STYLISTIC CLASSIFICATION OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT: The proposed paper outlines the varieties of English. It describes the differences between the literary and non-literary language between spoken and written language. The most important characteristic features between these varieties are discussed and illustrated with examples. The proper and appropriate use of words in context within different layers of language is essential for good language proficiency, therefore speakers and users of language in general are supposed to be aware of norms (standards) and its exceptions. A stylistic classification of the English vocabulary has also been provided in order to explain and illustrate the different nuances and shades of meaning of the words and the particular stylistic layer they belong.

Keywords: Literary/non-literary Language, Spoken/Written Language; Vocabulary Layers: Literary, Neutral, Colloquial

İNGİLİZCE KELİMELERİN BİÇEMSEL SINIFLANDIRMASI

ÖZ: Bu metin İngilizcedeki farklılıkları özetlemekte ve sözlü ile yazılı dildeki edebi ve edebi olmayan dili açıklamaktadır. Bu çeşitlilik içindeki en önemli karakteristik özellikler örneklerle tartışılmış ve açıklanmıştır. Kelimelerin metin içindeki farklı katmanlarıyla doğru ve uygun kullanımı iyi bir dil yeterliliği için şarttır, bu sebeple konuşanların ve dili kullananların genel mahiyette kuralların (standartların) ve kuralların dışındaki tüm kelimelerin farkında olmaları gerekmektedir. İngilizce kelimelerin şekilsel olarak sınıflandırılması, kelimelerin ait oldukları özel ve şekilsel katmanları ve farklı nüans ile yapıdaki anlamlarını açıklamak ve göstermek için ayrıca sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edebi Dil/Edebi Olmayan Dil; Yazı Dili/Konuşma Dili; Kelime Katmanları: Edebi, Argo ve Nötr Kelimeler

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Introduction

There is clear division between the literary and non-literary language. They are interdependent. The literary language constantly enriches its vocabulary and includes the non-literary (vernacular, colloquial). It also adopts some of its syntactical peculiarities and by doing so gives them the status of norms of the literary language. The norm of usage is established by the language community at every given period in the development of the language. Thus literary language is a historical category. I.R. Galperin defines the literary language as "that elaborated form (variety) of the national language which obeys definite morphological, phonetic, syntactical, lexical, phraseological, and stylistic norms recognized as standard and therefore acceptable in all kinds and types of discourse. It allows modifications but within the framework of the system of established norms."

The literary language greatly influences the non-literary language. Many words, constructions and particularly phonetic improvements have been introduced into the English colloquial language through it. The English literary language was particularly regulated and formalized during the 17th and 18th centuries. The influence over the non-literary language had its greatest effect in the 19th century with the spread of general education, in the 20th century with the introduction of radio and TV.

It is difficult to specify the characteristic features of the non-literary variety because it does not present any system. Thus the best way to understand it is to contrast the non-literary form to the existing form of the literary English. The publication of dictionaries does much to establish the literary language norms, but at the very moment the norm is established, it begins to fluctuate. Sometimes we may say that two norms co-exist, but one of them will give way to its rival and either vanish from the language completely or remain on its peripheries. This is particularly the case with pronunciation norms.

There are two varieties of language - **the spoken** and **the written** within standard (literary) language. This differentiation is predetermined by two distinct factors, namely, the actual situation in which the language is being used and the aim of communication. Of the two varieties of language, diachronically the spoken is primary and the written is secondary. The situation in which the spoken variety of language is used and in which it develops, presupposes the presence of the interlocutor, whereas, the written variety presupposes the absence of the interlocutor. The spoken language is mostly maintained in the form of a dialogue; but the written in the form of a monologue. The spoken language has a considerable advantage over the

written because of factors such as human voice, all kinds of gestures, which give additional information.

The written language has to seek means to compensate for what it lacks. This is the reason why the written language is more carefully organized, more explanatory, the word choice is more deliberate. The spoken language is spontaneous, momentary. It vanishes after having fulfilled its purpose, which is to communicate the thought, no matter trivial or important. The idea remains, the language disappears. The written language is able to live forever with the idea it expresses.

The spoken language can not be detached from the user of it, the written language can be detached and objectively looked at. The writer has an opportunity to correct and improve what has been put on paper. The written language bears a greater volume of responsibility than its spoken counterpart.

The spoken language differs from the written language phonetically, morphologically, lexically and syntactically. The most striking difference between the spoken and the written language is in the vocabulary used. There are words and phrases typically colloquial on the one hand, and typically bookish on the other hand. If colloquial words and phrases find their way in the written language, they immediately produce a marked stylistic effect and can be used for the speech characterization, for example. The spoken language widely uses intensifying words. These are interjections and words with strong emotive meaning, as oaths, swear– words and adjectives which have lost their primary meaning (He put my **goddam** paper down. I am **pretty** sure.). The spoken language is characterized by the insertion into the utterance of words without any meaning, which are called "fill-ups" or empty words (as well, and all, so to say, whatever).

The essential difference between the two varieties of language is evidently reflected in the syntactical structure. The syntactical peculiarities of the spoken language are

1) omission of the part of utterance easily supplied by the situation in which the communication takes place (*Who you with? Tell you what?*)

2) tendency to use the direct word-order in questions or omit auxiliary verb, leaving it to the intonation to indicate the grammatical meaning (*He knew she was dead?*)

3) unfinished sentences (*If I were you…*)

4) usage of a construction with two subjects (a tautological subject) (*Helen, she was there*.)

5) absence of connecting words (*Came home late. Had a cup of tea. Went to bed soon after that.*)

6) syntactical structures, expressing definite emotions, which can be understood only knowing a proper intonation design (*Isn't she cute! Don't you tell me that*!)

The written language is characterized by

1) the exact nature of the utterance (the abundance of all kinds of connecting words))

2) the bookish "space-wasters" (despite the fact; reach a decision)

3) the use of complicated sentence-units (long periods are more frequent than short utterances)

An essential property of the written variety of language is coherence and logical unity backed up by purely linguistic means.

A.S. Pushkin: "The written language is constantly being enlivened by expressions born in conversation but must not give up what it has acquired in the course of centuries. To use the spoken language only, means not to know the language."

English vocabulary layers

1. The neutral layer of the English vocabulary.

2. The literary layer.

3. The colloquial layer.

The classification of the English vocabulary is discussed for purely stylistic purposes. Some stylistic devices are based on the interplay of different stylistic aspects of words. The word-stock of any language is a system, the elements of which are interconnected, interrelated and yet independent.

In accordance with the already-mentioned division of language into literary and non-literary (colloquial), we may represent the whole of the word-stock of the English language as being divided into three main layers: **literary, neutral and colloquial**. The literary and the colloquial layers

contain a number of sub-groups. The 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 the one that makes this layer more or less stable. The aspect of the colloquial layer is its lively spoken character. It is this that makes it unstable, fleeting. The aspect of the neutral layer is its universal character. This layer is the most stable of all, because it is unrestricted in use, it can be employed in all styles of language and in all spheres of human activity.

Neutral words form the bulk of the English vocabulary, they are used in both literary and colloquial language. Unlike these two groups, the neutral group of words does not have any special stylistic coloring, whereas both literary and colloquial words have a definite stylistic coloring. The following synonyms illustrate the relations which exist between the three layers:

Colloquial

Neutral

Literary

daddy

father

parent

get out

go away

retire

go on

continue

proceed

chap

fellow

associate

There is a definite, though slight, semantic difference between these words, but this is almost always the case with synonyms. The main distinction between them remains stylistic. But stylistic difference may be of various kinds:

1) it may lie in the emotional tension connoted in a word;

2) in the sphere of application;

3) in the degree of the quality denoted.

Colloquial words are always more emotionally colored than literary ones. The neutral layer of words 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 (common literary) approaches the neutral layer and has an obvious tendency to pass into that layer. The same may be said of the upper range of the colloquial layer (common colloquial). The blurred lines of demarcation show the process of interpenetration of the stylistic layers. Still the extremes remain antagonistic and therefore are very often used to bring about a collision of manners of speech for special stylistic purposes.

Example:

-"What the hell made you take on a job like that?"

-"A regrettable necessity for cash. I can assure you it doesn't suit my temperament." (A. Christie)

The literary vocabulary consists of the following groups of words:

Common literary.
1) **Terms** (Their main stylistic function is to create the true-to-life atmosphere of the narration, but terms can be also used with a parodying function, thus creating humorous effect.) *"…he rode up to the <u>campus</u>, arranged for a room in the <u>graduate dormitory</u> and went out at once to the empty <u>Physics building</u>."*

2) **Barbarisms and foreign words** (They are used mainly to supply the narrated events with the proper local coloring and to convey the idea of the foreign origin or cultural and educational status of the personage.) *"Yates remained serious. "We have time, Herr Zippmann, to try your <u>schnapps</u>. Are there any German troops in Neustadt?""*

3) **Archaisms** (The main stylistic function is to re-create the atmosphere of antiquity. Archaisms used in inappropriate surroundings can cause humorous effect.) The main types of archaisms are **archaisms proper**, i.e. obsolete words replaced by new ones (befall = happen), **historical words** (knight, spear), **morphological archaisms**, i.e. archaic forms of non-archaic words (speaketh, cometh, brethren). *"He kept looking at the fantastic gree of the jungle and then at the orange-brown earth…The Lord <u>giveth</u> and He <u>taketh</u> away, Ridges thought solemnly."*

4) **Poetic words** (These are words with the fixed sphere of usage in poetry and elevated prose, their function is to give a lofty poetic coloring.)

5) **Literary Coinages (including Nonce-words)** (**Stylistic coinages** are words coined because their creators seek expressive utterance. Their stylistic function is to create the effect of laconism, implication (lilliput) or to create the atmosphere of witty humor and satire.) **Nonce-words** are words coined to suit one particular occasion, they rarely pass into the language as legitimate units of vocabulary. *"I am not just talented. I'm <u>geniused</u>."*

The colloquial vocabulary falls into the following groups:

Common colloquial words.

1) **Slang** (It is the most extended and vastly developed subgroup of non-standard colloquial layer of the vocabulary. Besides separate words it includes also highly figurative phraseology. Slang occurs mainly in dialogue and serves to create speech characteristics of personages.) *"I'm the first one saw her. I find out she's some <u>jock's regular</u>, she's living with a <u>shrimp</u>." Remember "old sport" in The Great Gatsby.*

2) **Professional and social jargons.** (They are used in emotive prose to depict the natural speech of a character within the framework of such device as speech-characterization. They can show vocation, education, breeding, environment and even the psychology of a personage. Slang, contrary to jargon, needs no translation, jargon is used to conceal or disguise something.) *"She came out of sleep, in a nightmare struggle for breath…Bart gave her a <u>needle</u>."*

3) **Vulgarisms** (Vulgarisms are divided into **expletives and swear-words** used as general exclamations and **obscene words**. They are emotionally strongly charged and can be used for speech-characterization.) *"Poor son of a bitch", he said, "I feel for him, and I'm so sorry I was bastardly."*

4) **Dialectal words** (They are introduced into the speech of personages to indicate their origin. The number of dialectal words and their frequency also indicate the educational and cultural level of the speaker.) *"We'll show Levenford what my clever lass can do."*

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