

- Abrosimova, N. G. (2019). *Aktualizacija jegocentricheskoj tochki zrenija rechevogo sub'ekta v tekstah delovoj i povsednevnoj kommunikacii [Actualization of subject's egocentric point of view in texts of business and everyday communication]* (Doctoral Dissertation). Russian federation, Saint-Petersburg: Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia.

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1979a). Problema rechevyh zhanrov [The problem of speech genres]. In *Jestetika slovesnogo tvorcestva [Esthetics of verbal art]* (pp. 237-280). Moscow: Iskustvo.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1979b). Problema teksta v lingvistike, filologii i drugih gumanitarnyh naukah. Opyt filosofskogo analiza [The problem of the text in linguistics, philology and other humane sciences. The experience of philosophical analysis]. In *Jestetika slovesnogo tvorcestva [Esthetics of verbal art]* (pp. 281-307). Moscow: Iskustvo.
- Duskaeva, L. R. (2003). Dialogichnost' rechi (pis'mennoj) [*Dialogueness of (written) speech*]. In *Stilisticheskij jenciklopedicheskij slovar' russkogo jazyka [Stylistic encyclopedic dictionary of the Russian language]* (pp. 45-53). Moscow: Flinta, Nauka.
- Fleischer W., Michel G., & Starke G. (1996). *Stilistik der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Goncharova, E. A. (1999). Stil' kak antropocentricheskaja kategorija [Style as an anthropocentric category]. *Studia Linguistica*, 8, 146-154.
- Goncharova, E. A. (2012). Tekst – diskurs – stil' kak kognitivnoe, kommunikativno-pragmaticeskoe i interpretacionnoe triedinstvo [Text - discourse - style as cognitive, communicative-pragmatic and interpreting trinity]. In *Tekst – diskurs – stil' v sovremennoj jetnokul'ture Germanii [Text - discourse - style in modern German ethnic culture]* (pp. 10-33). Saint-Petersburg: publishing house of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia.
- Goncharova, E. A. (2018). Rehevaja aktualizacija jegocentricheskoj pragmaticeskoj perspektivy avtora v tekstah delovoj kommunikacii (na primere nemeckojazychnogo tipa teksta «zajavlenie o prieme na rabotu») [Speech actualization of the author's egocentric pragmatic perspective in business communication texts (as exemplified by the German-language text type “job application”)]. *Sovremennaja nauka: Aktual'nye problemy teorii praktiki. Gumanitarnye nauki [Modern Science: actual problems of theory and practice, series HUMANITIES]*, 11, 132-135.
- Hoffmann, M. (2017). *Stil und Text. Eine Einführung*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto.
- Issers, O. S. (2015). *Diskursivnye praktiki nashego vremeni [Discursive practices of our time]*. Moscow: Lenand.
- Ivanova, T. B. (2003). Kategorija akcentnosti [Category of accentness]. In *Stilisticheskij jenciklopedicheskij slovar' russkogo jazyka [Stylistic encyclopedic dictionary of the Russian language]* (pp. 120-126). Moscow: Flinta, Nauka.
- Komleva, E. V. (2014). *Apelljativnost' i tekst (na materiale sovremennogo nemeckogo jazyka [Appeal and the text (on the material of modern German language)]*. Saint-Petersburg: Renome.
- Kozhina, M. N. (2003). Nauchnyj stil' [Scientific style]. In *Stilisticheskij jenciklopedicheskij slovar' russkogo jazyka [Stylistic encyclopedic dictionary of the Russian language]* (pp. 242-248). Moscow: Flinta, Nauka.
- Lerchner, G. (2010). Individualstil und gesellschaftliche Sprachtätigkeit. *Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung*, 2, 31-55.
- Pelevina, N. N. (2009). *Tekstovaja aktualizacija kognitivno-rehevogo sub"ekta v nauchnoj i hudozhestvennoj kommunikacii. [Textual actualization of cognitive and verbal subject in scientific and literary communication]* (Doctoral Dissertation). Saint-Petersburg: Lema.
- Schirova, I. A., & Goncharova, E. A. (2018). *Mnogomernost' teksta: ponimanie i interpretacija [Multidimensionality of the text: understanding and interpreting]*. Saint-Petersburg: publishing house of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia.