Three Main Layers of the English Vocabulary

Special Literary Vocabulary:
Poetical Words, Archaic Words, Coinages

Common Literary Vocabulary: Terms, Foreignisms and Barbarisms

Neutral Words

Common Colloquial Vocabulary

Standard English

Special Colloquial Vocabulary:
(non-literary)
Professionalisms, Slang, Dialectal Words, Jargon, Vulgarisms, Coinages
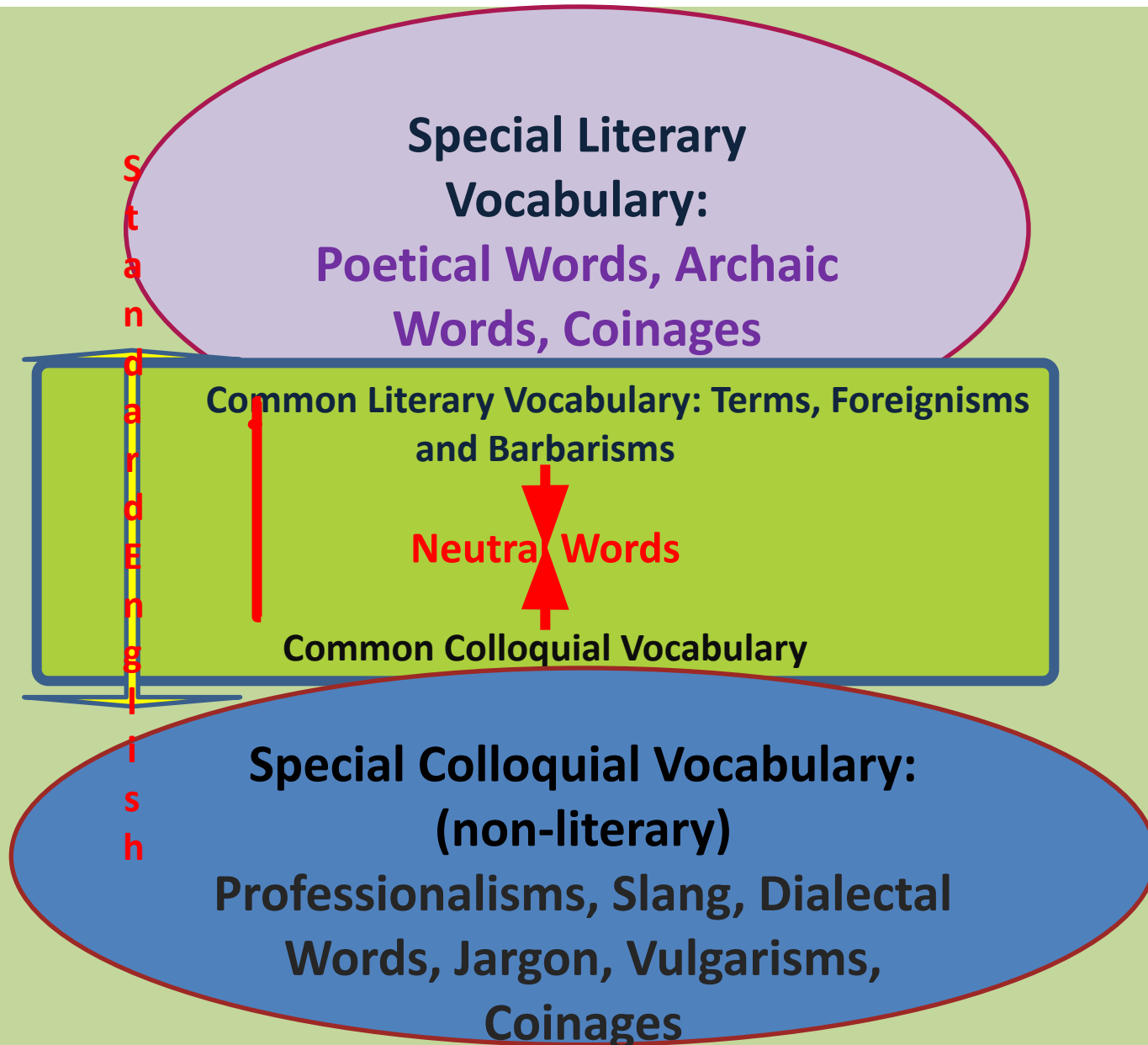
Layer	The common property	Groups of words
The literary layer	The markedly **bookish** character.	*1)Common literary words;* *Special literary vocabulary:* 2)Terms and learned words; 3)Poetic words; 4)Archaic words; 5)Barbarisms and foreign words; 6)Literary coinages
The neutral layer	The **universal** character: it is **unrestricted in its use**, it can be employed in all styles of language and all spheres of human activity, It is the most **stable** layer of vocabulary.	*Standard English vocabulary:* *1)Common literary words;* 2)Neutral words; *3)Common colloquial words*
The colloquial layer	The **lively spoken** character, it is **unstable, fleeting.** It is often **limited** to a definite language community or confined to a special locality where it circulates.	*1)Common colloquial words;* *Special colloquial (non-literary) words:* 2)Slangisms; 3)Jargonisms; 4)Professional words; 5)Dialectal words; 6)Vulgar words;

Neutral, common literary and common colloquial vocabulary

Neutral words form the bulk of the English vocabulary. They are used in both ***literary and colloquial language.*** Neutral words are the main source of synonymy and polysemy and are prolific in the production of new meanings. They are <u>*not stylistically marked*</u> whereas both literary and colloquial words have a <u>*special stylistic colouring*</u> *(degree of emotiveness, sphere of application or degree of quality denoted,etc.).E.g.* **to talk- to converse-to chat.** The <u>*lines of demarcation*</u> between common colloquial and neutral on the one hand, and common literary and neutral, on the other hand, are <u>*blurred*</u>. The process of <u>interpenetration and interdependence</u> of the stylistic strata becomes here most apparent, because the lower range of literary words and the upper range of the colloquial layer have a markedly obvious <u>*tendency to pass into the neutral layer.*</u> E.g. **teenager** **and** *flapper* are colloquial words passing into the neutral vocabulary. They are gradually loosing their non-standard character and becoming widely recognized.

Special literary vocabulary

-**Terms** (*social connotation in respect of various strata of a society*);

-**Poetic** and **highly literary** words (*social connotation in respect of the accepted literary norm; communicative-functional connotation*);

-**Archaic** words (*temporal connotation*);

-**Barbarisms** and **foreign** words (*territorial connotation*);

-**Literary coinages** (*including nonce-words*).

Special Colloquial Vocabulary

-**Slangisms** (*social connotation in respect of various strata of society*);

-**Jargonisms** (*social connotation in respect of various strata of society*);

-**Professionalisms** (*social connotation in respect of various strata of society*);

-**Dialectal words** (*territorial connotation*)

-**Vulgar words** (*social connotation in respect of various strata of society*);

Normative stylistic colouring	Norm	Examples
Bombastic, High-flown, pompous	**Out of the norm**	
Special-literary, lofty, elevated, highly literary, poetic, learned words, bookish, formal	**Exalted norm**	*to inter, to precipitate, amplitude, demerit, decorous, espouse, rudiment; steed, charger; welkin; vale; devouring element, etc.*
Standard English: Common literary	**Basic norm**	*To eliminate; to assign, to allocate ;to fabricate, to concoct; to assist; to continue; to initiate, etc.*
Standard English: Neutral	**Basic norm**	*To destroy; to budget, to earmark; to invent, to make up; to help; to proceed; to begin, to start, etc.*
Standard English: Common colloquial, Literary-colloquial, informal	**Possible norm**	*To wreck, to dump; to set aside; to trump up; Mummy, dad, dorm, chap, rubbish, doc, monstrosity, rumbustious, to shut up, to pooh-pooh, down and out, to snuff it.*
Special-colloquial, familiar-colloquial, low colloquial	**Out of the norm**	*Girl: bundle, duckling, fluff, plaything, sugar, cookie, etc.*
Vulgar, rude, taboo, four-letter words	**Out of the norm**	Bastard, son-of-a-bitch, arse (ass), ass-hole, bugger, etc.

Word building models of word coinage

The word building level of the language can be considered as a special resource of <u>expressiveness</u>. In modern English new words are coined by means of *affixation, word compounding, contraction and conversion.* However, only those means of word coinage which provide **novelty + force** have <u>stylistic marking.</u>

<u>1) Affixation</u> is still predominant in coining new words. Suffixes and prefixes of *Latin or Greek origin* (*<u>pro-, anti-, super-, quasi-, post-, ex-</u>*,) traditionally create coinages of *literary-bookish* character, e.g. *<u>anti</u>-census campaign; the <u>pro</u>-choice vs <u>pro</u>-life debate permeates politics; <u>quasi</u>military, etc.*

Suffixes –**y, -ie** and **-er** are productive in the *colloquial speech*. E.g., seed*y, weepy, hairy, smelly, nervy; bookie, yuppie, veggie; belly bomber; job-hopper, temp-worker, freelancer,etc.*

Suffixes and prefixes borrowed from modern foreign languages create *ironical or slighting connotations* (German: *-fest, űber-*; French: *-ville*; Russian: *-nik*; Italian: *-azzi, -ati, -ize*).

E.g., *refusenik, all-rightnik; dullville, dogville, disasterville; videorazzi, paperazzi,rumorazzi; soccerati, ligerati, illuminati; to picturize, to vacationize, to cityzenize; ubermodel, uberchief, etc.*

Besides the effect of compression and economy, some traditional prefixes and suffixes may produce an *effect of surprise, irony* and add an *expressive-emotional colouring* to a word.

E.g. *unkiss<u>able</u>, laugh<u>able</u>, pay<u>able</u>, certifi<u>able</u>; father<u>less</u>, child<u>less</u>, spine<u>less</u>, age<u>less</u>, brain<u>less</u>, etc.*

2) Word compounding let combine different parts of speech to form new compound words with stylistic marking.

E.g. <u>*brainwave, thinktank, blueblood Ivy Leaguer, to windowshop, to babysit, to blackmail, to pickpocket, to brainwash, to skyrocket,*</u> *etc.*

3) **Contraction** is realized by clipping and abbreviation. *Clipping* appeared in the colloquial speech, the most productive way is *back clipping,* e.g. *con (confidence): con-man, con-game, to con; showbiz (show business); glam (glamorous); diff (difference); ad (advertisment),etc.*

Fore-clipping: in-laws (mother- in-law, father-in-law), mum (chrysanthemum), etc.

Middle-clipping: flu (influenza), etc.

Blend: stagflation (stagnation+inflation), Amerind (American+Indian), spam (spiced+ham), etc.

Abbreviation: initialisms (HIV, FBI, DIY, FAQ, PhD) and achronyms *(AIDS, NATO, UNICEF, OPEC).*

4) Conversion is formation of new words by transferring them <u>from one part of speech to another</u> without any word building means. Conversion has a great stylistic potential. A new word acquires the paradigm of a new part of speech.

E.g. *a <u>second</u> pair of shoes/ a <u>second</u> in command / to <u>second</u> a motion;*

<u>local</u> citizens → <u>locals</u>; to <u>monkey</u> sb; to <u>bulldog</u> sb to the ground; to <u>scissor</u> the cloth; to <u>hook</u> the reader; to <u>mirror</u> the opinions of common people, etc.