

Study of Stylistic Lexicology

Feruz Melsovn Khajieva

PhD

Docent of English literature department

Bukhara State University

Republic of Uzbekistan

e-mail:feruza11031979@mail.ru

+998914484480

Kendjayeva Gulrukh Fatillojevna

Teacher of English literature department

Bukhara State University

Republic of Uzbekistan

e-mail:guli.kendjaeva@mail.ru

+998973065753

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Abstract:

The study of stylistic features of the language has a great importance in the sphere of linguistics and literature interpretation. The language is a phenomenon which is in the process of development. Time creates new words and they are to be put into the groups they belong. Different theories connected with stylistic organization of language level, especially stylistic lexicology show that this field of stylistics has issues for investigation. The given article discusses the groups of words studied in the stylistic lexicology and their role in the literary language. Being divided into three groups the English vocabulary is classified according neutral, literary and colloquial layers. Aforementioned layers comprise such groups of words as terms, archaic words, poetic words, nonce-words, barbarisms, slang, jargon, professionalisms, dialectal words, vulgar words, colloquial coinages. In the article they are discussed and their functions in the literary work are identified.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Stylistic lexicology is a branch of the stylistics which is deeply interested in the study of lexical units of the vocabulary which deals with a specific vocabulary belonging to literary and colloquial layers of the language. They are deeply investigated in the works of such scholars as Galperin I.R.(1977), Bobokhonova L.T. (1995), Ivashkin M.P. (1999), Skrebnyov M.Y. (2000),

Quronov D. (2004), Znamenskaya T.A. (2008), Kukhrenko V.A. (2009), Esin A.B. (2010) and others. Most of the mentioned scholars propose the study of words in clusters. So, the appropriate method of investigating lexicon is dividing them into three layers literary, neutral and colloquial.

II. DISCUSSION

As it is known lexicology is the branch of linguistics that studies the stock of words (the

lexicon) in a given language whereas stylistic lexicology deals with words which carry stylistic coloring and thus create expressiveness. These words are inherent in the language and make up vocabulary. Unlike stylistic devices investigated in the stylistic semasiology they do not depend on context, on the contrary context requires the usage of such words. In the research text or scientific discourse the abundant usage of terms is presupposed. For instance, if we read an excerpt from article, on textile industry we meet abundant of terms connected with the very sphere of science.

*“With up to 16 filling thread colors it is the ideal tool for creative, flexible, reliable and efficient production of top quality clothing and domestic textiles or technical textiles in cotton, silk, glass, carbon or aramid. And it can be used with cam motion, doobby (up to 24 shafts) or Jacquard machines with up to 30,000 cards and in conjunction with the EasyLeno® leno system developed by DORNIER.”*¹

In the fragment, the terms *aramid* – aromatic polyamide, *doobby* - an attachment to a loom, used in weaving, small figures, *shafts* – axis, belong to the vocabulary specific to the textile industry. Their explanation or translation can be found in the dictionaries with indication to particular sphere.

While creating a literary work or impressive text on a given topic the language user tries to seek for a word to create pragmatic discourse. Without appropriately chosen word the stylistic effect of communication will not occur. In the belles-lettres text with highly poetic character special literary vocabulary is used by the writer. Such words carry emotiveness and are fixed in the dictionaries as well. For instance while creating a biographical or historical novel the author

relevantly refers to specific vocabulary with historical or archaic coloring to create the epoch in his work. For example, in the historical novel the creator will use archaic words to make the literary piece convincing and appropriate or in the novel written in science fiction the writer refers to the terms, the literary work about teachers and students is will be imbued with professionalisms.

Stylistic lexicology is deeply interested in stylistic differentiation of word-stock due to three layers: neutral words, literary words and colloquial words. This type of grouping is suggested by Prof. I.R. Galperin in his book “Stylistics”². According to his distinction literary and colloquial layers of whole word-stock of the English language have their own subgroups whereas literary layer of vocabulary consists of legitimate members of vocabulary and they do not possess local or dialectal character. Thus, the following classification of the English word-stock is suggested by the scholar.

Special literary vocabulary	Standard English vocabulary	Special colloquial vocabulary
Terms Archaic words Poetic words Nonce-words Barbarisms	Neutral words	Slang Jargon Professionalism Dialectal words Vulgarism Nonce-words

Neutral words

Neutral words form the lexical backbone of all functional styles. Usually they are understood and accepted by all English-speaking people. Separated from the context they do not carry stylistic coloring. Only in the context when their meaning stands in the various types of interactions they can acquire stylistic coloring. Being the main

¹ Retrieved from:
<https://www.lindauerdornier.com/en/weaving-machines/p2/>

² Galperin I.R. Stylistics. – Moscow: Higher school, 1977.

source of synonymy and polysemy, neutral words easily produce new meanings and stylistic variants. Compare: log = 1) a section of the trunk or a main branch of a tree, when stripped of branches; 2) log = a detailed record of a voyage of a ship or aircraft; 3) log = cut down (an area of forest) in order to exploit the timber commercially, 4) to sleep like a log = to sleep very well without being woken by any voice.

Special literary vocabulary

Special literary vocabulary or bookish words are mainly used in writing and in polished speech. They form stylistic opposition to their colloquial synonyms. Compare: infant (bookish) = child (neutral) = kid (colloquial); parent (bookish) = father (neutral) = daddy (colloquial); maiden (bookish) = girl (neutral) = flapper (colloquial); police officer (bookish) = policeman (neutral) = cop (colloquial); garment (bookish) = clothes (neutral) = kit (colloquial).

Terms are the words which denote objects, processes, phenomena of science, humanities, technique in a particular kind of language or field of study. Most of the terms are understood by the narrow specialists and they can be used mostly in scientific style. But the use of terms is not confined to only scientific style. They are successfully implemented in literary style as well.

*“Adam listlessly turned over pages of notes on minor novelists who were now excluded from his thesis. There was this great wad, for instance, on Egbert Merrymarsh, the Catholic belletrist, younger contemporary of Chesterton and Belloc. Adam had written a whole chapter, tentatively entitled ‘The Divine Wisecrack’ on Merrymarsh’s use of **paradox** and **antithesis** to prop up his facile Christian **apologetics**. All wasted labour.”* (David Lodge)

In the fragment from the novel “The British Museum is Falling Down” the author used

the terms (they are highlighted in the text) belonging to the philology and theology. Indeed the novel is about Adam - a researcher from the world of intellectual and is preparing an earth-shattering thesis.

In the next extract it is possible to read the lines describing chemical procedure because the terms are taken from the chemistry field. In the story “Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde” the author touches upon the doppelganger theme and due to chemical crystal and liquid the hero turns into another man with evil features.

*“The phial, to which I next turned my attention, might have been about half full of a blood-red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell and seemed to me to contain **phosphorus** and some volatile ether.”* (Robert Louis Stevenson)

The word *phosphorous* is a term belonging to the sphere of chemistry and due to the given context it refers to the process of chemical reaction. The writer used the term to give authenticity to text and an episode.

Archaic words. Archaism comes from the Greek word *archaios* and means ‘ancient’.³ In the course of language history they are ousted by newer synonymic words.

“Methinks it is like a weasel.” (William Shakespeare)

Archaic words are not used in present day speech but they can be found in historical works to create authenticity and describe more vividly the epoch and its coloring. Such words can be example for archaisms: *anon* – in a little while or soon, *methinks* – it seems to me, *palfrey* – a small horse, *troth* – faith, *loسل* – worthless fellow, *cease* – to die, *apothecary* – pharmacist, *damsel* – a

³ Тимофеев Л.И. и Венгров М.П. Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов. – Москва: Учпедгиз, 1963. – С. 18.

young unmarried woman, poesy – poetry, maketh – make, thee – you.

“Sweetest love, I do not go,

For weariness of thee,

Nor in hope the world can show

A fitter love for me;

But since that I

Must die at last, 'tis best

To use myself in jest

Thus by feign'd deaths to die.” (John

Donne)

Poetic words are the words with highly stylistic coloring and elevated mood. They are usually used belles-lettres style to make the text vivid and imbue with sense. “Poetic words 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 and 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.”⁴ The following words can be example for poetic words: *steed – horse, quoth – said, woe – sorrow, horse – steed, valley – vale, fire – devouring element, welkin – sky, morrow – the next day, foe – opponent or enemy, decease – to die.*

“But the war did not cease; though friend and foe alike were almost drowned in blood, it seemed as powerful as eternity, and in time Tony Vassal too went to battle and was killed.” (Alfred Copard)

In the example the writer used poetic word *foe* to keep alliteration in the combination with *friend and foe*. The word *foe* is poetic because we can meet the lexeme in the literary texts but in our ordinary speech we say *enemy*.

Nonce-words (also called an occasionalism) is a word coined to suit one particular occasion. They are the “words for once” created for a single occasion to solve an immediate problem of communication. These words appear in the context and rarely pass into the language. Literary nonce words are usually formed by means of affixes.

Surface *knowingness, sevenish* (around seven o'clock), *morish* (a little more) and so on.

“Let me say in the beginning that even if I wanted to avoid Texas I could not, for I am wived in Texas, and mother-in-lawed, and uncled, and aunted, and cousined within an inch of my life.” (J. Steinbeck)

“You're the bestest good one – she said – the most bestest good one in the world.” (H. E. Bates)

Nonce-words aim at introducing additional meanings as a result of an aesthetic re-evaluation of the given concept may perform the function of a stylistic device.

Barbarism (Foreignism) comes from Latin word *barbarous* and means foreign.⁵

These are the words of foreign origin. Unlike borrowings these words are not the part of the language. In the literary text they are used to create the foreign atmosphere in the speech of the literary personages and need a special decoding to be understood. This is the pragmatic manner of conveying the speech peculiar to the foreign heroes in the book. As for example in the short story by C. Donnel “Recipe for Murder” the

⁴ Galperin I.R. Stylistics. – Moscow: Higher school, 1977. – P. 79.

⁵ Тимофеев Л.И. и Венгров М.П. Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов. – Москва: Учпедгиз, 1963. – С. 26

heroine Madame Chalon of French origin uses many French words in her dialogue with inspector Miron.

"She turned, her face illuminated by a smile. "You are familiar, perhaps, with such dishes as 'Dindonneau Ford aux Marrons'f Or 'Supremes de Volatile al Indienne'y Or 'Tournedos Mascotie'" Or 'Omelette en Surprise a la Napolitaine'y Or 'Potage Bagation Cras'" 'Aubergines a la Torque', 'Chaud-Froid de Cailles en Belle Vue', or..." (C.P.Donnel)

As we see, barbarisms in the literary text serve to provide local or national colour as a background to the narrative. In the example the names of French dishes are given in the native language of Madame Chalon to stress the subtle taste of French cuisine.

Generally speaking the special literary vocabulary is a group of words which serves pragmatically in a literary text to create a poetic language and emphasize the precise aspects of speech acts.

Special colloquial vocabulary

Common colloquial vocabulary is part of standard English word-stock. It borders both on neutral vocabulary and on special colloquial vocabulary. Colloquialisms are familiar words and idioms used in informal speech and writing, but unacceptable in polite conversation or business correspondence. Compare standard speech sentence *"Sir, you speak clearly and to the point"* and its colloquial equivalent *"Friend, you talk plain and hit the nail right on the head"*. There are various types of colloquial vocabulary.

Slang is language (words, phrases, and usages) of an informal register that members of particular in-groups favor (over the common vocabulary of a standard language) in order to establish group identity, exclude outsiders, or both. In its earliest attested use, the word slang referred to the vocabulary of "low" or

"disreputable" people. By the early nineteenth century, it was no longer exclusively associated with disreputable people, but continued to be applied to usages below the level of standard educated speech. Such words are used

Wallflower – a shy – typically a girl – person.

"You'll have more fun at the dance if you aren't such a wallflower."

Hip (hippie, hipster) – someone very fashionable.

"My hip grandfather plays the sax, but my hipster brother just makes homemade pickles."

Coin – another way to refer to money.

"She's about to earn some major coin."

Dying – something that was so funny, you died laughing.

"This anecdote is hilarious. I'm dying."

Epic – highly enjoyable.

"His latest novel was epic."

Thingy – people or things whose name one can't remember.

Give me that thingy, yes, that bottle opener.

Brolly – another word for umbrella.

Fetch and carry my brolly!

Slang is non-standard vocabulary understood and used by the whole nation. Slang is sometimes described as the language of sub-cultures or the language of the streets. Linguistically, slang can be viewed as a sub-dialect. It is hardly used in writing - except for stylistic effect. People resort to slang because it is more forceful, vivid and expressive than standard usages.

Jargon (argot) derived from the Latin word *gaggire*, meaning 'to chatter'.⁶ Jargon words are

⁶Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jargon>

non-standard words used by people of a certain asocial group to keep their intercourse secret. There are jargons of criminals, convicts, gamblers, vagabonds, souteneurs, prostitutes, drug addicts and the like. The use of jargon conveys the suggestion that the speaker and the listener enjoy a special "fraternity" which is closed for outsiders, because outsiders do not understand the secret language.

Agonal - Term to signify a major, negative change in a patient's condition. (medical jargon)

Chief cook and bottle-washer - A person who holds many responsibilities. (business jargon)

Versity – university (students' jargon)

Suspect – a person whom the police think may have committed a crime. (police jargon)

Left wing - Political jargon for liberal, progressive viewpoint. (political jargon)

Professionalisms are term-like words. They are used and understood by members of a certain trade or profession. Their function is to rationalize professional communication and make it economical. This is achieved due to a broad semantic structure of professional terms, which makes them economical substitutes for lengthy Standard English vocabulary equivalents.

Scalpel – a small sharp knife used by a doctor for doing an operation.

Round pliers – a metal tool with round ends that looks like a strong pair of scissors, used for holding small objects or for bending and cutting wire.

Tin fish – submarine.

"Stocks and bonds, loans and mortgages, margins and securities – here was a world of finance, and there was no room in it for the human world or the world of nature."
(O'Henry)

In the example the highlighted words are professionalisms and belong to the world of business and finance. The author used them to create the authentic description of the broker in his story "The Romance of Busy Broker".

Dialectal words are the variety of a language that a group of people speak, separated either by geography, class, or ethnicity. "They 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. 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'. The dialectal words can belong to Irish, Scottish, Australian dialects."⁷

In the following example from the novel "The Grapes of Wrath" American writer John Steinbeck used Oklahoma dialect in the dialogues to describe the personages' original background.

"The boy was at her side complaining. 'I didn't know. He said he et (eat), or he wasn't hungry. Las' (last) night I went an'bust a winda an'stoled (I broke into a house and stole) some bread. Made 'im chew'er down. But he pucked it all up (I made him to eat it. But he vomited it), an' then he was weaker." (John Steinbeck)

In the example the highlighted words belong to Oklahoma dialect of American English.

Dialectal words are used in emotive prose to characterize the speaker as a person of a certain locality, breeding and education.

⁷ Galperin I.R. Stylistics. – Moscow: Higher school, 1977. – P. 116.

Vulgar words. The word vulgar comes from Latin word *vulgaris* and means 'rude'.⁸ These are the words of offensive or obscene character. It is synonymous with the general meaning of profanity. The word most associated with the verbal form of vulgarity is "cursing".

In the literary work these words are usually used by writers in the speech of personages to underline their rudeness and unculturedness and bad mannerism. Mostly literary personages like gangsters, robbers or people belonging to lower class use in their speech such words.

"You, lean, long, lanky lath of a lousy bastard!" (O'Casey.)

Colloquial coinages (nonce-words), unlike those of a literary bookish character, are spontaneous and elusive, – writes prof. I.R.Galperin. these are the words which are formed with help of word coining i.e. the new words are created in the process of speech on the frame of the fixed word building. Unlike literary-bookish coinages, nonce-words of colloquial nature are not usually built by means of affixes, but are based on certain semantic changes in words.

1. This can be word formation by means of compound word building:

"Her nose was red and dew-droppy."
(Richard Aldington)

2. By means of blending:

"Obstreosis of the ductal tract". (James Thurber)

The nonce-word *obstreosis* sounds realistic term for those who are not aware of medical science. But in fact this is coined from two terms:

medical - "streptothricosis" (animal disease) and botany - "coreopsis" (sort of flower).⁹

3. By means of changing noun into verb – denomination of verb.

"I didn't buy the piano to be sonatoed out of my own house." (Greenwood)

Thus we can see that nonce-words are of reach stylistic function and to decode them requires the subtle linguistic sense.

In conclusion to the study of stylistic lexicology it can be stated that this branch of stylistics mostly deals with those language elements which carry stylistic coloring and make the speech either literary or colloquial, both being inseparable part of the general word-stock of the English language.

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⁸ Тимофеев Л.И. и Венгров М.П. Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов. – Москва: Учпедгиз, 1963. – С. 32

⁹ Example is taken from Jalilova L.J. Comic Creation Means in James Thurber's Novel "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"// International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science. Philadelphia, 2019 № 72. – P.559.

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