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## «Stylistic Classification of the English Vocabulary»

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**Introduction**

Theme actually. It is no news that any prepositional content – any «idea» – can be verbalized in several different ways. So, «May I offer you are chair?», Take a seat, please, «Sit down» – have the same proposition but differ in the manner of expression, which, in its turn, depends upon the situational conditions of the communication act.

70 percent of our lifetime is spent in various forms of communication activities – oral or written, so it is self evident how important it is for a philologist to know the mechanics of relations between the non verbal, extralinguistic denotional essence of the communicative act and its verbal, linguistic presentation. That’s why I think to study the classification of the vocabulary is very important thing for the English teacher and students.

The aims and purposes of the work. The work set a task to learn. The peculiarities of stylistic differentiation of English vocabulary. To show the examples of different scholars approaches to the theme.

The practical value. Materials of the work will help students, teachers and particular translators and interpreters who work on the translation of the originals.

Literature overview. Basic information’s of the qualification work are given from the manuals of great scholars such as: Stylistics by Galperin I.R, A book of practice in stylistics by Kukharenko V.A, English Stylistics by Bobohonova L.T. Besides above mentioned manuals I took informations from Internet and World Book Encyclopedia.

The structure of the work. This qualification work consists of Introduction, main Part, and Conclusion and at the end the list of used literatures.

**1. General considerations of stylistic classification of the English vocabulary**

The word-stock of any given language can be roughly divided into three uneven groups, differing from each other by the sphere of its possible use.

The biggest division is made up of neutral words, possessing no stylistic connotation and suitable for any communicative situation, two smaller ones are literary and colloquial strata respectively.

In order to get a more or less clear idea of the word-stock of nay language, it must be presented as a system, the elements of which are interconnected, interrelated and yet independent. Some linguists, who clearly see the systematic character of language as a whole, deny, however, the possibility of systematically classifying the vocabulary. They say that he word-stock of any language is so large and so heterogeneous that it is impossible to formalize it and therefore present it in any system. The words of a language are thought of as a chaotic body whether viewed from their origin and development or from their present state.

Indeed, coinage of new lexical units, the development of meaning, the differentiation of words according to their stylistic evaluation and their spheres of usage, the correlation between meaning and concept and other problems connected with vocabulary are so multifarious and varied that it is difficult to grasp the systematic character of the word-stock of a language, though it coexist with the systems of other level-phonetics, morphology and syntax.

To deny the systematic character of the word-stock of a language amounts to denying the systematic character of language as a whole, words being elements in the general system of language.

The word-stock of a language may be represented as a definite system in which different aspects of words may be singled out as interdependent. A special branch of linguistic science lexicology has done much to classify vocabulary. A glance at the contents of any book on lexicology coil suffices to ascertain the outline of the system of the word-stock of the given language.

For our purpose, i.e. for linguistic stylistics, a special type of classification, stylistic classification, is most important.

In accordance with the already mentioned division of language into literary and colloquial, we may represent the whole of the word-stock of the English language as being divided into three main layers: the literary layer, the neutral layer and the colloquial layer. The literary and the colloquial layers contain number of subgroups each of which has a property it shares with all the subgroups within the layer. This common property, which unites the different groups of words within the layer, may be called its aspect. The aspect of the literary layer is its markedly bookish character. It is this that makes the layer more or less stable. The aspect of the colloquial layer of words is its lively spoken character. It is this that makes it unstable, fleeting.

The aspect of the neutral layer is its universal character. That means it is unrestricted in its use. It can be employed in all styles of language and in all spheres of human activity. It is this that makes the layer the most stable of all.

The literary layer of words consists of groups accepted as legitimate members of the English vocabulary they have no local or dialectal character.

The colloquial layer of words as qualified in most English or American dictionaries is not infrequently limited to a definite language community or confined to a special locality where it circulates.

The literary vocabulary consist of the following groups of words: 1. common literary: 2. terms and learned words: 3. poetic words: 4. archaic words; 5. barbarisms and foreign words: 6. literary coinages including nonce-words.

The colloquial vocabulary falls into the following groups: 1. common colloquial words: 2. slang: 3. jargons: 4. professional words: 5. dialectal words: 6. vulgar words: 7. colloquial coinages.

**2. Main part**

**2.1 Neutral, common literary and Сommon colloquial vocabulary**

Neutral words, which form the bulk of the English vocabulary, are used in both literary and colloquial language. Neutral words are the main source of synonymy and polysemy. It is the neutral stock of words that is so prolific in the production of new meanings.

The wealth of the neutral stratum of words is often overlooked. This is due to their inconspicuous character. But their faculty for assuming new meanings and generating new stylistic variants is often quite amazing. This generative power of the neutral words in English language is multiplied by the very nature of the language itself. It has been estimated that most neutral English words are of monosyllabic character, as, in the process of development from Old English to Modern English, most of the parts of speech lost their distinguish suffixes. This phenomenon has led to the development of conversion as the most productive means of word-building. Word compounding is not so productive as conversion or word shift in the part of speech in the first case and by the addition of an affix in the second. Unlike all other groups, the neutral group of words cannot be considered as having a special stylistic coloring.

Common literary words are chiefly used in writing and in polished speech. One can always tell a literary word from a colloquial word. The reason fro this lies in certain objective features of the literary layer of words. What these objective features are, is difficult to say because as yet no objective criteria have been worked out. But one of the undoubtedly is that literary units stand in opposition to colloquial units. This is especially apparent when pairs of synonyms, literary and colloquial, can be formed which stand in contrasting relation.

The following synonyms illustrate the relations that exist between the neutral, literary and colloquial words in the English language.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Colloquial | Neutral | Literary |
| Kid | Child | Infant |
| Daddy | Father | Parent |
| Chap | Fellow | Associate |
| Get out | Go away | Retire |
| Go on | Continue | Proceed |
| Teenager | Boy (girl) | Youth (maiden) |
| Flapper | Young girl | Maiden |
| Go ahead | Begin |  |
| Get going | Start | Commence |

It goes without saying that these synonyms are not only stylistic but ideographic as a well, i.e. there is a definite, though slight, semantic difference between the words. But this is almost always the case with synonyms. There are very few absolute synonyms in English just as there are in any language. The main distinction between synonyms remains stylistic. But stylistic difference may be of various kinds: it may lie in the emotional tension connoted in a word, or in the sphere of application, or in the degree of the quality denoted. Colloquial words are always more emotionally colored that literary ones. The neutral stratum of words, as het term itself implies, has no degree of emotiveness, nor have they any distinctions in the sphere of usage.

Both literary and colloquial words have their upper and lower ranges. The lower range of literary words approaches the neutral layer and has a markedly obvious tendency to pass into that layer. The same may be said of the upper range of the colloquial layer: it can very easily pass into the neutral layer. The lines of demarcation between common colloquial and neutral, on the one hand, and common literary and neutral, on the other, are blurred. It is here that the process of interpenetration of the stylistic strata becomes most apparent.

Still the extremes remain antagonistic and therefore are often used to bring about a collision of manners of speech for special stylistic purposes. The difference in the stylistic aspect of words may color the whole of an utterance.

In this example from «Fanny’s First Play», the difference between the common literary and common colloquial vocabulary is clearly seen.

«Dora: Oh, I’ve let it out. Have I? (contemplating Juggins approvingly as he places a chair for her between the table and the sideboard). But he’s the right sort: I can see that (button holing him). You won’t let it out downstairs, old man, will you?

Juggins: The family can rely on my absolute discretion».

The words in Jugginses answer are on the border – line between common literary and neutral, whereas the words and expressions used by Dora are clearly common colloquial, not bordering on neutral.

The example from «David Copperfield» (Dickens) illustrates the use of literary English words which do not border on neutral:

«My dear Copperfield,» said Mr. Micawber, «this is luxurious. This is a way of life which reminds me of a period when I was myself in a state of celibacy, and Mrs. Micawber had not yet been solicited to plight her faith at the Hymeneal altar».

«He means, solicited by him, Mr. Copperfield,» said Mrs. Micawber, archly. «He cannot answer for others».

«My dear,» returned Mr. Micawber with sudden seriousness, «I have no desire to answer for others. I am too well aware that when, in the inscrutable decrees of Fate, you were reserved for me, it is possible you may have been reserved for one destined, after protracted struggle, at length to fall a victim to pecuniary involvements of a complicated nature. I understand your allusion, my love, I regret it, but I can bear it.»

«Micawber!» exclaimed Mrs. Micawber, in tears. «Have I deserved this! I, who never have deserted you; who never will desert you, Micawber!»

«My love,» said Mr. Micawber, much affected, «you will forgive, and our old and tried friend Copperfield will, I am sure, forgive the momentary laceration of a wounded spirit, made sensitive by a recent collision with the Minion of Power-in other words, with a ribald Turncock attached to the waterworks – and will pity, not condemn, its excesses».

There is a certain analogy between the interdependence of common literary words and neutral ones, on the one hand, and common colloquial words and neutral ones, on the other. Both sets can be viewed as being in invariant variant relations.

The neutral vocabulary may be viewed as the invariant of the standard English vocabulary. The stock of words forming the neutral stratum should in this case be regarded as an abstraction. The words of this stratum are generally deprived of any concrete associations and refer to the concept more or less directly. Synonyms of neutral words, both colloquial and literary, assume a far greater degree of concreteness. They generally present the same notions not abstractly but as a more or less concrete image, that is, in a form perceptible by the senses. This perceptibility by the senses causes subjective evaluations of the notion in question, or a mental image of the concept. Sometimes an impact of a definite kind on het reader or hearer is the aim laying behind the choice of a colloquial or a literary word rather than a neutral one.

In the diagram, common colloquial vocabulary is represented as overlapping into the standard English vocabulary and is therefore to be considered part of it. It borders both on the neutral vocabulary and on the special colloquial vocabulary which, as we shall see later, falls out of standard English altogether. Just as common literary words lack homogeneity so do common colloquial words and set expressions. Some of the lexical items belonging to this stratum are close to the non-standard colloquial groups such as jargonisms, professionalisms, etc. There are on the border line between the common colloquial vocabulary and the special colloquial or non-standard vocabulary. Other words approach the neutral bulk of the English vocabulary.

Thus, the words teenager (a young girl or young man) and hippie (hippy) (a young person who leads an unordered and unconventional life) are colloquial words passing into the neutral vocabulary. They are gradually losing their non-standard character and becoming widely recognized. However, they have not lost their colloquial association and therefore still remain in the colloquial stratum of the English vocabulary. So also are the following words and expressions: **take** (in as I take it = as I understand); **to go for** (to be attracted by, like very much, as in «You think she still goes for the guy?»); **guy** (young man); **to be gone on** (to be madly in love with); **pro** (professional, e.g. a professional boxer, tennis – player, etc.)

The spoken language abounds in set expressions which are colloquial in character, e.g. **all sorts of things, just a bit, how is life treating you?, so-so, what time do you make it? To hob-nob (**to be very friendly with, to drink together**), so much the better, to be sick and tired of, to be up to something.**

The stylistic function of the different strata of the English vocabulary depends not so much on the inner qualities of each of the groups, as on their interaction when they are opposed to one another. However, the qualities themselves are not unaffected by the function of the words, in as much as these qualities have been acquired in certain environments. It is interesting to note that anything written assumes a greater degree of significance than what is only spoken. If the spoken takes the place of he written or vice versa, it means that we are faced with a stylistic device.

Certain set expressions have been coined within literary English and their use in ordinary speech will inevitably make the utterance sound bookish. In other words, it will become literary. The following are examples of set expressions which can be considered literary: in accordance with, with regard to, by virtue of, to speak at great length, to lend assistance, to draw a lesson, responsibility rest.

**2.2 Special literary vocabulary**

**2.2.1 Terms**

«All scientists are linguists to some extent. They are responsible for devising a consistent terminology, a skeleton language to talk about their subject matter. Philologists and philosophers of speech are in the peculiar position f having to evolve a special language to talk about language itself.»

This quotation makes clear one of the essential characteristics of a term viz its highly conventional character. A term is generally very easily coined and easily accepted: and new coinages as replace outdated ones.

This sensitivity to alteration is mainly due to the necessity of reflecting in language the cognitive process maintained by scholars analyzing different concepts and phenomena. One of the most characteristic features of a term is its direct relevance to the system or set of terms used in a particular science, discipline or art, i.e. to its nomenclature.

When a term is used our mind immediately associates it with a certain nomenclature. A term is directly connected with the concept it denotes. A term, unlike other words, directs the mind to the essential quality of the things, phenomenon or action as seen by the scientist in the light of his own conceptualization

«A word is organically one with its meaning; likewise a term is one with a concept. Conceptualization leaves, as it were, language behind although the words remain as (scientific or philosophical) terms linguistically the difference is important in that terms are much more easily substitutable by other terms than are words by other words; it is easier to replace, say the term phonology by phonemics (provided I make it clear what is meant)[[1]](#footnote-1), than to replace everyday words like table and chair by other word

Terms are mostly and predominantly used in special works dealing with the nations of some branch of science. There sore it may be said that they belong to the style. They may as well appear in newspaper style, inpublicistic and practically in all other existing styles of language. But their function in this case changes. They do not always fulfill their basic function that of bearing exact reference to a given concept. When used in the belles – letters style, for instance, a term may acquire a stylistic function and consequently become a (sporadical) SD. This happens when a term is used n such a way that two meanings are materialized simultaneously.

The function of terms, if encountered in other styles, is either to indicate the technical peculiarities of the subject dealt with, or to make some reference to the occupation of a character whose language would naturally contain special words and expressions.

In this connection it is interesting to analyze the stylistic effect of he medical terminology used by A.J. Cromin in his novel «The Citadel»[[2]](#footnote-2). The frequent use of medical terms in the novel is explained by its subject matter the life of a physician and finds it natural to use medical terminology.

The piling up of difficult and special terms hinders the readers understanding of the text if he is not a specialist even when the writer strives to explain them. More over, such an accumulation of special terminology often suggests that the author is displaying his erudition. Maxim Gorki said that terms must not be overused. It has been pointed out that those who are learning use far more complicated terms than those who have already learned.

There is an interesting process going on in the development of any language. With the increase of general education and the expansion of technique to satisfy the ever-growing needs and desires of mankind, many words that were once terms have gradually lost their quality as terms and have passed into the common literary or even neutral vocabulary. This process may be called «determinization». Such words as «radio», ‘television’ and the like have long been in common use and their terminological character is no longer evident.

Brain Foster in his book «The Changing English Language» writes: «…science is one of the most powerful influences molding in English language into fresh shapes at the present time. Scientific writing is not highly esteemed for its elegance one recalls the tale of the scientist who alluded to a certain domain of enquiry as a virgin field pregnant with possibilities but scientific jargon and modes of thought inevitably come to the fore in a society which equates civilization with chromium plated bath taps. Nor does the process date from yesterday, for we have long been talking of people being ‘galvanized’ into activity or going full steam ahead, but nowadays this tendency to prefer technical imagery is ever increasing, so that science can truly be said to have sparked off a chain reaction in the linguistic sphere»[[3]](#footnote-3)

This quotation clearly shows how easily terms and terminological combinations become determinized. We hardly notice sometimes the terminological origin of the words we use.

But such determinized words may by the force of a stylistic device become re-established in their terminological function, thus assuming a twofold application, which is the feature required of a stylistic device.

But when terms are used in their normal function as terms in a work of belles-lettres, they are or ought to be easily understood from the context so that the desired effect in depicting the situation will be secured.

Here is an example of a moderate use of special terminology bordering on common literary vocabulary.

«There was a long conversation along wait. His father came back to say it was doubtful whether they could make the loan. Eight percent, then being secured for money, was a small rate of interest, considering its need. For ten percent Mr. Kuzel might make a call-loan. Frank went back to his employer, whose commercial choler rose at the report» (Theodore Dreiser, «The Financier»).

Such terms as ‘loan’, ‘rate of interest’, and the phrase ‘to secure for money’ are widely known financial terms which to the majority of the English and American reading public need no explanation. The terms used here do not understood they may to some extent be neglected. It will suffice if the reader has a general idea, vague though it may be, of the actual meaning of the terms used. The main task of the co writer in this passage is not to explain the process of business negotiations, but to create the environment of a business atmosphere.

In this example the terms retain their ordinary meaning though their function in the text is not exactly terminological. It is more nearly stylistic, inasmuch as here the terms serve the purpose of characterizing the commercial spirit of the hero of the novel. However, they are not SDs because they fail to meet the main requirement of an SD.

The following is an example where a term is used as an SD.

«What a fool Fawd on Crawley has been,» Clump replied, «to go and marry a governess. There was something about the girl too.»

«Green eyes, fair skin, pretty figure, famous frontal development,» Squill remarked. (W.M. Thackeray).

The combination ‘frontal development’ is terminological in character (used sometimes in anatomy). But being preceded by the word ‘famous’ used in the sense indicated by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as ‘a strong expression of approval (chiefly colloquial), excellent, capital» the whole expression assumes a specific stylistic function due to the fact that ‘frontal development’ is used both in its terminological aspect and in its logical meaning ‘the breast of a woman’.

Another example of the same kind terms becoming SDs:

«I should like,» said young Jolyon, «to lecture on it: PROPERTY AND QUALITIES OF A FORSYTE. This little animal disturbed by the ridicule of his own sort, is unaffected in his motions by the laughter of strange creatures (you and I). hereditarily disposed to myopia, he recognizes only the persons and habitats of his own species, among which he passes an existence of competitive tranquility». (Galsworthy).

In this excerpt the twofold application of meanings terminological and stylistic is achieved by the following means; the verb to ‘lecture (on…)’ and the title of the subject’ properties and qualities (of a Forsyte)’ direct the mind to the domain of science, i.e. they are used in a terminological sense. But when they are followed by a word with nominal meaning (Forsyte) they assume an additional meaning a stylistic one. This dash of incongruous notions arrests the mind forces it to re-evaluate the terminological meaning of the words which aim at supporting the pseudo-biological and medical aspect of the message-this being contained in the words ‘sort’, ‘creature’, little animal’, ‘species’, ‘habitats’, ‘myopia’. This aspect is also backed up by such literary words and word – combinations as ‘tranquility’ and ‘passes an existence’ which are in full accord with the demands of a lecture.

Whenever the terms used in the belles letters style set the reader at odds with the text, we can register a stylistic effect caused either by a specific use of terms in their proper meanings or by simultaneous realization of two meanings.

**2.3 Poetic and highly literary words**

Poetic words form a rather insignificant layer of the special literary vocabulary. They are mostly archaic or very rarely used highly literary words which aim at producing an elevated effect. They have a marked tendency to detach themselves from the common literary word-stock an gradually assume the quality of terms denoting certain definite notions and calling forth poetic diction.

Poetic words and expressions are called upon to sustain the special elevated atmosphere of poetry. This may be said to be the main function of poetic words.

V.V. Vinogradov gives the following properties of poetic words:

«…the cobweb of poetic words and images vials the reality, stylizing it according to the established literary norms and canons. A word is torn away form its referent. Being drawn into the system of literary styles, the words are selected and arranged in groups of definite images, in Phraseological series, which grow standardized and stale and are becoming conventional symbols of definite phenomena or characters or of definite ideas or impressions». [[4]](#footnote-4)

Poetical tradition has kept alive such archaic words and forms as yclept (p.p.of the old verb clipian – to call, name); quoth (p.t. of clean – to speak); eft soons (eftsona, – again, soon after), which are used even by modern ballad-mongers. Let us note in passing that archaic words are here to be understood as units that have either entirely gone out of use, or as words some of whose meanings have grown archaic, e.g. hall in the following line from Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.

Deserted is my own good hall, its hearth is desolate.

It must be remembered though, that not all English poetry makes use of «poeticisms or poetical terms», as they might be named. In the history of English literature there were periods, as there were in many countries, which were characterized by protests against the use of such conventional symbols. The literature trends known as classicism and romanticism were particularly rich in fresh poetic terms.

Poetical words in an ordinary environment may also have a satirical function, as seen in this passage from Byron.

But Adeline was not indifferent; for

(Now for a common – place!) beneath the snow,

As a volcano holds the lava more

Within – et cetera. Shall I go on? – No.

I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,

So let the often used volcano go.

Poor thing: How frequently, by me and others, it heath been stirred up till its smoke quite smothers! (Don Juan)

The satirical function of poetic words and conventional poetic devices is well revealed in this stanza. The tired metaphor and the often used volcano are typical of Byron’s estimate of het value of conventional metaphors and stereotyped poetical expressions.

The striving for the unusual the characteristic feature of some kinds of poetry is a kin to the sensational and is therefore to be found not only in poetry, but in many other styles.

A modern English literary critic has remarked that in journalese a policeman never goes to an appointed spot; he proceeds to it. The picturesque reporter seldom talks of a horse, it is a steed or a charger. The sky is the welkin; the valey is the vale; fire is the devouring elements…

Poetical words and word-combinations can be likened to terms in that they do not easily yield to polisemy.

They are said to evoke emotive meanings. They color the utterance with a certain air of loftiness, but generally fail to produce a genuine feeling of delight; Hoy are too hackeyed for the purpose, too stale. And that is the reason that the excessive use of poeticisms at present calls forth protest and derision towards those who favor this conventional device.

Such protests have had a long history. As far back as the 16th century Shakespeare in a number of lines voiced his attitude toward poeticisms, considering them as means to embellish poetry. Here is one of the sonnets in which he condemns the use of such words.

Su is it not with me as with that Muse.

Stirr’d by a painted beauty to his verse,

Who heaven itself for ornament doth use

And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,

Making a complement of proud compare,

With sun and moon, with earth and sea’s rich gems,

With April’s first-born flowers, and all things rare.

That heaven’s air in this huge rondure hems.

O, let me, true in love, but truly write,

And then believe me, my love is as fair

As any mother’s child, though not so bright

As those gold candles fix’d in heaven’s air;

Let then say more that like of hearsay well;

I will not praise that purpose not to sell

(Sonnet XXI)

It is remarkable how Shakespeare though avoiding poetic words proper uses highly elevated vocabulary in the first part of the sonnet (the octave), such as ‘heaven’s air’, ‘rehearse’, ‘complement’, ‘compare’ (noun), ‘rondure’, ‘hems’, in contrast to the very common vocabulary of the second part (the sestette).

The very secret of a truly poetic quality of a word does not lie in conventionality of usage. On the contrary, a poeticism through constant repetition gradually becomes hackeyed. Like anything that lacks freshness it fails to evoke a genuinely aesthetic effect and eventually call forth protest on the part of those who are sensitive to real beauty.

As far back as in 1800 Word worth raised the question of the conventional use of words and phrases, which to his mind should be avoided. There was (and still persists) a notion called «poetic diction» which still means the collection of epithet, periphrases archaisms, etc., which were common property to most poets of the 18th century.

However, the term has now acquired a broader meaning.

Thus Owen Barfield says:

«When words are selected and arranged in such a way that their meaning either arouses or is obviously intended to arouse aesthetic imagination, the result may be described as poetic diction.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Poetic diction in the former meaning has had a long lineage. Aristotle in his «Poetics» writes the following:

«The perfection of Diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean. The clearest indeed is that made up of the ordinary words for things, but it is mean… the diction becomes distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of unfamiliar terms, i.e. strange words, metaphors, lengthened forms and everything that deviates from the ordinary modes of speech… A certain admixture, accordingly, of unfamiliar terms is necessary. These, the strange words, the metaphor, the ornamental equivalent, etc. will save the language from seeming mean and prosaic, while the ordinary words in it will secure the requisite dearness.»[[6]](#footnote-6)

A good illustration of the use of poetic words the bulk of which are archaic is the following stanza from Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.

Whilome (at some past time) in Albion’s isle (the oldest name of the island of Britain) there dwelt (lived) a youth,

Who ne (not) in virtu’s ways did take delight:

But spend his days in riot (wasteful living) most uncouth (unusual, strange).

And vex’d (disturbed) with mirth (fun) the drowsy ear of Night.

Ah me! (interjection expressing regret, sorrow) in sooth (truly he was a shameless wight (a human being).

Sore (severely, harshly) given to revel (noisy festivity) and ungodly (wicked) glee (entertainment);

Few earthly things found favor in his sight.

Save concubines (prostitutes) and carnal (not spiritual) company,

And flaunting (impudent) wassailers (drunkards; revelers) of high and low degree.

The use of poetic words does not as a rule create the atmosphere of poetry in the true sense; it is a substitute for real art.

Poetic words are not freely built in contrast to neutral, colloquial and common literary words, or terms. The commonest means is by compounding, e.g. ‘young-eyed’, ‘rosy-fingered’.

Some writers make abundant use of this word-building means. Thus Arthur Hailey in his novel «In High Places» has ‘serious-faced’, ‘high ceilinged’, ‘beige-carpeted’, ‘tall backed’, ‘horn-rimmed’ in almost close proximity.

There is, however, one means of creating new poetic words still recognized as productive even in present-day English, viz. the use of a contracted form of a word instead of the full one, e.g. ‘dear’ instead of dreary, ‘scant’ (=scanty).

Sometimes the reverse process leads to the birth of a poeticism, e.g. ‘vasty’ (=vast. ‘The vasty deep’, i.e. the ocean); ‘steepy’ (=steep), ‘paly’ (=pale).

These two conventional devices are called forth by the requirements of the metre of the poem, to add or remove a syllable, and are generally avoided by modern English poets.

Poetical words and set expressions make the utterance understandable only to a limited member of readers. It is mainly due to poeticisms that poetical language is sometimes called poetical jargon.

In modern English poetry there is a strong tendency to use words in strange combinations. It manifests itself in the coinage of new words and, most of all, in combining old and familiar words in a way that hinders understanding and forces the reader to stoop and try to decipher the message so encoded.

The following may serve as examples;

‘The sound of shape’, ‘night-long ages’, ‘to utter ponds of dream’, ‘wings of because’, ‘to reap one’s same’, ‘goldenly whole, prodigiously’ keen star whom she-and he-, – like its of am perceive… (E.E. Cummings).

All these combinations are considered ungrammatical inasmuch as they violate the rules of encoding a message. But in search of new modes of expression modern poets, particularly those who may be called «modernists», have a strong bias for all kinds of innovation. They experiment with language means and are ready to approve of any deviation from the normal. So also are literary critics belonging to what is called the avant-garde movement in art, the essence of which is the use of unorthodox and experimental methods? There usually lead both the poet and the critic to extremes, examples of which are given above.

**2.4 Archaic, Obsolescent and Obsolete Words**

The word-stock of a language is in an increasing state of change. Words change their meaning and sometimes drop out of the language altogether. New words sprig up and replace the old ones. Some words stay in the language a vey long time and do not lose their faculty of gaining new meanings and becoming richer and richer polysemantically. Other words live but a short time are like bubbles on the surface of water they disappear leaving no trace of their existence.

In registering these processes the role of dictionaries can hardly be over-estimated. Dictionaries serve to retain this or that word in a language either as a relic of ancient times, where it lived and circulated, or as a still living unit of the system, though it may have lost some of its meaning. They may also preserve certain nonce-creations which were never intended for general use.

In every period in the development of a literary language one can find words which will show more or less apparent changes in their meaning or usage, from full vigour, though a moribund state to death, i.e. complete disappearance of the unite from the language.

We shall distinguish three stages in the aging process of words:

The beginning of the aging process when the word becomes rarely used. Such words are called obsolescent, i.e. they are in the stage of gradually passing out of general use. To this category first of all belong morphological forms belonging to the earlier stages in the development of the language. In the English language these are the pronouns thou and its forms thee, thy and thine: the corresponding verbal ending – est and the verb-forms art, wilt (thou makest, thou wilt); the ending – (e) th instead of – (e) s (he maketh) and the pronoun ye.

To the category of obsolescent words belong many French borrowings which have been kept in the literary language as a means of preserving the spirit of earlier periods, e.g. a pallet (a straw mattress), a palfrey (a small horse); garniture (furniture); to emplume (to adorn with feathers of plumes).

The second group of archaic words are those that have already gone completely out of use but are still recognized by the English speaking community: e.g. methinks (it seems to me); nay (no). These words are called obsolete.

The third group, which may be called archaic proper, are words which are no longer recognizable in modern English, words that were in use in Old English and which have either dropped out of the language entirely or have changed in their appearance so much that they have become unrecognizable, e.g. troth (faith); a losel (a worthless, lazy fellow).

It will be noted that on the diagram the small circles denoting archaic and poetic words overlap and both extend beyond the large circle «special literary vocabulary». This indicates that some of the words in these layers do not belong to the present day English vocabulary.

The border lines between the groups are not distinct. In fact they interpenetrate. It is specially difficult to distinguish between obsolete and obsolescent words. But the difference is important when we come to deal with the stylistic aspect of an utterance in which the given word serves a certain stylistic purpose. Obsolete and obsolescent words have separate functions, as we shall point out later.

There is still another class of words which is erroneously classed as archaic, viz. historical words. By gone periods in the life of any society are marked by historical events, and by institutions, customs, material objects, etc. which are no longer in use, for example.: Thane, yeoman, goblet, baldric, mace. Words of this type never disappear from the language. They are historical terms and remain as terms referring to definite stages in the development of society and cannot therefore be dispensed with, though the things and phenomena to which they refer have long passed into oblivion. Historical words have no synonyms, where as archaic words have been replaced by modern synonyms.

Archaic words are primarily and predominantly used in the creation of a realistic background to historical novels. It must be pointed out, however, that the use of historical words(terms) in a passage written in scientific style, say, in an essay on the history of the Danish invasion, will bear no stylistic function at all. But the same terms when used in historical novels assume a different stylistic value. They carry, as it were, a special volume of information adding to the logical aspect of the communication.

This, the main function of archaisms, finds different interpretation in different novels by different writers. Some writers overdo things in this respect, the result being that the reader finds all kinds of obstacles in his way others under estimate the necessity of introducing obsolete or obsolescent elements into their narration and thus fail to convey what is called «local colour»

In his «Letter to the Young Writer» A.N. Tolstoi states that the heroes of historical novels must think and speak in the way the time they live in, forces them to. If Stepan Razin, he maintain, were to speak of the initial accumulation of capital, the reader would throw the book under the table and he would be right. But the writer must know all about the initial accumulation of capital and view events from this particular position.

On the whole Tolstoy’s idea does not call for criticism. But the way it is worded may lead to the misconception that heroes of historical novels should speak the language of the period they live in. If those heroes really spoke that language of the time they lived in, the reader would undoubtedly throw the book under the table because he would be unable to understand it.

As a matter of fact the heroes of historical novels speak the language of the period the writer and the reader live in, and the skill of the writer is required to color the language with such obsolete or obsolescent elements as most naturally interweave with the teature of the modern literary language. These elements must not be archaic in the narrow sense.

They must be recognizable to the native reader and not hinder his understanding of the communication.

The difficulty in handling archaic words and phrases and the subtlety required was acutely felt by A.S. Pushikin. In his article «Juri Miloslavki, or the Russian of 1612,» Pushkin writes:

«Walter Scott carried along with him a crowd of imitators. But how far hey are from the Scottish charmer! Like Agrippa’s pupil, they summoned the demon of the past but they could not handle him and fell victims of their own imprudence».

Walter Scott was indeed an inimitable master in the creation of an historical atmosphere. He used the stylistic means that cerate this atmosphere with the stylistic means that create this atmosphere with such skill and discrimination, that the reader is scarcely aware that the heroes of the novels speak his language and not that of their own epoch. Walter Scott himself states the principles which he considers basic for the purpose; the writer’s language must not be out of date and therefore incomprehensible, but words and phrases of modern coinage should be used.

«It is one thing to use the language to express feelings common both to us and to our forefathers,» says Scott, «but it is another thing to impose upon them the emotions and speech characteristics of their descendants».

In accordance with these principle Walter Scott never phonographs the language of earlier periods; he sparingly introduces into the texture of his language of few words and expressions more or less obsolescent in character and this is enough to convey the desired effect without unduly interlarding present day English with outdated elements of speech. Therefore we can find such words as methinks, haply, nay, travail, repast and the like in great number and, of course, a multiplicity of historical terms. But you will hardly find a true archaism of the nature indicated in our classification as archaisms proper.

Besides the function just mentioned, archaic words and phrases have other functions found in other styles. They are, first of all, frequently to be found in the style of official documents. In business letters, in legal language, in all kinds of statutes, in diplomatic documents and in all kind of legal documents one can find obsolescent words which would long ago have become obsolete if it were not for the preserving power of the special use within the above mentioned spheres of communication. It is the same with archaic and obsolete words in poetry. As has already been pointed out, they are employed in the poetic style as special terms and hence prevented from dropping completely our of the language.

Among the obsolescent elements of the English vocabulary preserved within the style of official documents, the following may be mentioned; aforesaid, hereby, there-within, herein after named.

The function of archaic words and constructions in official documents is terminological in character. They are used here because they help to maintain that exactness of expression so necessary in this style.

Archaic words and particularly archaic forms of words are some times used for satirical purposes. This is achieved through what is called Anticlimax. The situation in which the archaism is used is not appropriate to the context there appears a sort of discrepancy between the words actually used and the ordinary situation which includes the possibility of such a usage. The low predictability of an archaism when it appears in ordinary speech produces the necessary satirical effect.

Here is an example of such a use of an archaic form. In Shaw’s play «How He Lied to Her Husband» a youth of eighteen; speaking of his feeling towards a «female of thirty seven» expresses himself in a language which is not in conformity with the situation. His words are:

«Perfect love casteth off fear».

Archaic words, words-forms and word-combinations are also used to create an elevated effect. Language is specially mounded to suit a solemn occasion; all kinds of stylistic devices are used, and among them is the use of archaisms.

Some archaic words due to their inner qualities (sound – texture, nuances of meaning, morphological peculiarities combination power) may be revived in a given.

**2.5 Special colloquial vocabulary**

**2.5.1 Slang**

There is hardly any other term that is as ambiguous and obscure as the term slang. Slang seems to mean everything that is below the standard of usage of present-day English.

Much has been said and written about it. This is probably due to the uncertainty of the concept itself. No one has yet given a more or less satisfactory definition of the term. Nor has it been specified by any linguist who deals with the problem of the English vocabulary.

The first thing that strikes the scholar is the fact that no other European language has singled out a special layer of vocabulary and named it slang, though all of them distinguish such groups of words as jargon, cant, and the like. Why was it necessary to invent a special term for something that has not been clearly defined as jargon or can’t have? Is this phenomenon specifically English? Has slang any special features which no other group within the non-literary vocabulary can lay claim to? The distinctions between slang and other groups of unconventional English, though perhaps subtle and sometimes difficult to grasp, should nevertheless be subjected to a more detailed linguistic specification.

Webster's «Third Mew International Dictionary» gives the following meanings of the term:

Slang [origin unknown] 1: language peculiar to a particular group: as a: the special and often secret vocabulary used by a class (as thieves, beggars) and usu. felt to be vulgar or inferior-argot; b: the jargon used by or associated with a particular trade,» profession, or field of activity; 2: a non-standard vocabulary composed of words and senses characterized primarily by connotations of extreme informality and usu. a currency not limited to a particular region and composed typically of» coinages or arbitrarily changed words, clipped or shortened forms, extravagant, forced or facetious figures of speech, or verbal novelties usu. experiencing quick popularity and relatively rapid decline into disuse.

The «New Oxford English Dictionary» defines slang as follows:

«a) the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low or disreputable character; language of a low and vulgar type. (Now merged in c, \cant\) b) the cant or jargon of a certain class or period; c) language of a highly colloquial type considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.»

As is seen from these quotations slang is represented both as a special vocabulary and as a special language. This is the first thing that causes confusion. If this is a certain lexical layer, then why should it be given the rank of language? If, on the other hand, slang is a certain language or a dialect or even a patois, then it should be characterized not only by its peculiar use of words but also by phonetic, morphological and syntactical peculiarities.

J.B. Greenough and C.L. Kitteridge define slang in these words:

«Slang… is a peculiar kind of vagabond language, always hanging on the outskirts of legitimate speech but continually straying or forcing its way into the most respectable company.»[[7]](#footnote-7)

Another definition of slang which is worth quoting is one made by Eric Partridge, the eminent student of the non-literary language.

«Slang is much rather a spoken than a literary language. It originates, nearly always, in speech. To coin a term on a written page is almost inevitably to brand it as a neologism which will either be accepted or become a nonce-word (or phrase), but, except in the rarest instances, that term will not be slang. «3

In most of the dictionaries sl. (slang) is used as convenient stylistic notation for a word or a phrase that cannot be specified more exactly. The obscure etymology of the term itself affects its use as a stylistic notation. Whenever the notation appears in a dictionary it may serve as an indication that the unit presented is non-literary, but not pinpointed. That is the reason why the various dictionaries disagree in the use of this term when applied as a stylistic notation.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Any new coinage that has not gained recognition and therefore has not yet been received into standard English is easily branded as slang.

The Times of the 12th of March, 3957 gives the following illustrations of slang: leggo (let go), sarge (sergeant), 'I've got a date with that Miss Morris to-night'. But it is obvious that leggo is a phonetic impropriety caused by careless rapid speaking; sarge is a vulgar equivalent of the full form of the word; date is, a widely recognized colloquial equivalent (synonym) of the literary and even bookish rendezvous (a meeting).

These different and heterogeneous phenomena united under the vague term slang cause natural confusion and do not encourage scholars to seek more objective criteria in order to distinguish the various stylistic layers of the English colloquial vocabulary. The confusion is made still deeper by the fact that any word or expression apparently legitimate, if used in an arbitrary, fanciful or metaphorical sense, may easily be labelled as slang. Many words formerly labelled as slang have now become legitimate units of Standard English. Thus the word kid (child), which was considered low slang in the nineteenth century, is now a legitimate colloquial unit of the English literary language.

Some linguists, when characterizing the most conspicuous features of slang, point out that it requires continuous innovation. It never grows stale. If a slang word or phrase does become stale, it is replaced by a new slangism. It is claimed that this satisfies the natural desire for fresh, newly created words and expressions, which give to an utterance emotional coloring and a subjective evaluation. Indeed, it seems to be in correspondence with the traditional view of English conservatism, that a special derogative term should have been coined to help preserve the «purity of standard English» by hindering the penetration into it of undesirable elements. The point is that the heterogeneous nature of the term serves as a kind of barrier which checks the natural influx of word coinages into the literary language. True, such barriers are not without their advantage in polishing up the literary language. This can be proved by the progressive role played by any conscious effort to sift innovations, some of which are indeed felt to be unnecessary, even contaminating elements in the body of the language. In this respect the American newspaper may serve as an example of how the absence of such a sifting process results in the contamination of the literary tongue of the nation with ugly redundant coinages. Such a barrier, however, sometimes turns into an obstacle which hinders the natural development of the literary language.

The term ‘slang’, which is widely used in English linguistic science, should be clearly specified if it is to be used as a term, i. e. it should refer to some definite notion and should be definable in explicit, simple terms. It is suggested here that the term 'slang' should be used for those forms of the English vocabulary which are either mispronounced or distorted in some way phonetically, morphologically or lexically. The term 'slang' should also be used to specify some elements which may be called over-colloquial. As for the other groups of words hitherto classified as slang, they should be specified according to the universally accepted classification of the vocabulary of a language.

But this must be done by those whose mother tongue is English. They and they only, being native speakers of the English language, are its masters and lawgivers. It is for them to place slang in its proper category by specifying its characteristic features.

Slang is nothing but a deviation from the established norm at the level of the vocabulary of the language. V.V. Vinogradov writes that one of the tasks set before the branch of linguistic science that is now called stylistics, is a thorough study of all changes in vocabulary, set phrases,» grammatical constructions, their functions, an evaluation of any breaking away from the established norm, and classification of mistakes and failures in word coinage.[[9]](#footnote-9)

H. Wentworth and S. Flexner in their «Dictionary of American Slang» write:

«Sometimes slang is used to escape the dull familiarity of standard words, to suggest an escape from the established routine of everyday life. When slang is used, our life seems a little fresher and a little more personal. Also, as at all levels of speech, slang is sometimes used for the pure joy of making sounds, or even for a need to attract attention by making noise. The sheer newness and informality of certain slang words produce pleasure.

«But more important than this expression of a more or less hidden aesthetic motive on the part of the speaker is the slang's reflection of the personality, the outward, clearly visible characteristics of the speaker. By and large, the man who uses slang is a forceful, pleasing, acceptable personality.»

This quotation from a well-known scientific study of slang clearly shows that what is labelled slang is either all kinds of nonce-formations – so frequently appearing in lively everyday speech and just as quickly disappearing from the language–, or jocular words and word-combinations that are formed by using the various means of word-building existing in the language and also by distorting the form or sense of existing words. Here are some more examples of words that are considered slang:

to take stock in–'to be interested in, attach importance, give credence to

bread-basket–'the stomach' (a jocular use)

to do a flit–'to quit one's flat or lodgings at night without paying the rent or board'

rot–'nonsense!’

the cat's pajamas–'the correct thing’

So broad is the term 'slang' that, according to Eric Partridge, there are many kinds of slang, e. g. Cockney, public-house, commercial, society, military, theatrical, parliamentary and others. This leads the author to believe that there is also a standard slang, the slang that is common to all those who, though employing received standard in their writing and speech, also use an informal language which, in fact, is no language but merely a way of speaking, using special words and phrases in some special sense. The most confusing definition of the nature of slang is the following one given by Partridge.

«…personality and one's surroundings (social or occupation-al) are the two coefficients, the two chief factors, the determining causes of the nature of slang, as they are of language in general and of style.»[[10]](#footnote-10)

According to this statement one may get the idea that language, style and slang all have the same nature, the same determining causes. Personality and surroundings determine:

1. the nature of the slang used by a definite person,

2. the nature of the language he uses,

3. the kind of style he writes.

There is a general tendency in England and to some extent in the US to over-estimate the significance of slang by attaching to it more significance than it deserves. Slang is regarded as the quintessence of colloquial speech and therefore stands above all the laws of grammar. Though it is regarded by some purists as a language that stands below standard English, it is highly praised nowadays as «vivid», «more flexible», «more picturesque», «richer in vocabulary» and so on.

Unwittingly one arrives at the idea that slang, as used by English and Americans, is a universal term for any word or phrases which, though not yet recognized as a fact of Standard English, has won general recognition as a fresh innovation quite irrespective of its nature: whether it is cant, jargon, dialect, jocular or a pure colloquialism. It is therefore important, for the sake of a scientific approach to the problem of a stylistic classification of the English vocabulary, to make a more exact discrimination between heterogeneous elements in the vocabulary, no matter how difficult it may be.

The following is an interesting example illustrating the contrast between Standard English and non-literary English including slang.

In the story «By Courier» O. Henry opposes neutral and common literary words to special colloquial words and slang for a definite stylistic purpose, viz. to distort a message by translating the literary vocabulary of one speaker into the non-literary vocabulary of another.

«Tell her I am on my way to the station, to leave for San Francisco, where I shall join that Alaska moose hunting expedition. Tell her that, since she has commanded me-neither to speak nor to write to her, I take this means of making one last appeal to her sense of justice, for the sake of what has been. Tell her that to condemn and discard one who has not deserved such treatment, without giving him her reason or a chance to explain is contrary to her nature as I believe it to be.»

This message was delivered in the following manner:

«He told me to tell yer he's got his collars and cuffs in dat grip for a scoot clean out to' Frisco. Den he's goin' to shoot snowbirds in de Klondike. He says yer told him to send' round no more pink notes nor come hangin' over de garden gate, and he takes dis mean (*sending the boy to speak for him. – I.G*.) of putting yer wise. He says yer referred to him like a has-been, and never give him no chance to kick at de decision. He says yer swiled him and never said why.»

The contrast between what is standard English and what is crude, broken non-literary or uneducated American English has been achieved by means of setting the common literary vocabulary and also the syntactical design of the original message against jargonisms, slang and all kinds of distortions of forms, phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactical.

It is suggestive that there is a tendency in some modern dictionaries to replace the label slang by *informal or colloquial*.[[11]](#footnote-11) Such a practice clearly manifests the dissatisfaction of some lexicographers with the term 'slang'. This is mainly due to the ambiguity of the term.

On the other hand, some lexicographers, as has already been pointed out, still make use of the term 'slang' as a substitute for 'jargon', 'cant', 'colloquialism', 'professionalism', 'vulgar', 'dialectal'. Thus, in his dictionary Prof. Barnhart gives the label st to such innovations as «grab – to cause (a person) to react; make an impression on», which, to my mind, should be classed as newspaper jargon; «grass or pot – marijuana», which are positively cant words (the quotation that follows proves it quite unambiguously); «groove–something very enjoyable,» «grunt – U.S. military slang», which in fact is a professionalism; «gyppy tummy, British slang, – a common intestinal upset experienced by travellers», which is a colloquialism; «hangup–a psychological or emotional problem», which is undoubtedly a professionalism which has undergone extension of meaning and now, according to Barnhart also means «any problem or difficulty, especially one that causes annoyance or irritation.»

The use of the label *sl* in this way is evidently due to the fact that Barnhart's Dictionary aims not so much at discrimination between different stylistic subtleties of neologisms but mainly at fixation of lexical units which have already won general recognition through constant repetition in newspaper language.

The term 'slang' is ambiguous because, to use a figurative expression, it has become a Jack of all trades and master of none.

**2.5.2 Jargonisms**

In the non-literary vocabulary of the English language there is a group of words that are called *jargonisms. Jargon* is a recognized term for a group of words that exists in almost every language and whose aim is to preserve secrecy within one or another social group. Jargonisms are generally old words with entirely new meanings imposed on them. The traditional meaning of the words is immaterial, only the new, improvised meaning is of importance. Most of the jargonisms of any language, and of the English language too, are absolutely incomprehensible to those outside the social group which has invented them, They may be defined as a code within a code, that is special meanings of words that are imposed on the recognized code – the dictionary meaning of the words.

Thus the word grease means 'money'; loaf means 'head'; a tiger hunter is 'a gambler'; a lexer is 'a student preparing for a law course'.

Jargonisms are social in character. They are not regional. In Britain and in the US almost any social group of people has its own jargon. The following jargons are well known in the English language: the jargon of thieves and vagabonds, generally known as cant; the jargon of jazz people; the jargon of the army, known as military slang; the jargon of sportsmen, and many others.

The various jargons (which in fact are nothing but a definite group of words) remain a foreign language to the outsiders of any particular social group. It is interesting in connection with this to quote a stanza from «Don Juan» by Byron where the poet himself finds it necessary to comment on the jargonisms he has used for definite stylistic purposes.

«He from the world had cut off a great man,

Who in his time had made heroic bustle.

Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,

Booze in the ken[[12]](#footnote-12), or at the spellken[[13]](#footnote-13) hustle?

Who queer a flat[[14]](#footnote-14)? Who (spite of Bow street's ban)

On the high toby-spice[[15]](#footnote-15) so flash the muzzle?

Who on a lark[[16]](#footnote-16), with black-eyed Sal (his blowing)[[17]](#footnote-17).

So prime, so swell[[18]](#footnote-18), so nutty[[19]](#footnote-19), and so knowing?»

The – explanation of the words used here was made by Byron's editor because they were all jargonisms in Byron's time and no one would understand their meaning unless they were explained in normal English. Byron wrote the following ironic comment to this stanza:

«The advance of science and of language has rendered it un-necessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select nobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular, at least in my early days;

«On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,

In spite of each gallows old scout;

If you at all spellken can't hustle,

You'll be hobbled in making a Clout.

Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty,

When she hears of your scaly mistake,

She'll surely turn snitch for the forty–

That her Jack may be regular weight.»

If there be any gemman (=gentleman) so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of pugilism; who, I trust, still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humor and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.» (John Murray. «The Poetical Works of Lord Byron»)

Slang, contrary to jargon, needs no translation. It is not a secret code. It is easily understood by the English-speaking community and is only regarded as something not quite regular. It must also be remembered that both jargon and slang differ from ordinary language mainly in their vocabularies. The structure of the sentences and the morphology of the language remain practically unchanged. But such is the power of words, which are the basic and most conspicuous element in the language, that we begin unwittingly to speak of a separate language.

Jargonisms do not always remain the possession of a given social group. Some of them migrate into other social strata and sometimes become recognized in the literary language of the nation. G.H. McKnight writes:

«The language of the underworld provided words facetiously adopted by the fashionable world, many of which, such as fan and queer and banter and bluff and sham and humbug, eventually made their way into dignified use.»[[20]](#footnote-20)

There are hundreds of words, once jargonisms or slang, which have become legitimate members of the English literary language.

Jargonisms have their definite place of abode and are therefore easily classified according to the social divisions of the given period. Almost any calling has its own jargon, i.e. its set of words with which its members intersperse their speech and render it incomprehensible to outsiders. Some linguists even maintain that:

«Within the limits of any linguistic unity there are as many languages as there are groups of people thrown together by propinquity and common interests.»[[21]](#footnote-21)

This is, of course, an overstatement. First of all, one should not mix up such notions as language and vocabulary. True, unknown words and phrases, if too many, may render speech unintelligible. But this fact does not raise speech to the level of a different language.

Jargonisms, however, do break away from the accepted norms of semantic variants of words. They are a special group within the non-literary layer of words.

There is a common jargon and there are also special professional jargons. Common Jargonisms have gradually lost their special quality, which is to promote secrecy and keep outsiders in the dark. In fact, there are no outsiders where common jargon is concerned. It belongs to all social groups and is therefore easily understood by everybody. That is why it is so difficult to draw a hard and fast line between slang and jargon. When a jargonism becomes common, it has passed on to a higher step on the ladder of word groups and becomes slang or colloquial.

Here are some further examples of jargon:

Piou-Piou–'a French soldier, a private in the infantry'. According to Eric Partridge this word has already passed from military jargon to ordinary colloquial speech.

Hummen–'a false arrest' (American)

Dar – (from damned average raiser)–'a persevering and assiduous student'. (University jargon)

Matlo(w)–'a sailor' (from the French word 'matelot)

Man and wife–'a knife' (rhyming slang)

Manany–'a sailor who is always putting off a job or work' (nautical jargon) (from the Spanish word 'manana'–'to-morrow')

The word brass in the meaning of 'money in general, cash' is not jargon inasmuch as there is an apparent semantic connection between 'the general name for all alloys of copper with tin or zinc' and cash. The metonymic ties between the two meanings prevent the word from being used as a special code word. The same can be said of the words joker–'something used to play a trick or win one's point or object with' from card-playing; drag–'to rob vehicles'; to soap-box–'to make speeches out-of-doors standing on a soap-box'. These are easily understood by native speakers and therefore fail to meet the most indispensable property of jargon words. They are slang words or perhaps colloquial.

On the other hand, such words as soap and flannel meaning bread and 'cheese' (naval), and some of the words mentioned above are scarcely likely to be understood by the language community. Only those who are in the know understand such words. Therefore they can be classed as Jargonisms,

It will not come amiss to mention here the words of Vandryes, a well-known French linguist, who said that»… jargon distorts words, it does not create them.» Indeed, the creation of really new words is a very rare process, In almost any language you can find only a few entirely new words. It is not accidental therefore that the efforts of some poets to coin completely new words have proved to be an absolute failure, their attempts being utterly rejected by the language community.

In passing, we must remark that both slang and the various jargons of Great Britain differ much more from those of America (the United 112 States and Canada) than the literary language in the two countries does. In fact, the most striking difference is to be observed in the non-literary layer of words and particularly in slang and Jargonisms and professionalisms. (See quotation from Randolph Quirk on p. 44).

«American slang,» remarks G.H. McKnight, «on the whole remains a foreign language to the Englishman. American plays such as «Is zat so» and American novels such as «Babbitt» have had to be provided with glossaries in order to be intelligible in England. John Galsworthy in his recent novel «The Silver Spoon» makes a naturalistic use of colloquial idiom. He exhibits the rich element of native slang in the colloquial speech of England.»[[22]](#footnote-22)

Jargonisms, like slang and other groups of the non-literary layer, do not always remain on the outskirts of the literary language. Many words have overcome the resistance of the language lawgivers and purists and entered the standard vocabulary. Thus the words kid, fun, queer, bluff, fib, humbug, formerly slang words or Jargonisms, are now considered common colloquial. They may be said to be dejargonized.

**2.5.3 Professionalisms**

Professionalisms, as the term itself signifies, are the words used in a definite trade, profession or calling by people connected by common interests both at work and at home. They commonly designate some working process or implement of labor. Professionalisms are correlated to terms. Terms, as has already been indicated, are coined to nominate new concepts that appear in the process of, and as a result of, technical progress and the development of science.

Professional words name anew already-existing concepts, tools or instruments, and have the typical properties of a special code. The main feature of a professionalism is its technicality. Professionalisms are special words in the non-literary layer of the English vocabulary, whereas terms are a specialized group belonging to the literary layer of words. Terms, if they are connected with a field or branch of science or technique well-known to ordinary people, are easily decoded and enter the neutral stratum of the vocabulary. Professionalisms generally remain in circulation within a definite community, as they are linked to a common occupation and common social interests. The semantic structure of the term is usually transparent and is therefore easily understood. The se-mantic structure of professionalism is often dimmed by the image on which the meaning of the professionalism is based, particularly when the features of the object in question reflect the process of the work, metaphorically or metonymically. Like terms, professionalisms do not allow any polisemy, they are monosemantic.

Here are some professionalisms used in different trades: tin-fish (=submarine); block-buster (a bomb especially designed to destroy blocks of big buildings); piper (=a specialist who decorates pastry with the use of a cream-pipe); a midder case (=a midwifery case); outer (=a knockout blow).

Some professionalism, however, like certain terms, become popular and gradually loses their professional flavor. Thus the word crane which Byron used in his «Don Juan»… was a verb meaning 'to stretch out the neck like a crane before a dangerous leap' (in hunting, in order to 'look before you leap'). Now, according to Eric Partridge, it has broadened its meaning and is used in the sense of 'to hesitate at an obstacle, a danger. By 1860 it was no more professionalism used in hunting but had become a colloquial word of the non-literary stratum and finally, since 1390, entered the Standard English vocabulary.

«No good craning at it. Let's go down.» (Galsworthy)

Professionalisms should not be mixed up with jargonisms. Like slang words, professionalisms do not aim at secrecy. They fulfill a socially useful function in communication, facilitating a quick and adequate grasp of the message.

Good examples of professionalisms as used by a man-of-letters can be found in Dreiser's «Financier.» The following passage is an illustration.

Frank soon picked up all the technicalities of the situation. A «bull», he learned, was one who bought in anticipation of a higher price to come; and if he was «loaded» up with a «line» of stocks he was said to be «long». He sold to «realize» his profit, or if his margins were exhausted he was «wiped out». A «bear» was one who sold stocks which most frequently he did not have, in anticipation of a lower price at which he could buy and satisfy his previous sales. He was «short» when he had sold what he did not own, and he was «covered» when he bought to satisfy his sales and to realize his profits or to protect himself against further loss in the case prices advanced instead of declining. He was in a «corner» when he found that he could not buy in order to make good the stock he had borrowed for delivery and the return of which had been demanded. He was then obliged to settle practically at a price fixed by those to whom he and other «shorts» had sold.

As is seen, each financial professionalism is explained by the author and the words themselves are in inverted commas to stress their peculiar idiomatic sense and also to indicate that the words do not belong to the Standard English vocabulary in the meanings they are used.

There are certain fields of human activity which enjoy nation-wide interest and popularity. This, for example, is the case in Great Britain where sports and games are concerned. English pugilistic terminology, for example, has gained particularly wide recognition and therefore is frequently used in a transferred meaning, thus adding to the general image-building function of emotive prose. Here is an example of the use of such professionalisms in fiction.

«Father Knickerbocker met them at the ferry giving one a right-hander on the nose and the other an uppercut with his left just to let them know that the fight was on.»

This is from a story by O. Henry called «The Duel» in which the writer depicts two characters who came from the West to conquer New York. The vocabulary of boxing (right-hander, uppercut), as well as other professional terms found in the story, like ring, to counter, to clinch, etc., help to maintain the atmosphere of a fight, which the story requires.

Professionalisms are used in emotive prose to depict the natural speech of a character. The skilful use of a professional word will show not only the vocation of a character, but also his education, breeding, environment and sometimes even his psychology. That is why, perhaps, a literary device known as speech-characterization is so abundantly used in emotive prose. The use of professionalisms forms the most conspicuous element of this literary device.

An interesting article was published in the Canadian Globe and Mail \* in which the author shows how a journalist who mocks at the professionalisms in the language of municipal planners, which render their speech almost incomprehensible, himself uses words and expressions unintelligible to the lay reader, Here is the article.

**2.5.4 Dialectal words**

This group of words» is obviously opposed to the other groups of the non-literary English vocabulary and therefore its stylistic functions can be more or less clearly defined. Dialectal words are those which in the process of integration of the English – national language remained beyond its literary boundaries, and their use is generally confined to a definite locality. We exclude here what are called social dialects or even the still looser application of the term as in expressions like poetical dialect or styles as dialects.

With reference to this group there is a confusion of terms, particularly between the terms dialectal, slang and vernacular. In order to ascertain the true value and the stylistic functions of dialectal words it is necessary to look into their nature. For this purpose a quotation from Cecil Wyld's «A History of Modern Colloquial English» will be to the point.

«The history of a very large part of the vocabulary of the present-day English dialects is still very obscure, and it is doubtful whether much of it is of any antiquity. So far very little attempt has been made to sift the chaff from the grain in that very vast receptacle of the English Dialect Dictionary, and to decide which elements are really genuine 'corruptions' of words which the yokel has heard from educated speakers, or read, misheard, or misread, and ignorantly altered, and adopted, often with a slightly twisted significance. Probably many hundreds of 'dialect' words are of this origin, and have no historical value whatever, except inasmuch as they illustrate a general principle in the modification of speech. Such words are not, as a rule, characteristic of any Regional Dialect, although they may be ascribed to one of these, simply because some collector of dialect forms has happened to hear them in a particular area. They belong rather to the category of 'mistakes' which any ignorant speaker may make, and which such persons do make, again and again, in every part of the country.» We are not concerned here with the historical aspect of dialectal words. For our purpose it will suffice to note that there is a definite similarity of functions in the use of slang, cockney and any other form of non-literary English and that of dialectal words. All these groups when used in emotive prose are meant to characterize the speaker as a person of a certain locality, breeding, education, etc.

There is sometimes a difficulty in distinguishing dialectal words from colloquial words. Some dialectal words have become so familiar in good colloquial or standard colloquial English that they are universally accepted as recognized units of the standard colloquial English. To these words belong lass, meaning 'a girl or a beloved girl' and the corresponding lad, 'a boy or a young man', daft from the Scottish and the northern dialect, meaning 'of unsound mind, silly'; fash, also Scottish, with the meaning of 'trouble, cares'. Still they have not lost their dialectal associations and therefore are used in literary English with the above-mentioned stylistic function of characterization.

**Conclusion**

There exist the following main layers of the English and the Uzbek vocabulary: literary, neutral and colloquial. Each of these layer has its own feature: the literary layer has a bookish character, the colloquial layer has a spoken character and the neutral layer is deprived of any coloring and may enter both literary and colloquial layers. These three layers have their own classification.

Within the literary layer we distinguish: common literary words, terms, poetic words, archaic words, barbarisms and neologisms. Within the colloquial vocabulary we distinguish: common colloquial words, vulgar words. The neutral layer penetrates both the literary and colloquial vocabulary and is deprived of any stylistic coloring.

Common literary words have a neutral character. This statement becomes obvious when we oppose common neutral literary words to bookish and colloquial.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Common | bookish | Colloquial |
| To begin  To eat | To commence  To consume | Bring about, get off  to cram |

Terms are words denoting notions of some special field of knowledge: medical terminology: antibiotic.

Generally terms are used in the language of science but with certain stylistic purpose they may be used in the language of emotive prose. For example, Arch. Cronin employed a lot of medical terms in some of his books. All this is done to make the narration bright, vivid and close to life. It is a well-known fact that terms are monosemantic and have not any contextual meaning. In most cases they have only a denotation free meaning.

Poetic words. This group of words stands between terms and archaic words. They are close to terms because they are monosemantic and they are close to archaic words because they are out of use: for example: brow(forehead), steed (horse).The fiction of poetic words may be different when used in the text, it calls on a certain type of environment and mood. Sometimes these words are used to produce a satirical effect.

For example: It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,

The holy time is quite as a Nun

Breathless with adoration (W. Wordsworth).

Archaic words are those which are not used now except for special purposes. Some of them are passing out of use: thee (you), thy (your), hath (has).

Archaic words are very close to historical words: names of ancient weapons, types of boats, carriages. For example: blunderbuss (an old type of gun).

In many cases we have archaic words in poetry. They are used here to create the elevated style.

Barbarisms are words which came into the English vocabulary from other languages and have retained their spelling and pronunciation: For example: chic (stylish), bon mot (a clever witty saying), mon-sieur (sit), tres bien (very good).

The function of barbarisms is to create local color. Many writers employ this device; Eg: «Monsieur ne mange rien» said sister St. Joseph (S. Maugham).

Neologisms (or coinages) appear when there is the need to express new ideas and notions. They are produced in accordance with the existing word-building models of the English language, mainly due to affixation, word-compounding.

Ex: me first-mefirstism, do it yourself-do it-yourself.

Another wide spread group of coinages is formed with prepositions in postposition: sit-in, teach-in.

When they are used in the written text they produce special stylistic effect. Their function may be different to produce a humorous effect, to make distinct the additional meaning.

Colloquial layer of the vocabulary.

Common colloquial words. The essential part of these words constitutes common neutral vocabulary which is in everyday usage. There are 3 types of colloquial words:

1. Words which change their phonetic form.

For example: S`long (So long) `kew (thank you)

Sometimes certain syllables may be omitted: `cos (because), `ave (have)

2. Words which change their form and meaning.

For example: back number (out-of-clate), oldie (the old song). Noddy (a stupid person).

3. Words which change their meaning in certain contexts.

For example: I like his get up-I like his way and manner. Let me know how you come out-let me know the results. Slang. Slangs are words which are used to create fresh names for some things. Sometimes slangs are vulgar and cynical.

There are following slang words for money: beans, jolly, brass.

The functions of slang in the written text may be the following to characterize the speech, of the person, to produce a special impression and humorous effect. For example: breadbasket (the stomach), go crackers (go mad)

Jargons. The vocabularies of jargon are the words existing in the language but which have acquired new meanings: There are the jargon of thieves, of jazz people, army.

People who are far from that profession may not understand this jargon. For example: grease (money), loaf (head).Many of jargon words are based on the use of the transferred meanings of words. For example. He was a great gas. (talked too much without saying anything useful or interesting.)

Professional words are words which are used in certain sphere of human activity but these words name this profession indirectly. For example: a tin-fish (submarine), right-hander(upright).

The function of professionalisms may be different: to characterize the speech of a person, to make the description more precise and realistic. For example: heart man (a cardiologist), red ink (blood).

Dialectal words are such words which are connected with a certain area or region. For example: a lass (a girl or a beloved), fash (trouble). All these belong to Scottish dialect. Examples of southern dialect: volk (folk), yound (found). Irish words: eejts (idiots), colleen (a girl).It’s quite natural that dialectal words are commonly used in oral speech and emotive prose and always perform the function of charactering a person, his breeding and education through his speech.

Vulgar words perform the function of interjections and speech characterization. For example: smeller (a nose), old bean (a familiar form of address), nigger (a black)

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11. See also Prof. R.W. Burclifield's remark on the system of labelling in his Introduction to "A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary". Oxford, 1972, p. XVI. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ken = a house which harbors' thieves [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. spellken = a play-house or theatre [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. to queer a flat = to puzzle a silly fellow [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. to flash the muzzle (gun) on the high toby-spice = to rob on horse back [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. a lark = fun or sport of any kind [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. a blowing = a girl [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. swell = gentlemanly [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. nutty = pleasing (to be nuts on = to be infatuated with) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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