

## COMPARATIVE STYLISTICS AS A BRANCH OF LINGUISTICS

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**Annotation.** Comparative stylistics is a developing branch of linguistics that explores the stylistic features of languages by comparing them. Rooted in early 20th-century work by Charles Bally and further shaped by scholars such as Alfred Malblanc, Vinay, Darbelnet and Fedorov, this field investigates similarities and differences between languages to enhance our understanding of stylistic systems and inform translation practice. Comparative stylistics has two major stages: the first focuses on describing stylistic resources and translation equivalents between languages, while the second examines how genres and functional styles differ across texts produced in comparable communicative situations. This article provides an analytical overview of comparative stylistics, highlighting its role in translation theory, the use of authentic texts, and the need for inter-level approaches that move beyond literary discourse to include various functional styles and genres. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives and practical research, the study outlines prospects for expanding comparative stylistics and its integration with translation studies and language pedagogy.

**Keywords:** comparative stylistics, contrastive linguistics, translation theory, functional styles, genres, communication situations, cross-cultural comparison, authentic texts.

**Аннотация.** Сопоставительная стилистика представляет собой развивающееся направление лингвистики, изучающее стилистические особенности языков на основе их сравнения. Возникнув в начале XX века в трудах Шарля Балли и получив развитие в работах таких учёных, как Альфред Мальблан, Жан-Поль Вине, Жан Дарбельне и А. В. Фёдоров, данная область исследует сходства и различия между языками, что способствует более глубокому пониманию стилистических систем и совершенствованию переводческой практики.

В развитии сопоставительной стилистики выделяются два основных этапа: первый связан с описанием стилистических средств и переводных эквивалентов между языками; второй — с анализом различий жанров и функциональных стилей в текстах, созданных в сопоставимых коммуникативных ситуациях.

В статье представлен аналитический обзор сопоставительной стилистики, освещающий её роль в теории перевода, использование аутентичных текстов и необходимость многоуровневого подхода, выходящего за рамки литературного дискурса и охватывающего различные функциональные стили и жанры. Обобщая теоретические и практические исследования, автор определяет перспективы расширения сопоставительной стилистики и её интеграции с переводоведением и методикой преподавания языков.

**Ключевые слова:** сопоставительная стилистика, контрастная лингвистика, теория перевода, функциональные стили, жанры, коммуникативные ситуации, межкультурное сопоставление, аутентичные тексты.

**Annotatsiya.** Qiyosiy stilistika — bu tillarning stilistik xususiyatlarini taqqoslash orqali o'rganadigan rivojlanayotgan lingvistika yo'nalishidir. U XX asr boshlarida Charl Balli ishlarida shakllanib, keyinchalik Alfred Malblanc, Vina, Darbelne va Fyodorov kabi olimlar tomonidan

yanada rivojlantirildi. Mazkur yo‘nalish tillar o‘rtasidagi o‘xshashlik va farqlarni tahlil qilish orqali stilistik tizimlarni chuqurroq anglash hamda tarjima amaliyotini takomillashtirishga xizmat qiladi.

Qiyosiy stilistika ikki asosiy bosqichdan iborat: birinchisi tillar o‘rtasidagi stilistik vositalar va tarjima ekvivalentlarini tavsiflashga qaratilgan; ikkinchisi esa o‘xshash kommunikativ vaziyatlarda yaratilgan matnlardagi janr va funksional uslublarning farqlarini o‘rganadi.

Maqolada qiyosiy stilistikaning tahliliy sharhi keltirilib, uning tarjima nazariyasidagi o‘rni, autentik matnlardan foydalanish zarurati hamda adabiy diskurs doirasidan chiqib, turli funksional uslublar va janrlarni qamrab oluvchi ko‘p darajali yondashuvning ahamiyati yoritilgan. Teoretik qarashlar va amaliy tadqiqotlarni umumlashtirgan holda, muallif qiyosiy stilistikaning istiqbollari, uni tarjima tadqiqotlari va til o‘qitish metodikasi bilan integratsiyalash yo‘llarini ko‘rsatib beradi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** qiyosiy stilistika, chog‘ishtirma tilshunoslik, tarjima nazariyasi, funksional uslublar, janrlar, kommunikativ vaziyatlar, madaniyatlararo chog‘ishtirish, autentik matnlar.

## Introduction

Comparative stylistics is a relatively young but rapidly developing branch of modern linguistics. It occupies a central place within contrastive linguistics — a discipline that compares languages at all levels: phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic. This comparison serves both theoretical and practical purposes, such as foreign language teaching and the development of translation theory. Although methods of comparing languages were used as early as the 17th–19th centuries, the systematic study of stylistics from a comparative perspective emerged only at the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the Swiss linguist Charles Bally, a student of Ferdinand de Saussure. Bally proposed comparing the stylistic features of one’s native language with those of foreign languages, assuming that identifying similarities and differences in expressive means would enrich both linguistic theory and pedagogical practice. He noted that modern European languages share many stylistic features and that their development tends toward mutual convergence rather than divergence. This idea laid the foundation for what later became known as *Comparative Stylistics*.

Following Bally, comparative stylistics was further developed by researchers such as Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, who in 1958 published the seminal monograph *Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais*, and Alfred Malblanc, whose work *La stylistique comparée* (1952) systematized materials for the comparison of various languages and emphasized the pedagogical value of such studies. Soviet scholars, including Yuri Stepanov, Andrey Fedorov, and M. N. Kozhina, applied the comparative method to French, Russian, and other languages, broadening the research base and incorporating functional styles and genres into the analysis. The modern stage of comparative stylistics is characterized by an expansion beyond literary discourse: researchers now focus on scientific, journalistic, technical, and business texts, as well as spoken forms of language.

## Research Objectives

The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview of comparative stylistics as an independent branch of linguistics. The author aims to:

1. trace the history of the discipline's formation, highlighting key works and academic schools;
2. describe the main stages of research methodology, including the onomasiological and semasiological approaches, as well as the distinction between level-based and functional comparison;
3. examine the relationship between comparative stylistics and translation theory, showing how the results of comparative studies assist in choosing equivalents and assessing translation adequacy;
4. outline current challenges and prospects for development, including the need to expand the corpus of analyzed texts, strengthen interdisciplinary connections, and apply new technologies.

## Methodology

### Research Stages and Approaches

Comparative stylistics employs two main approaches that correspond to two stages of analysis.

The first stage — the *descriptive (onomasiological)* stage — focuses on analyzing how identical or similar meanings are expressed in different languages through phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic means. This level includes the study of phonological patterns (e.g., assonance, alliteration), word-formation models (*anti-*, *hyper-*, *aero-*, *meta-*, etc.), the choice of lexical units, and syntactic constructions used to express such concepts as possession, location, evaluation, or politeness. A common practice involves using parallel texts — originals and their translations — to identify how translators convey the stylistic effects of the source language. The comparison of French and Russian texts shows how fixed expressions, metaphors, and irony are translated, demonstrating a preference for certain lexical units or syntactic structures in the target text. Such analysis relies on the concept of equivalence, assessing the extent to which a translated unit preserves the pragmatic, semantic, and contextual meaning of the original.

The second stage — the *comparative-functional (semasiological)* stage — explores how languages organize genres and functional styles in comparable communicative situations. Researchers proceed not from specific linguistic forms but from communicative functions and goals, analyzing which linguistic means are chosen in similar contexts. At this stage, authentic texts from various functional styles — official documents, scientific articles, journalistic materials, and manuals — are used to identify common and distinctive features in text organization, argumentation, speech clichés, speech acts, and pragmatics. The analysis includes the comparison of discourse markers, information structure, cohesion, and expressive means, paying attention to extralinguistic factors such as social norms, cultural traditions, and audience expectations.

### Sources and Methods

This review employs a *qualitative method of analysis* based on the synthesis of findings from classical studies (by Bally, Malblanc, Vinay and Darbelnet, Stepanov, Fedorov, Kozhina, Dolinin, and others) and contemporary works on comparative stylistics, functional discourse, and language pedagogy. Secondary sources, including reviews and critical articles, help broaden the range of genres and languages under consideration. Examples from existing comparative analyses are used to illustrate theoretical principles. Particular attention is given to the integration of linguistic and extralinguistic parameters, since communicative goals, the roles of

the speaker and the addressee, context, and cultural norms determine the choice of stylistic means.

## Results

### Similarities and Differences in Expressive Means

The analysis of comparative data has revealed several key patterns.

First, languages belonging to different families often share similar stylistic devices. For example, word-formation processes such as the prefixes *anti-*, *hyper-*, *aero-*, *meta-*, and certain derivational suffixes have analogues across many Indo-European languages, allowing similar meanings to be conveyed. International borrowings (e.g., *aggression*, *agitation*, *stylistics*) retain comparable semantic and evaluative shades despite differences in frequency or stylistic coloring. At the syntactic level, parallels are found in word order, types of subordinate clauses, and the use of complex sentences. However, the frequency and acceptability of such structures vary: for instance, an English gerundial construction is sometimes translated into Russian with a verbal adverbial phrase, but this substitution is not always functionally appropriate; in some cases, Russian texts require a more explicit subordination or an additional clause.

Second, studies emphasize that *functional equivalence*—the preservation of pragmatic, semantic, and contextual meaning—is more important for translators than literal correspondence. Translators often modify sentence structure, lexical choice, or even narrative perspective to align with the norms and expectations of the target-language audience. Vinay and Darbelnet identified seven translation procedures (borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation), which illustrate the *asymmetry between linguistic systems*: not all expressive means have direct correspondences. The effectiveness of translation depends on a translator's awareness of the stylistic resources of both languages and on the appropriate choice of strategy.

Third, the *genre and stylistic dimension* have become a key focus of analysis. Official documents, academic papers, and mass journalism differ markedly in their lexical choices, syntax, composition, politeness strategies, and argumentation patterns across languages. For example, English-language scientific papers tend to emphasize the author's contribution and findings at the beginning, whereas Russian ones typically provide a detailed theoretical overview before presenting results. Legal texts in French, Italian, and Spanish are characterized by long, complex sentences with multiple subordinate clauses, while English legal writing prefers shorter and clearer sentences. These distinctions demonstrate the need to compare *functional styles as a whole*, extending beyond the sentence or paragraph level.

Finally, comparative stylistics draws attention to *social, cultural, and situational factors*. Languages encode politeness, formality, emotional tone, and cultural references according to communication traditions. Forms of address in Russian (the choice between *ty* and *Vy*), in English (the use of titles and modal verbs), and in Uzbek (different verb forms depending on interlocutors' social status) illustrate the importance of accounting for cultural norms. Adaptation to these norms is a crucial aspect of successful translation.

### Significance for Understanding Linguistics

The findings show that *comparative stylistics* is not merely a catalogue of stylistic devices; it reveals how languages construct meaning and discourse, how communicative goals

determine the choice of linguistic means, and how translation ensures effective intercultural interaction by balancing between linguistic systems.

## Discussion

### Connection with Linguistics and Translation Theory

The results of comparative studies have important implications for linguistic theory, translation, and language teaching. One of the key ideas is the need to view stylistic systems in their functional application. Traditional stylistics often focused on literary texts, analyzing isolated techniques. Comparative stylistics shifts the emphasis toward language use: what linguistic means speakers and writers choose, how genre and social expectations shape expression, and how these parameters differ across languages. This functional perspective is closely related to *systemic functional linguistics* and *discourse analysis*, which regard language as a resource for realizing meaning within a social context. By comparing how different languages serve similar communicative purposes, researchers identify both *universal tendencies* and *culture-specific patterns*.

A second important aspect is the integration of comparative stylistics with translation theory. Translation is a process of complex decision-making — determining how to convey meaning and communicative impact in another language. Comparative stylistics provides translators with an analytical tool for understanding both the source and target stylistic systems. For instance, translating satire requires an understanding of irony and humor mechanisms in both languages and the ability to adapt cultural allusions. The concept of *functional equivalence* reminds us that formal similarity does not guarantee successful communication; a translator may need to modify sentence structure, replace idioms, or employ compensatory strategies to preserve the pragmatic effect of the text.

Furthermore, the notion of the *translation unit* is discussed: research shows that beyond words and sentences, important translation units include *situational clichés*, *genre conventions*, and *text types*, all of which play a vital role in achieving stylistic and communicative adequacy.

### Pedagogical Perspectives

Comparative stylistics plays a significant role in *foreign language teaching*. Comparing authentic texts from different languages helps learners acquire not only vocabulary and grammar but also *cultural norms*, *speech clichés*, and *genre conventions*. This approach prevents interference — the transfer of structures from one's native language — and enhances *metalinguistic awareness*. The concept of the *activity-based approach* implies creating realistic communicative situations; comparative stylistics provides the tools for selecting appropriate texts and designing relevant tasks.

### Challenges and Directions for Future Research

Despite its achievements, *comparative stylistics still faces several challenges*. Many studies are limited to literary genres or small samples; it is essential to expand the corpus to include *technical*, *scientific*, *legal*, *media*, and *online discourses*. In addition, analytical methods vary: researchers employ different criteria for text selection, classification of stylistic devices, and evaluation of equivalence. *Standardization of terminology and methodology* would help compare findings and build unified databases.

Another task is to *explain the causes of stylistic differences* — a goal that requires *interdisciplinary approaches* integrating sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and cognitive research.

In the future, researchers should apply *corpus linguistics* for quantitative verification of observations, identifying frequency patterns and collocations; draw on *cognitive linguistics* to analyze conceptual metaphors and schemas; and incorporate *anthropological and ethnographic methods* to explore how cultural values shape language use. Such an *integrated approach* will allow scholars to view language as a social, cultural, and cognitive phenomenon, thereby broadening the horizons of comparative stylistics.

## Conclusion

Comparative stylistics lies at the intersection of *linguistics, translation theory, and cultural studies*. From the early works of Charles Bally to the studies of Alfred Malblanc, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, Andrey Fedorov, and others, the discipline has developed a coherent methodology for comparing stylistic systems. The distinction between *onomasiological and semasiological approaches*, as well as the recognition of two analytical stages — *descriptive and functional* — provides a comprehensive framework for analysis.

Its connection with *translation theory* highlights its practical significance: translators use their knowledge of stylistic resources to select appropriate equivalents and strategies. *Foreign language teachers* can also rely on comparative stylistic research to design effective instructional materials.

This review has demonstrated that comparative stylistics has achieved considerable progress but still requires further development — including the expansion of genre and language coverage, the standardization of research methods, interdisciplinary integration, and the application of modern technologies. The use of authentic texts, activity-based learning, and corpus methods will make research more comprehensive and precise.

Ultimately, comparative stylistics reveals both the *variability and universality of language*, showing that communicative practices are shaped not only by linguistic systems but also by *cultural values and social norms*. Therefore, it remains — and will continue to remain — a significant area of study within linguistics and translation theory.

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