

The English literary language has evolved a number of Functional styles easily distinguishable one from another. They are not homogeneous and fall into several variants all having some central point of resemblance, or better to say, all integrated by the invariant, i.e. the abstract ideal system.

The belles – lettres style has the following sub-styles:

- 1) *The Language of poetry, or simply verse.*
- 2) *Emotive prose, or the language of fiction.*
- 3) *The Language of the drama.*

Each of these sub-styles has certain common features, typical of the general belles-lettres style, which make up the foundation of the style, by which the particular style is made recognizable and can therefore be singled out. Each of them also enjoys some individuality. This is revealed in definite features typical only of one or another sub-style. This correlation of the general and the particular in each variant of the belles-lettres style had manifested itself differently at different stages in its historical development.

The common features of the sub-styles may be summed up as follows. First of all come the common function, which may broadly be called “aesthetic-cognitive”. This is a double function which aims at the cognitive process, which secures the gradual unfolding of the idea to the reader and at the same time calls forth a feeling of pleasure, a pleasure which is derived from the form in which the content is wrought. The psychological element, pleasure, is not irrelevant when evaluating the effect of the communication. Since the belles-lettres style has a cognitive function as well as an aesthetic one, follows that it has something in common with scientific style. The purpose of science as a branch of human activity is to disclose by research the inner substance of things and phenomena of objective reality and find out the laws regulating them, thus enabling man to predict, control and direct their further development in order to improve the material and social life of mankind. The style of scientific prose is therefore mainly characterized by an arrangement of language means, which will bring proofs to clinch a theory. Therefore we say that the main function of scientific prose is proof. The selection of language means must therefore meet this principal requirement.

The purpose of the belles-lettres style is not to prove but only to suggest a possible interpretation of the phenomena of life by forcing the reader to see the viewpoint of the writer. This is the cognitive function of the belles-lettres style. From all this it follows, therefore, that the belles-lettres styles must select a system of language means, which will secure the effect, sought.

#### *Language of poetry.*

The first sub-style it will be considered as verse. Its first differentiating property is its orderly form, which is based mainly on the rhythmic and phonetic arrangement of the utterances. The rhythmic aspect calls forth syntactical and semantic peculiarities, which also fall into a more or less strict orderly arrangement. Both the syntactical and semantic aspects of the poetic sub-style may be defined as compact, for they are held in check by rhythmic patterns. Both syntax and semantics comply with the restrictions imposed by the rhythmic pattern, and the result is brevity of expression, epigram-like utterances, and fresh, unexpected imagery. Syntactically this brevity is shown in elliptical and fragmentary sentences, in detached constructions, in inversion, asyndeton and other syntactical peculiarities.

Rhythm and rhyme are immediately distinguishable properties of the poetic sub-style provided they are wrought into compositional patterns. They can call the external differentiating features of the sub-style, typical only of this one variety of the belles-lettres style. The various compositional forms of rhyme and rhythm are generally studied under the term’s versification or prosody.

### *Emotive prose*

The sub-style of emotive prose has the same common features as have been pointed out for the belles-lettres style in general; but all these features are correlated differently in emotive prose. The imagery is not so rich as it is in poetry; the percentage of words with contextual meaning is not so high as in poetry; the idiosyncrasy of the author is not so clearly discernible. Apart from metre and rhyme, what most of all distinguishes emotive prose from the poetic style is the combination of the literary variant of the language, both in words and syntax, with the colloquial variant. It would perhaps be more exact to define this as a combination of the spoken and written varieties of the language, inasmuch as there are always two forms of communication present—monologue (the writer's speech) and dialogue (the speech of the characters).

The language of the writer conforms or is expected to conform to the literary norms of the given period in the development of the English literary language. The language of the hero of a novel, or of a story will in the main be chosen in order to characterize the man himself. True, this language is also subjected to some kind of reshaping. This is an indispensable requirement of any literary work. Those writers who neglect this requirement may unduly contaminate the literary language by flooding the speech of their characters with non-literary elements, thus overdoing the otherwise very advantageous device of depicting a hero through his speech.

It follows then that the colloquial language in the belles-lettres style is not a pure and simple reproduction of what might be the natural speech of living people. It has undergone changes introduced by the writer. The colloquial speech has been made "literature-like". This means that only the most striking elements of what might have been a conversation in life are made use of, and even these have undergone some kind of transformation.

Emotive prose allows the use of elements from other styles as well. Thus we find elements of the newspaper style (see, for example, Sinclair Lewis's "It Can't Happen Here"); the official style (see, for example, the business letters exchanged between two characters in Galsworthy's novel "The Man of Property"); the style of scientific prose (see excerpts from Crouin's "The Citadel" where medical language is used).

But all these styles under the influence of emotive prose undergo a kind of transformation. The general features of the belles-lettres style, which subjects it to its own purposes, dilute a style of language that is made use of in prose. Passages written in other styles may be viewed only as interpolations and not as constituents of the style.

### *Language of the drama.*

The third subdivision of the belles-lettres style is the Language of plays. The first thing to be said about the parameters of this variety of belles-lettres is that, unlike poetry, which, except for ballads, in essence excludes direct speech and therefore dialogue, and unlike emotive prose, which is a combination of monologue (the author's speech) and dialogue (the speech of the characters), the language of plays is entirely dialogue. The author's speech is almost entirely excluded except for the playwright's remarks and stage directions, significant though they may be.

But the language of the characters is in no way the exact reproduction of the norms of colloquial language, although the playwright seeks to reproduce actual conversation as far as the norms of the written language will allow. Any variety of the belles-lettres style will use the norms of the literary language of the given period. True, in every variety there will be found, as we have already shown, departures from the established literary norms. But in genuinely artistic work these departures will never go beyond the boundaries of the permissible fluctuations of the norms, lest the aesthetic aspect of the work should be lost.

It follows then that the language of plays is always stylized, that is, it strives to retain the modus of literary English, unless the playwright has a particular aim which requires the use of non-literary forms and expressions. However, even in this case a good playwright will use such forms sparingly. Thus in Bernard Shaw's play "Fanny's First Play", Dora, a street-girl, whose language reveals her upbringing, her lack of education, her way of living, her tastes and aspirations, nevertheless uses comparatively few non-literary words. A bunk, a squire are exam-

ples. Even these are explained with the help of some literary device. This is due to the stylization of the language.

For example:

**“The Captain: Dunn! I had a boatswain whose name was Dunn. He was originally a pirate in China. He set up as a ship’s chandler with stores, which I have every reason to believe he stole from me. No doubt he became rich. Are you his daughter?”**

The purpose of the belles-lettres style is not to prove but only to suggest a possible interpretation of the phenomena of life by forcing the reader to see the viewpoint of the writer. This is the cognitive function of the belles-lettres style. From all this it follows, therefore, that the belles-lettres styles must select a system of language means, which will secure the effect, sought. The translator has to preserve and fit into a different linguistic and social context a gamut of shades of meaning and stylistic nuances expressed in the original text by a great variety of language devices: neutral and emotional words, archaic words and new coinages, metaphors and similes, foreign borrowings, dialectal, jargon and slang expressions, stilted phrases and obscenities, proverbs and quotations, illiterate or inaccurate speech, and so on and so forth.

### Literature

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