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Professional Language in Formal and Business Style

By Prof. Elena N.Malyuga

Friendship University of Russia

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PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE IN FORMAL AND BUSINESS STYLE

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I. PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE AT MODERN STAGE

Changes in the social and linguistic development have resulted in broad interest in studying the language functioning in different professional spheres. The development of professional communication results in studies of professional language as a component of the general linguistic system.

In the modern world a language as a factor of social consolidation has acquired particular importance. Social aspects produce the change in status position of languages in the world as well as intralingual changes under the influence of transformational processes. (D. Crystal 2003, D.P. Krysin 1989 etc.)

The problems of the professional language position in the general system of a language and its interaction with standard language are debatable: is it a functional variety of a language, a type of a sociolect or a part of a standard language?

Linguists use the following terms: professional language, sub language, professional dialect, professional speech, professional style, specialised language etc. In general, the above mentioned terms are identical. Scholars are unanimous in their opinion that professional language is a type of a social dialect or sociolect.

Professional language is a historical and national category resulted from interaction of various factors and cultures. One of the main features of a professional standard is the development and use of lexical and phraseological units and appropriate terms.

Author : Elena Malyuga, Academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Doctor of Philology, Full Professor, Chair of the foreign languages department at economics faculty of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Chairperson of the Business and Vocational Foreign Languages Teachers National Association (Telephone number +79454345356
E-mail: en_malyuga@hotmail.com)

Professional language is often seen as a terminology system.

II. SOCIAL FACTORS IN BUSINESS LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Russian and foreign linguists highlight a leading role of social factors in the process of language development (V.N. Yartseva 2010, H. Bergenholz, Schaeder B. 1979 etc). The expansion of social and political relations is one of the factors causing strata integration. The process of integration and internationalization formed a wide specific lexical group.

Social influence on linguistic community has given rise to specific phenomena in languages. One specific feature of a professional language is its lexical and phraseological structure. The content structure of a professional language defines the forms of its functioning, genre and stylistic peculiarity.

Professional language is aimed at achieving efficient professional communication among specialists. Language means used in a particular sphere shape a system in which notions have logical links of subordination and collateral subordination. Most scholars consider professional language as a system where the core is terminology. This terminology system comprises both uncoded lexical and phraseological units that are used in emerging areas of activity that have no official designations yet.

Professional language is characterised by a limited sphere of specific communication. Professional language has peculiar grammar, but its distinctive feature is lexical and phraseological structure. Professional language is a narrower concept than a general literary language as its functions are gnosiological, cognitive, epistemic, informative, logical, intellectual and communicative functions.

Many linguists consider that professional language lacks the expressive function. In this research it has been found out that expressive function is present in written and spoken types of professional communication

It should be noted that as a rule formal and business style of speech is used in professional language. Before, this style used to be quite specific and formalised. It was considered to have emotionally neutral vocabulary. Business partners generally did not use emotional words, idiomatic expressions, metaphors

because the activity of every company constrained people's language behaviour. It was related to tight regulation of communication goals. At present it would be misleading to say that business process is unemotional.

It is doubtless that the use of such nouns as *monkey business* –

- 1) *playing the fool*;
- 2) *mischievous or deceitful behaviour*;

back-of-the-envelope calculation – *preliminary, rough or approximate calculation*;

bite the bullet (bite (on) the bullet) – *courageously accept a dire necessity*;

keep mum's the word – *hold one's tongue, keep secret* – *adds emotional colouring to British business people's speech*.

Professional language is distinguished by a great number of metaphors. Metaphor is a constantly developing linguistic phenomenon. With a wide range of functions and meanings metaphors can be interpreted in different ways.

Similarities of different features such as colour, sound, form, physical action, sensation, size, name, time, taste, smell or property can underlie a metaphorical transfer. Metaphorical transfer is considered to be one of the main methods used in forming lexical and phraseological units of a professional language that have a number of functions in professional and business contexts, designating new social phenomena with already existing words, figuratively describing special terms and giving additional emotional and expressive colouring to speech. Metaphor cannot be perceived literally and is inseparable from the context.

For example, in British and American newspapers and journals, on BBC and CNN sites there are a lot of metaphorical expressions that today have become a characteristic feature of professional language used by journalists.

- High inflation and low interest rates do ease the pressure on those with high debts, as the amount that is owed is eaten away in the same way as *a nest egg* of savings is affected by inflation. (BBC, 22 March 2011)
So what can Best Buy do if a takeover is *off the table*? (CNN, 15 March 2011)

a) *Forming New Lexical Units In Business Language*

Professional language is a historically formed, relatively stable for a certain period of time, autonomously existential form of a national language, possessing a distinctive system of interacting sociolinguistic norms, presenting a set of some phonetic, grammar and, mainly, specific lexical means of a national language, maintaining speech communication of a particular society characterised by

the unity of its members' professional corporate activity and an appropriate system of specific concepts (Golub, 2002). We consider specific lexical means as a codified (terms) and uncoded vocabulary (professional jargon and specialised slang).

At the same time in most cases where professional language is in the focus of linguists' attention they study normative or codified part of vocabulary (terms), while the study of uncoded units of professional language (professional jargon and its components, specified slang etc.) has just been started in Russian linguistic school. The understanding of professional language is not complete without a thorough study of uncoded version as in professional language there are specific layers of uncoded and codified lexical and phraseological units which can be used simultaneously in the same professional sphere.

The example of the deviation from the norm of standard language is use of acronyms as another way of forming new lexical units.

In the following sentence we come across such deviation from the British norms (specialised slang). The noun "blamestorming" (discussion regarding the assigning of responsibility for a failure or mistake) can be used by analogy with "brainstorming" to express sarcastic attitude to some actions.

"Here's what will really happen: after four months of secret meetings and public *blamestorming*, the Legislature will adjourn. ..." Anchorage Daily News, 9 January, 2000.

The use of acronyms is one of the widespread ways of forming professional jargon.

B2A – *business to anybody* is a sarcastic coinage used on analogy with *B2B* – business to business, *B2C* – business to customer, *B2G* – business to government.

Their company is a small profitable B2A with a strong desire for success.

Today we can often see vocabulary in professional discourse with emotional semantic component expressing addressee's attitude to addressant, which implies that such discourse vocabulary has a lot of different nuances of meaning.

As an example of sound reduction we can refer to a newly emerged noun that has already become widespread. That is "webinar" (a web conference or a seminar held on a real time basis), which is formed by composing two words "web" and "seminar" with subsequent omitting of the syllable "sem".

English words and morphemes are actively used in professional lexical systems of other languages. However, in the English language we can see a lot of examples of adopting foreign words and morphemes. One of the examples of such adoption is a frequent morpheme in the sphere of network engineering "wiki",

which derives from Hawaiian "wikiwiki" meaning "fast" (Wikipedia, Wikileaks, Wikidictionary, Wikitravel).

b) *Functional Styles in Business Language*

Over the years together with linguistics development scientific ideas about styles have constantly been changing, and different principles of style classification have been put forward.

A language style is a variant of language of a particular society fixed by tradition to one of the most common social spheres in some way different from other variants of the same national language in its key parameters – vocabulary, grammar, phonetics etc.

Classification of language styles, which is closely linked with the choice of linguistic means corresponding to a particular communicative goal, has led to identifying functional stylistics and its main concept – functional style as a separate branch of stylistics. Functional styles – is the most common language differentiation allowing to generalise isolated cases when the use of language is stipulated by communication conditions. The factor underlying functional style differentiation enables to define regular patterns of specific use of language means for different types of communication. (Akhmanova O.S., 1966, p. 184)

V.V. Vinogradov examined the usage of the key language functions (communication, message, influence), highlighting the most generalised system of functional styles and singling out six functional styles: everyday informal, everyday business, formal documentary, scientific, journalistic and belletristic (Vinogradov V.V., 1963).

The notion of functional styles as a specific type of language is now wide-spread. These styles are used in different social spheres – scientific, formal, business, informal etc. O.S. Akhmanova defines functional styles as those "differentiated in accordance with the key language functions: message, communication, influence" (Akhmanova O.S., 1966, p.66).

Functional styles are the systems of linguistic means, which are linked with particular spheres of social life. M.P. Brandes distinguishes five major functional styles, linked with particular spheres of social life: "formal business, scientific technical, newspaper journalistic, everyday informal, verbal belletristic" (Brandes M.P., 2004, p.43).

Functional styles are implemented in two forms – oral and written and characterized by specific choice at the levels of vocabulary, phraseology, word-formation, morphology, phonetics and in their specific use of emotive and figurative means. The function of aesthetic influence plays the main role in effective intercultural business communication.

"Functional styles are subsystems of standard language, serving a particular sphere of communication, and organized by a system of steady forms of

stereotypes and traditions, with its specific lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonetic features, which exists as a set of texts" (Arnold I.V., 2009, p.61).

Functional style is a social historical category, directly related to changing social and cultural features of language use and with a variety of people's social and speech practice.

The notion of style can be applied to any two or more objects, which have integral similarity but are different in some additional characteristics that do not reflect any of their essential peculiarities. Accordingly, there must be an idea (concept) of an abstract norm that is known to everybody who knows the language.

The official business style is not homogeneous by its nature. It can be related to legal, administrative and social relations. Business speech functions in areas of law, politics, production, trade, management, social activity and international relations. Official business style can exist in written (business correspondence, legal texts, paperwork etc.) or oral forms (meetings, negotiations, interviews, presentations, speeches etc.).

In formal business style there are some sub-styles: legislative, diplomatic, administrative-clerical. It is interesting to note that all above mentioned sub-styles have their specific features, communicative forms and speech clichés.

The specific character of formal business communicative activity and conveyed information require specific structure of business texts. Formal business texts have clear and unambiguous structure. Accuracy is obtained by use of terminology that defines mainly: names of documents (inquiry, contract etc.); b) names of professions, functions, social status (sales manager, marketing director, witness, judge etc.); c) professional and legal action (to repare certificate/reference, inform etc.) (Formanovskaya, N.I., 1982, p. 39).

Formal business style is characterized by conciseness, laconism and economical use of language means. Objective character and credibility of information – these are the main requirements of this style. Written documents cannot contain subjective opinion and emotional words. For formal business way of communication it is typical to use impersonal address, because the statement is usually made on behalf of an organization or officials.

Regulation of relations, communication according to strictly defined standards resulted in the emergence of standardized speech. This is inherent in formal and business style.

From the functional and pragmatic points of view communicants' language behavior is an unconscious choice of lexical, syntactical, stylistic and prosodic means to verbalize business partners' ideas, intentions and expresses their national and cultural stereotypes of thinking.

III. CONCLUSION

This research defines speech behaviour as a form of a person's interaction with the external world, which is reflected in his/her speech and influenced by a speech situation as well as conditions of business communication and its national and cultural specificity. Dynamic development of science and the necessity of Russia's integration in global community trigger increased interest in the problems of business communication.

The concept of "style" has moved to the forefront in research of speech behaviour patterns in business discourse. Thus, a definite effect of a statement is of particular importance. First of all, we have to concentrate on those features of a statement that are to make a certain impression on the participants of communication.

In written business discourse, as a rule, implicitness is a universal character of a discourse. Implicitness is expressed in the speaker's use of emotive vocabulary, characterised by verbalisation of notions in business discourse. For example, in the language of business communication there are commonly used phrases that denote colours – *red chips* – first class Chinese shares in stock markets; *in the red* (indebted, overdrawn, unprofitable), *red goods* (day-to-day goods demanding rapid replacement and having a low profit margin), *orange goods* (consumer goods that are gradually replaced by similar goods (e.g. clothing), *red ink* (financial deficit or debt).

Genres of business communication have become especially important. The language of business communication is defined by the stereotype of the particular communicative situation.

English professional linguistic culture, as a rule, is not seen as a separate type. Scholars consider professional linguistic culture as a branch of general culture or as a subculture. Professional culture comprises such components as speech etiquette, traditions, customs etc. The above-mentioned components are a part of social norms of behaviour.

Professional self-awareness recognises the community of interests, forms the processes of social merging of groups and sustaining their stability. Professional self-awareness is linked with professional world-view and acts as an indicator for general ideology and a component of professional linguistic culture.

As a whole, linguistic and social picture of the world reflects professional thinking, which forms professional community's self-awareness and creates professional vision of the world. Therefore, interaction of a speciality and professional linguistic culture is the basis for developing professional culture.

Professional language secures the communication effectiveness of specialists in the same sphere. Language means used in professional sphere

are presented as a system with developed logical ties among its separate elements. Professional culture is reflected in professional language in the nominative system.

Professional language is a national historical category. It reflects the professional language culture, the specific character of which is simultaneous use of codified and uncoded vocabulary.

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