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SPEECH GENRES IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE: SOCIOLINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS, NARRATIVE DYNAMICS AND CULTURAL MODELLING

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Abstract. This paper explores the role of speech genres in Russian literature as mechanisms of character construction, narrative development, and cultural representation. Drawing on the theoretical framework of M. M. Bakhtin and contemporary sociolinguistic approaches, the study examines how literary texts model communicative behavior through culturally embedded genres such as confession, congratulation, complaint, persuasion, lamentation, and dialogue. The analysis demonstrates that speech genres serve not only as stylistic devices but also as cognitive tools for representing social norms, emotional states, and ideological conflicts within the literary world. The article argues that genre-based analysis is essential for understanding the linguistic worldview and communicative culture reflected in Russian literary tradition.

Speech genres, as conceptualized by Bakhtin, constitute stable forms of verbal interaction shaped by sociocultural conditions. In Russian literature, they operate as powerful instruments for narrative organization and character portrayal. Literary authors creatively transform everyday communicative genres, embedding them into fictional contexts and enriching them with stylistic, psychological, and ideational nuances.

The investigation of speech genres in literature is relevant for several fields:

- philology, where genres function as structural and stylistic elements,
- sociolinguistics, which studies how genres encode social practices,
- cognitive linguistics, which examines genre as a mental model of communication,
- intercultural communication, where speech genres reflect national communicative norms.

This interdisciplinary relevance highlights the importance of genre-based studies in understanding Russian literary discourse.

Speech genres represent socially recognized communicative formats. Their stability results from:

- recurrent social situations (greeting, congratulation, apology),
- culturally entrenched communicative norms,
- expected roles of speaker and addressee,
- typical intentions and emotional states.





In literature, however, these genres are not simply reproduced — they undergo transformation. Authors may expand genres, reduce them to key markers, or subvert expected norms to achieve irony or psychological depth.

For example:

- a confession may be stylized as internal monologue (Dostoevsky),
- a congratulation may become ironic or socially rigid (Gogol),
- a lamentation may acquire philosophical overtones (Turgenev),
- a quarrel or verbal duel may function as ideological confrontation (Tolstoy).

Thus, speech genres become instruments for narrative development. Russian literature is rich in genre-based communicative scenes that reveal both character psychology and cultural norms.

In Dostoevsky's novels, confession is a central genre that exposes internal contradictions, guilt, and moral struggle. Characters verbalize their fragmented consciousness through monologic genres resembling spiritual or judicial confession.

In works of Gogol and Chekhov, congratulatory genres reflect social etiquette and cultural expectations. These genres often reveal hypocrisy, formality, or emotional detachment, illustrating the conflict between social ritual and personal sincerity.

Persuasion and Moral Instruction Tolstoy frequently employs the genre of moralizing persuasion: dialogues between characters embody ethical confrontation. Persuasive genres shape ideological tension and frame key philosophical questions.

The genre of complaint in Russian literature is deeply rooted in folklore lament traditions. In Turgenev's prose and Ostrovsky's dramas, this genre conveys emotional suffering and social injustice, serving as a voice of the oppressed or vulnerable.

Speech genres in literature serve as cognitive models that reflect the national linguistic worldview. Several aspects are noteworthy:

Cultural symbolism: Genres carry cultural scripts (e.g., humility in confession, communal warmth in congratulation).

Emotion modelling: Genres encode culturally specific emotional patterns such as Russian emotional intensity, ambivalence, or moral introspection.

Social stratification: Literary texts show how genre usage differs by social class, age, gender, and status.

Ideological framing: Genres become vehicles for political, religious, and philosophical ideas.

Thus, speech genres perform not only communicative but also cultural and cognitive functions.

Speech Genres and Teaching Russian Literature and Language Understanding speech genres enhances the teaching of:





Students learn to interpret character intention, narrative strategy, and cultural context by recognizing genres embedded in literary discourse.

Speech genres help learners navigate pragmatic norms of Russian communication. Genre-based instruction assists in developing sociocultural competence, especially with culturally marked genres such as: toast and congratulation, condolences, requests and refusals, apologies, forms of address.

Incorporating literary examples deepens learners' understanding of authentic Russian communicative culture.

Speech genres in Russian literature represent an intersection of linguistic, cultural, and narrative systems. They shape character identity, construct social worlds, and encode culturally specific communicative norms. Genre-based analysis reveals the deep interconnection between language, culture, and literature, demonstrating that speech genres are indispensable tools for understanding the Russian linguistic worldview. Their study is equally relevant for literary scholarship, sociolinguistics, and the pedagogy of Russian as a foreign language.

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