

Leon Levițchi – Archive. 16



A Course in English Lexicology 1963

Ediție facsimil în 3 volume
Volumul 3

With all the efforts of the lexicographers, no dictionary can be 'perfect': between the first moments of its compilation and the moment of its printing, new words and meanings make it lose its 'up-to-dateness'. But, quoting Dr. Johnson : "Dictionaries are like watches : the worst is better than none". To say nothing of the poetry they contain - at least according to Oliver Wendell Holmes : "When I feel inclined to read poetry I take down my dictionary."

Editat de
C. George Sandulescu
și
Lidia Vianu

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CENTENAR LEVIȚCHI

A Course in English Lexicology

Ediție facsimil în 3 volume

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Editat de C. George Sandulescu și Lidia Vianu

Anul acesta se împlinesc 100 de ani bătuți pe muchie de la nașterea Profesorului de limbă și literatură engleză Leon D. Levițchi. ESTE CENTENARUL LEVIȚCHI.

*

Nu există gramatic mai însemnat decât Leon Levițchi pentru profesorul de limba engleză din România. A scris gramatici din care toți urmașii lui au învățat structura limbii engleze, și cum poate ea fi predată vorbitorului de limba română. A făcut cele mai bune dicționare dintre câte avem. A tradus integral William Shakespeare. A predat lexicologie. A scris „Învățați limba engleză fără profesor”. A scris istoria literaturii engleze și americane.

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1973]

“Well – you see – quite, quite accidentally, I belong to an older generation; and quite, quite accidentally, for twenty years on end I taught English grammar to our students; and I taught them in the spirit of Charles Bally and Harold Palmer, not in that of Chomsky.... I do not in the least believe in the idea that the history of linguistics should be divided into two: the pre- and the post-Chomsky period. I should rather say: I believe in things that can be demonstrated and I do not believe in things that cannot be demonstrated. If – if! – the new achievements of linguistics can prove that we have been in the wrong, and the new achievements are in the right, all the better – we shall surrender to them: but, if they cannot justify themselves, all the worse – we

shall not surrender, and we shall go on saying that it is much much better to speak of subject and predicate than of subject and predicate group (SG, or PG)."

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1972]

L.L: "...an Austrian professor invited me to join an international society of lexicographers."

Announcer: "Does that imply practical or theoretical activity?"

L.L: I don't know yet; I only hope it will be applied linguistics – a discipline which I personally like very much. Of course, I like theory as well, but only if it is based on applied linguistics."

C. George Sandulescu

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Lidia Vianu
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III. SEMANTIC RELATIONS BETWEEN WORDS

A. SYNONYMS

Lexical synonyms are words which in one and the same context are apt to be substituted for one another without a sensible modification of the meaning. It stands to reason that there exist also synonyms in a germinal (or potential) state – words having much the same meaning outside a context, e.g. to answer – to reply; channel – canal; beautiful – fine, etc.

There are generally few 'perfect' or 'absolute' synonyms in a language, most of them belonging to specialized or technical terminology, e.g. oak nut, oak apple, oak plum, oak pear, oak gall (nucă galică).

The great majority of synonyms do not coincide in their notional or stylistical spheres. A word whose meaning is absolutely identical with that of another word (outside a context) is superfluous and, as a rule, one of them is ousted from the language (there are numerous instances in the history of the English language, e.g. a number of Scandinavian words which replaced the Old English words: Sc. to take instead of the OE niman, etc.).

Lexical synonyms are roughly divided into two: a) ideographic, and b) stylistic.

a) Ideographic synonyms imply certain differences in meaning, e.g.

thin, the most comprehensive in the whole series, expresses lack of fatness or insufficient quantity of fatness;

slender involves a certain agreeable proportion in the body or parts of the body – sometimes in objects;

slim may replace slender, but it usually connotes the idea of frailty;

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lean is used to underline the idea that somebody is 'no longer fat or normal';

meagre connotes the idea of 'emaciation' and 'weakness'.

Specialized synonyms, a variety of ideographic synonyms, express the relation between genus and species, e.g. pen - fountain-pen; table - writing table; book - exercise-book, etc.

b) Stylistic synonyms imply notional coincidence and stylistic differences, e.g.

a man, a person - neutral stylistically; a fellow - colloquial; a guy - USA, colloquial; a cove - slang;

aunt - neutral; auntie - familiar, in children's language, etc.

A variety of stylistic synonyms is represented by 'disguised synonyms', which are based either on some figure of speech, or on some word or word-group characterizing an object in different ways, mainly on a stylistic basis, e.g. Shakespeare - 'the sweet swan of Avon'; 'the author of Hamlet'; 'the poet' (Emerson); 'the greatest English playwright', etc.

Analogous words have much in common with synonyms, although 'they are not true synonyms because they do not carry a common denotation, or are not applicable to the same things or ideas, or diverge in one or more important implications.'¹ Thus, importance and merit, to mean and to suggest, silent and inhibited are "analogous words".

Synonymy and Lexicography

Synonymy is an extremely important element in lexicography.

1 Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms, Springfield, 1951, p.753.

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In monolingual dictionaries it is frequently resorted to instead of explanations, e.g. in The Concise Oxford Dictionary :

hazardous - risky;
jump - leap, bound, spring from the ground;
littérateur- literary man;
to perplex - to bewilder, to puzzle;
resonant - echoing, resounding, etc.

The use of such a method has its advantages and disadvantages. Thus, the great economy of space effected through such brief 'definitions' or the fact that a pretty good knower of the language may thus find 'equivalents' for a translation, a composition, etc. are obviously advantages. On the other hand, the main disadvantage of the above method is that, no discrimination being made between synonyms, people less proficient in the respective language thus get absolutely insufficient, and, more often than not, misleading information. There being but few perfect or absolute synonyms in a language, we can see how useful is both the exact and circumstantial definition of a word and the correct discrimination of its possible synonyms. The English-English dictionary appended to Advanced English by Todd, Part II, Moscow, 1948, is a model worth imitating from this point of view. Here is the way in which the verbs to perplex and to puzzle are treated in it:

to perplex : to cause difficulty in understanding and thus make a decision difficult, e.g. What to do about Jennie Gerhardt, thought perplexed Lester, who did not want to leave her and at the same time did not want to offend his family. With no money and no friends to help him, Nicholas Nickleby found life a perplexing problem indeed.

to puzzle : to find difficulty in understanding; to cause difficulty in finding the reason for, e.g. His refusing to speak to me puzzled me, for only yesterday we were the best friends. We sat puzzling over the map, trying to trace the roads to the small village.

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Note. We are puzzled when we can find no reason or basis for something. We are perplexed when the problem is so complicated that we cannot find the correct answer, and when our failure to do so causes worry or anxiety on our part, e.g. His attitude was puzzling; what to do under the circumstances was a perplexing problem.

In bilingual dictionaries, synonymy is implicitly an essential element since the manifold translation of a word is ultimately synonymy. A simple enumeration of the possible translations is misleading, e.g.

adică, adv. 1. that is (to say), namely, to wit, viz., videlicet, i.e., id est; that's equivalent to; as it were, etc.; 2. now..., that is..., well..., etc.

The English synonyms above must needs be discriminated in a way or another, for example by means of brief Rumanian explanations (taking into account the fact that the dictionary to which we refer is a Rumanian-English one and is meant for Rumanians) :

adică, adv.: 1. (va să zică) that is (to say), namely, to wit; (în texte) viz., videlicet, i.e., id est; (anume) namely; (echivalent cu) that's equivalent to, that's nothing else than/but; (cum ar veni) as it were; (de fapt) in (point of) fact; (într-un sens strict) in a strict sense, strictly (speaking); (propriu zis) properly (speaking); (cu alte cuvinte) in other words; (pe scurt) in short, briefly. 2. (expri-
mat în timpul unei reflecții) now... that is... well... @ ~ de ce ? why so/then ? (b) cum ~ ? 1. (cum ?) how ? (cum se face ?) how's that. 2. (ce vrei să spui ?) what do you mean ? 3. (ce înseamnă toate acestea ?) what is the real/exact meaning of (all) this ? la o ~ 1. (la urma urme-
lor) after all; (în fond) at (the) bottom, fun-

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damentally; (in concluzie) in conclusion; (de fapt) as a matter of fact, in (point of) fact.
2. (vorbind în general) in the main, as a whole, on the whole; vorbind la o ~ to speak/speaking frankly/candidly/plainly.

Note. Note that synonymy above generally runs parallel in the two languages.

Synonymy and Translation Work

The importance of a good command of synonymy not only in one but also in two or more languages cannot be underestimated in connection with translations, as may be easily inferred from the preceding subchapter. To translate means to find equivalents – the most adequate equivalents both ideographically and stylistically; and since the best solutions seldom come to the fore at once, to find equivalents generally means to select from a possible synonymic series.

Selection of the most adequate synonym out a series of possible synonyms is a common process in composition, too; and, practically, in different kinds of written or oral communication: a careful writer or speaker always undaunders to find the word or words which most properly (sometimes also most graphically) express his ideas or feelings – therefore singling out is implicit.

Synonymy and Literary Analysis

A good knowledge of the problems connected with synonymy often helps one to deepen the analysis of a literary text.

It is known that in a poem, novel, play, etc. the respective author will always underline the ideas and feelings that he would like his readers to share. The means by which he does this are various: repetitions of different kinds,

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antitheses, striking metaphors and other figures of speech, etc.

The use of several synonyms not far from each other in some part of the text (a variety of repetition characterized as 'repetition of content with change of form') is one of these means, e.g.,

"Oh ! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-mill, Scrooge ! - a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching covetous old sinner !" (C h . D i c k e n s , A Christmas Carol.) (The interjection, the exclamatory sentence, and the accumulation of synonyms - all of them ending in -ing - combine to point out the character of the old business-man.)

A peculiar form of synonymic association is the so-called 'quantitative hendiadys' - two synonyms connected by the conjunction and.

Quantitative hendiadys may be lexical (standardized), as in :

with might and main ("din răspuțeri"; "cu toată hotărîrea"); safe and sound ("teafăr-sănătos"); each and every ("absolut fiecare"); far and away ("cu mult"; "categoric, fără îndoială"); lord and master ("domn și stăpîn"); by leaps and bounds ("cu pași uriași, foarte repede"); wear and tear ("uzură extremă"; "mari ispitiri, vicisitudini"); airs and graces ("afectare, fandoseală"); babes and sucklings ("novici, ageamii"); a hard and fast rule ("o regulă fixă"), etc.

In literary works we find hendiadys in the form of 'stylistic quantitative hendiadys' (viz. devised by the writers themselves), - along the lexical one -, for example in Thomas Morus' Utopia, as translated by Ralph Robynson (1551) :

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"For the wise man did easily foresee, that this is the one and only way to the wealth of a commonalty, if equality of all things should be brought in and established. Which I think is not possible to be observed, where every man's goods be proper and peculiar to himself. For where everyman undercertain titles and pretences draws and plucks to himself as much as he can, and so a few divide among themselves all the riches that there is, be there never so much abundance and store, there to the residue is left lack and poverty...

Thus I do fully persuade myself, that no equal and just distribution of things can be made; nor that perfect wealth shall ever be among men; unless this property be exiled and banished."

Note how in the fragment above the hendiadyses underline the necessity to abolish private property - one of the main ideas in the great humanist's work.

Being thus a means of underlining an author's intentions accumulation of synonyms - together with the other intensive devices - should be taken into account whenever a comprehensive analysis of a text is undertaken with a view to better understanding its content.

B. HOMONYMS

In the economy of contemporary English, homonyms play an outstanding role. Largely engendered by the lack of inflections, they contribute to the complexities of a language 'which has undergone a long and complicated process of historical development' and in which "by far not all words enjoy

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a clear morphological structure... In the lexical system of the English language particularly complex processes occur in the domain of reduction and redistribution of stems and affixes, which at every stage of language development introduce into the vocabulary a great number of words with an obscure morphological structure." (K.S. Nedoshivina, Nekotoryje osobennosti kornevyh suschestvitelnyh sovremennogo anglijskogo jazyka, in Voprosy lingvistiki, Moscow, 1958, p. 6-7).

Lexical homonyms are generally defined as "two or more words which sound alike but have quite different meanings"; but with reference to English, the term may acquire a wider significance - it is necessary that it should also comprise words that have the same spelling (sometimes with a different pronunciation) but different meanings.

In the light of the above, lexical homonyms are "words which, sounded and spelt alike, or sounded or spelt alike, differ in meaning". Hence, a basic division of homonyms into Absolute Homonyms (words spelt and sounded alike) and Relative Homonyms, represented by :

a) Homophones, that is to say words that are sounded alike but have different spellings, e.g.

air, ere, e'er, heir; bad, bade (pronunciation 2); bare, bear, (to) bear; cannon, canon; sent, scent, cent; dew, due; ewe, you, yew; feat, feet; here, (to) hear; hair, hare; in, inn; lesson, (to) lessen; meat, (to) meet, (to) mete; oar, ore, o'er; plain, plane; site, sight; tide, tied; yoke, yolk.

b) Homographs - words that are spelt alike but are pronounced differently, e.g.

wound (rană), wound (răsucit etc.); wind (vînt), (to) wind (a răsuci, etc.); separate (separat), (to) separate (a separa); close (strîns, apropiat), (to) close (a închide); record (înregistra-re, etc.), (to) record (a înregistra, etc.)

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Two or more words are usually treated as homonyms when their etymologies are different; but etymology is far from being an absolute criterion :

last (noun - "calapod"), last (adjective - "ultim"), (to) last (verb - "a dura"), and last (noun - "încărcătură", mar.) have different etymologies, which obviously entitles us to treat them as homonyms (of the absolute type). But how about the words box ("cutie" etc.) and box ("merișor") which are treated as separate title words in dictionaries and thus are homonyms, although their etymology is the same (L.buxus) ? In the last analysis, it is the marked difference between the senses of one or more words with the same form which should stamp them as homonyms. In this way, the widely different meanings of one and the same word may be looked upon as so many different words, e.g. fancy, n.: 1. fantezie, imaginație; 2. capriciu, moft, toană; 3. înclinație; gust; 4. the ~ amatorii unui anumit sport (mai ales ai boxului).

Meanings 1-3 on the one hand, and meaning 4 on the other are 'widely different', although in dictionaries they adhere to the same title-word. Meanings 1-3 are connected semantically in such a way that they may be considered synonyms (particularly synonyms of the contextual or 'connotative' type) ; meaning 4 is no synonym to any of them.

The long-debated question : where does polysemy end and where does homonymy begin ? may thus find its solution with the help of synonymy : the polysemy of a word comprises only such meanings as can form part of a synonymic series; the other meanings or synonymic series of meanings become homonyms and should be looked upon as separate words.

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N o t e . The fact that in dictionaries a title-word is often represented by a great number of widely different meanings should not surprise anyone : the way in which words are treated in dictionaries is generally highly conventional and the patterns they use do not always coincide with lexicological analysis.

Homonyms and their use in literature

The so-called 'pun' or 'play upon words' is frequently resorted to in English literature on the basis of homonyms. Shakespeare offers numerous illustrations, for example in the excerpt below, in which the misunderstandings between Pandarus and the servant are caused by the different interpretation given to certain words (the underlined ones) :

Pandarus. Friend, pray you, a word : do not you follow the young lord Paris ?

Servant. Ay, Sir, when he goes before me.

.....

Pandarus. Friend, know me better; I am the lord Pandarus.

Servant. I hope I shall know your honour better.

Pandarus. I do desire it.

Servant. You are in a state of grace.

Pandarus. Grace ! Not so, friend; honour and lordship are my titles. (Music sounds within.) What music is this ?

Servant. I do but partly know, Sir; it is music in parts.

Pandarus. Know you the musicians ?

Servant. Wholly, sir.

Pandarus. Who play they to ?

Servant. To the hearers, Sir.

Pandarus. At whose pleasure, friend ?

Servant. At mine, Sir, and theirs that love music.

C O N T E M P O R A R Y
L I T E R A T U R E P R E S S



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Pandarus. Command, I mean, friend.

Servant. Who shall I command, Sir ?

Pandarus. Friend, we understand not one another;
I am too courtly and thou art too cunning. (Troilus and Cressida, III, 1.)

(Explanations : to follow : 1. a face parte din
suita...; 2. a urma, a merge pe urmele...; to know
somebody better : 1. a cunoaște mai bine pe cine-
va; 2. a afla că cineva se simte mai bine; grace:
1. har, grație divină; 2. (titlu) excelență; to
play to : 1. a cînta din ordinul...; 2. a cînta
pentru...; at the pleasure of...: 1. din ordi-
nul...; 2. pentru plăcerea...; command : 1. po-
runcă, ordin; 2. to command - a comanda, a po-
runci.)

Sometimes, however, homonyms may be used for serious purposes. Thus, for example, in Hamlet I,3, 98 - 198, the word tender uttered by Ophelia and Polonius in some of its different meanings has a direct bearing on the change of Ophelia's attitude towards Hamlet as a result of her father's prompting.

Homonyms and Translations

Homonymic series in an English text are generally a stumbling-block for translators. The explanation is very simple: in most cases, there is no semantic correspondence between the various homonymic series of two different languages. Translators are usually obliged to resort to other 'puns', etc.

C. ANTONYMS

Antonyms are words "opposed to each other as having opposite meanings" (Vorno, E.F. etc., Leksikologhia anglijskovo jazyka, Leningrad, 1955, page 40), or: an antonym is a word

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whose meaning is opposed to that of another word - as sad is the antonym of happy (Webster's New World Dictionary), etc.

The significance of the word 'antonym' may be extended. Besides such antonyms as 'good - bad', 'white - black', etc., there are cases when antonymy is only implied or understood. Hence, a rough division of antonyms into explicit and implicit antonyms.

1. Explicit Antonyms

Explicit antonyms are represented by such pairs as: beautiful-ugly; significant - non-significant; deep - shallow; before - after; sea - land, etc.

A word may have several antonyms, all of which form a synonymic series, e.g. attractive - unattractive, unalluring, undesirable, uncared-for, etc. Since - as we have already seen - a word may have a number of different meanings, which, in fact become homonyms, each of these different meanings may have its antonym or antonymic series, e.g.

dull 1. (stupid) - ant. clever, intelligent, bright, etc.; 2. (slow-moving) - ant. quick-moving, brisk, etc.; 3. (unfeeling) - ant. sensitive, sensible, etc.; 4. (depressed) - ant. of good cheer, in good spirits, in high spirits, gay, etc.; 5. (tedious) - ant. amusing, entertaining, etc.; 6. (blunt) - ant. sharp, pointed, etc.; 7. (dim) - ant. vivid, bright, etc.; 8. (cloudy) - ant. bright, serene, etc.

A peculiar instance of explicit antonymy is represented by two opposed meanings of the same word, e.g.

apparent 1. visible; evident; 2. seeming.
certain 1. sure, fixed, determined; 2. assumed to be known; not fixed, undetermined.

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to reword 1. to express again in other words; 2. to express again in the same words.

These may be called homonymic antonyms.

There are many antonymic standardized phrases in English,
e.g.

by sea and land; by flood and field; through thick and thin; through the length and breadth of ... (all over...); by fair means and foul; by yea and no (obsolete : 'my word of honour !').

Proverbs may contain antonyms, e.g.

A good beginning makes a good ending. Once bitten twice shy. A little body often harbours a great soul.

2. Implicit Antonyms

A word is said to be the implicit antonym of another word in different cases, e.g.

a) When, in a given context, contact is established between some characteristics of two or more notions which, as usual, are not associated, e.g.

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave, etc.

(S h e l l e y , To Night.)

Antonymy in the above example is established between swiftly and walk in the sense that walk connotes the idea of slow movement.

b) When, in a synonymic series, the respective synonyms are characterized by certain notes that are antonymic, e.g.

to shine - to flash - to sparkle - to glimmer.

Although these words are synonyms, implicit antonymy also characterizes them in that to shine implies 'continuousness' and 'intensity', to flash - 'suddenness' and 'fragmenta-

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riness', to sparkle - 'intermittence', and to glimmer - 'dimness'.

In the same way, to strike and to swinge imply the idea of 'force', while to pat, their synonym, the idea of 'gentleness'; conduct is a synonym of behaviour, but 'conduct' is characterized by 'permanence', and 'behaviour' is 'incidental', etc.

All these may be called antonymic synonyms.

c) When some word is so strongly stressed that it calls up implicit contrast with its possible antonym or antonyms, e.g.

... Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'
(Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, V.)

(A man - therefore, all that is positive in the notion: gentle - not a brute; mature - not a child, etc.)

Antonyms and their use in literature

Alongside other means of emphasis, antonyms are widely used in literary works. Shakespeare's plays and poems, for example, are replete with antonyms; and the most important passages are quite frequently characterized by accumulations of antonyms, e.g. Timon's monologue in which he reveals the essence of money:

Thus much of this /gold/ will make black white;
foul, fair;
Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward,
valiant, etc.

(Timon of Athens, IV, 3, 28-29.)

Note. Distinction should be made between justified antonyms in a literary work and unjustified ones. In the writing of great authors, they contribute to the pointing out of ideas and feelings; in those of less skilled ones, they may

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be a cumbersome addition, as in the following excerpt from John Lyly :

"The coral plant in the water is a soft weed, on the land, a hard stone; a sword frieth in the fire like a black eel; but laid in earth like white snow; the heart in love is altogether passionate, but free from desire, altogether careless."

Both explicit and implicit antonyms are to be found in a number of figures of speech, for example in:

- Antithesis, in which words (and thus ideas and feelings) are brought into contrast by being balanced one against another, e.g.

Crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them.

(B a c o n , Of Studies.)

- Oxymoron, an apparent contradiction in terms, e.g.

His honour rooted in dishonour stood.

(T e n n y s o n .)

- Anticlimax or Bathos, which implies descent from something higher to something lower, often of the most unexpected kind, e.g.

"Philosophy is said to console a man under disappointment, although Shakespeare asserts that it is no remedy for a toothache; so Mr. Easy turned philosopher, the very best profession a man can take up, when he is fit for nothing else..."

(M a r r y a t , Mr. Midshipman Easy.)

- Irony, in which the intended meaning of the words used is the direct opposite of their usual sense. Swift, 'the father of irony', supplies good examples in Gulliver's Travels, for instance in Book II, when Gulliver explains to the king of Brobdingnag the state of things in England, e.g.

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"I then spoke at large upon the constitution of an English Parliament, partly made up of an illustrious body called the House of Peers, persons of the noblest blood and of the most ancient and ample patrimonies. I described that extraordinary care always taken of their education in arts and arms, to qualify them for being counsellors born to the king and kingdom... and to be champions always ready for the defence of their Prince and country, by their valour, conduct, and fidelity. That these were the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom, worthy followers of their most renowned ancestors, whose honour had been the reward of their virtue, from which their posterity were never once known to degenerate, etc."

- Litotes, the use of understatement for the purpose of emphasis, or of a negative to imply a positive, e.g.

They had rendered no small service (-great service.)





IV. LEXICAL STRATA IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

A retrospective glance at the lexicological problems studied so far will make one realize how motley is the structure of the English vocabulary. English words have the most varied origin, history, and persistence in time; they may be rich or poor semantically, polysemantic or monosemantic, significant or less significant, their meanings are direct (proper) and figurative; their possible grammatical functions are sometimes few, sometimes numerous (monofunctionalism; polyfunctionalism), etc. All these factors ultimately entail stylistical differentiations between words, primarily in relation to the non-stylistical vocabulary (words and phrases which have no stylistical values), the bulk of which is made up of lexical units belonging to the basic word stock. This kind of differentiations between words may be conveniently grouped under the general heading of 'lexical strata'.

Lexical strata is a stylistical category closely connected with a synchronic approach to all the problems which it implies; but the diachronic (historical) element, always material for the explanation of causes determining the existence of this or that lexical phenomenon, is sometimes the very criterion by means of which a stylistical category of words (and phrases) is established : this is, for example, the case of neologisms, archaisms, etc.

1. Neologisms

Neologisms (Gk neo - 'new' + logos - 'word') are new words (phrases and meanings included), introduced into a language by the usual channels (borrowings, word-formation) at a

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given stage of its development and remaining in the condition of 'neologisms' only for a time - as long as they are still felt as new. Neologisms thus have a marked historical character : a word which today represents a new coinage and is, therefore, a neologism, will, in course of time, lose its 'novelty' and 'freshness' to range with the old or relatively new words which form the great mass of vocabulary and which, at the time when they were introduced into the respective language, were neologisms too.

Among the words listed as 'neologisms' by A Guide to the English Language, London, 1915, we find aesthetics, anthropology, perseverance, psycho-physical, appendicitis, motor, aeroplane, of which not one is any longer considered a 'new word' today.

To emancipate, to eradicate, to exist, and some other words probably coined by Philip Sidney (the 16th century) were neologisms in his time, and so were Milton's probable coinages to consolidate, disregard, sensuous, in Milton's time.

Neologisms are best represented in contemporary English by terms, as a result of the impetuous development of science and technique, e.g. cosmobiology ("astrobiologie"), turbojet ("turboreactor"), radar ("radiolocație"), etc.

The general condition for the survival of neologisms, or, rather, for their transformation into 'common', 'current' words, is that they should be actually needed by the language, either because they denote new notions, activities, characteristics, etc. (as a result of discoveries, inventions, etc.) or because they carry an emotional weight which, under specific circumstances, conveys people's feelings, attitudes, etc. in the most adequate manner.

When a neologism is not felt as needful, it is ousted from the language and it is only special dictionaries that register it as a strange relic in the language-museum.

More often than not - as we have already mentioned - language rejects from its repository words that differ in form but have absolutely the same meaning and stylistical value (absolute synonyms); although this principle may be

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sometimes counteracted by other principles. The illustration below is represented by slangy and highly colloquial words meaning 'money'. Their creation, life, and death are all connected, on the one hand, with the necessity felt by their creators to use graphical (often disdainful) words defining the 'visible god' of the capitalist world 'that solders close impossibilities' (Shakespeare, Timon of Athens, IV,3); on the other, with the above-mentioned principle according to which absolute synonyms rarely survive. The synonyms are taken from J. S. Farmer and W.E. Henley's A Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial English (London, -), in which a most variegated chronological picture of these former neologisms is presented under Rhino ('money') - above 400 equivalents:

actual (1856)¹, ballast, beans, bit (bite,
byte - 1532), blunt (1714), brads (1814), brass
(1526), bustle, Californians, the captain, ca-
ravan (1690), change, charms, checks, chink
(1557), chinkers (1557), clink (1724), coal
(cole - 1671), cod, coin, colliander-seeds,
coppers, cork, corn in Egypt, crap (crop),
cuckoos (1612), etc.²

Of these only brass and chink seem to be still current (as slang words, therefore with the infringement of another general principle, viz. that slang-words and phrases are short-lived as slang.) As to most of the others, they did not go beyond their condition of neologisms; they disappeared from the language, though continually replaced by successive generations of slangy synonyms.

A peculiar fate is reserved to the category of neologisms called nonce-words (nonce, from for the nonce - ME for the nones for then ones, 'the once'). Nonce-words are words coined and used for a single occasion, denoting beings, things, phenomena, etc. in a definite contextual situation; as a rule they do not find entrance into the vocabulary of a language. Vorno

1 The year is that of the word's first occurrence in written literature.

2 According to Webster's New World Dictionary, NY, 1952.

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et alt. (op.cit., page 138) give the following illustrations: ribbandry ("alergătură fără sens prin magazine" - Galsworthy), lordolatry ("ploconire în fața titlurilor" - Thackeray), wordling ("aristocrat - om de lume" - Thackeray), cleptopigia ("mania de a fura porci" - O'Henry), Finch keeps a hats-cleaned-by-electricity-while-you-wait establishment ("Finch are un atelier în care pălăriile sînt curățate electric în prezența clientului"). Other examples : to spheterise ("a fura"-Burke), splendidous ("splendid" - Drayton), luciferously ("luciferic" - Thomas Browne), extasis ("extaz" - Burton), misanthropos ("mizantrop" - Shakespeare) statua ("statuie" - Shakespeare), preludium ("preludiu" - Beaumont.)

Barbarisms are neologisms conspicuous through their uselessness - they merely double already existing words, describing the same notions, phenomena, actions, etc. Quite frequently they are borrowed from other languages, e.g. au revoir ! (instead of good-bye !), par ici (instead of this way), kickshaw (in Shakespeare's language: 'quelque chose', instead of something), etc. Sometimes they are naturalized, sometimes not.

Note . Confusion should be avoided between barbarisms and borrowings which finally prove useful, e.g.

concerto is not a mere redundant twin of concert: concerto means 'a musical composition for one or more principal instruments accompanied by an orchestra', whereas concert is 'a musical entertainment, especially given in a public hall at which singers or players perform'. (H o r n b y's Dictionary.)

Writers sometimes use barbarisms for stylistical purposes viz. to create an impression of affected speech, as in the following excerpt from H. F i e l d i n g's Joseph Andrews :

"Adorable and Charmante,

I am sorry to have the Honour to tell you
I am not the heureux Person destined for your
divine Arms. Your Papa hath told me so. You may
perhaps guess his manner of refusing me. Ah mon
Dieu !

Bellarmino"

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Malapropisms or malaprops, the substitution of one word for another which is more or less similar in sound, are nearly related to barbarisms in the sense that they too express the speaker's desire to 'show off' by using abstract, occasionally high-flown, pedantic words. The term comes from the name of a character in R. B. Sheridan's play The Rivals, Mrs. Malaprop, who lavishly used such words, although the device is to be found as early as Shakespeare (Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing, Quince in A Midsummer Night's Dream), in Fielding, Smollett, etc. Here is a brief fragment from Fielding, op.cit., showing the way in which Lady Slip-slop speaks :

"Yes, Madam !... Do you intent (-intend) to result (-insult) my passion ?... Must you treat me with ironing (irony) ? Do you as-sinuate (-insinuate) that I am old enough to be your mother ?"

2. Obsolete Words

Those words (or phrases) are styled obsolete which, after having been in use in a period of time more or less remote from a subsequent one, are either no longer found in the latter or only used for quite limited purposes.

Many obsolete words have altogether disappeared from the English language and can only be found in special historical dictionaries, e.g. specht ("ciocănitoare" - Hooker), soothsaw ("proverb" - Wiclif), forword ("făgăduială" - Chaucer), sun-stand ("solstițiu" - Holland), charmeress ("vrăjitoare" - Chaucer), etc.

Others are still used occasionally, as may be proved by their being listed in large-sized dictionaries of contemporary English. They are divided into two distinct groups: historisms and archaisms.

Historisms are words that once denoted things, phenomena, actions, etc. which, as a result of the evolution of human so-

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ciety, have disappeared from man's life, while preserving a historical 'documentary' importance; they may be found in historical texts or in literary texts dealing with past ages, e.g. gleeman ("cîntăreț ambulant din evul mediu englez"), witan ("sfetnicii regelui; consiliu de coroană - la anglo-saxoni"), knight ("cavaler" feudal), archer ("arcaș"), spear ("suliță", "lance"), May-pole ("stîlpul floraliilor"), etc.

Archaisms (Greek arhaikos - 'ancient', 'primitive') are words that have disappeared from the language, being supplanted by new equivalents. In contrast with historisms, they denote things, phenomena, actions, etc. that are still present in man's life, though, like the former, they are relegated to earlier modalities of human intercourse by means of language.

The classical division of archaisms is into a) lexical, and b) grammatical. Lexical archaisms include old words (meanings, phrases), e.g. in sooth ('in truth'), wight ('fellow'), to hark ('to listen'), to hie oneself ('to make haste'), to abide (in the sense of 'to stay', 'to reside'), etc. Grammatical archaisms include old grammatical forms and units, e.g. doth ('does'), thou ('you', sec.pers.sing.), ne ('not'), ye ('you', sec.pers.pl.), mote ('might', as a verb), etc.

Archaisms are often used in poetry, in rhetorical prose, in official documents. Here is a fragment from Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, characterized by the presence of both lexical and grammatical archaisms :

Childe Harold had a mother - not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage began :
If friends he had he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel...
(I,10)

Walter Scott, both in his historical novels and in the poems in which he described past ages, is one of the greatest English masters of both historisms and archaisms. In the frag-

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ments from The Bridal of Triermain below historisms are underlined once, archaisms twice :

Hearken, my minstrels ! Which of you all
Touched his harp with that dying fall... ?
And hearken, my merry-men ! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow ?

.....

Then come thou hither, Henry, my page
Whom I saved from the sack of hermitage...
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose, with airy turrets crowned,
Buttress, and rampire's circle bound, etc.

As the Soviet linguist K.A. Levkovskaya rightly points out in her Leksikologhia nemetskovo jazyka , "... archaisms are a rather complex problem, which can only be cleared up by a historical approach. When we read this or that linguistic monument of the past and find in it words that are obsolete for our time, we cannot establish (unless we know the usage of words in the period to which the respective monument belongs) whether these words are also archaisms in relation to the language of this monument... The wrong impression may be created that the language of the monuments of the past is archaic as such, whereas in these monuments the contemporary usage of words is reflected which is not archaic at all from the standpoint of that (older) period but from our own standpoint."¹

The above remarks are extremely important both for the correct, scientific understanding of the linguistic realities of a given period and for the correct, scientific translation of old(er) texts.

For the time when Byron wrote his Childe Harold such words as whilome ('once', 'formerly'), ne ('not'), hight ('named'), etc. were already archaisms (and Byron used them deliberately, for stylistic purposes); but were they so in Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene, for example ? Decidedly not -

1 K. A. L e v k o v s k a y a , Leksikologhia nemetskovo jazyka, Moscow, 1956, p.57-58.

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although Spenser himself loved to use an archaism here and there. It is matter of common knowledge that Shakespeare's works are far from being easy reading today (the best proof thereof are the special Shakespearean 'lexicons'¹, 'dictionaries', and 'grammars'²); and yet Shakespeare's language presented no difficulties to his spectators. Hence, a most important theoretical conclusion, namely that Shakespeare, or any other author of the past must be translated in a language perfectly intelligible to contemporary readers and spectators, with the rendering of archaisms by archaisms where they are manifest. It goes without saying that this should not make the translator adopt the reverse extreme attitude, that of using neologisms. The language of written literary texts in general (and the language of poetry or poetical prose in particular) is more conservative than 'conversational' language, as regards both vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, historicisms oblige the translator to avoid violent linguistic collisions between them and contemporary (or, in a more restricted sense, neologicistic) language. Far more important than these linguistic considerations, however, are the concrete historical realities, the economic, social, and ideological specific character of the age in which an author lived and wrote (although, of course, language does not change depending on the change of the base of a social order); which circumstances must of necessity be reflected not only in the faithful rendering of ideas, feelings, etc., but also in the vocabulary and grammar used. As, consequently, the historical principle specified above and the principle of transmissibility specified earlier must be both observed in the translation of old(er) writers, the best solution is probably intermediate: to use intelligible archaisms and to use them with discretion, without neglecting older grammatical constructions (generally easier to understand than separate words).

1 Alexander Schmidt, Shakespeare-Lexicon.
2 E. A. Abbott, A Shakespearean Grammar, London, 1929, (511 pages.)

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3. Terms

Terms are a special category of words denoting scientific and technical notions, connected with man's activity in different (specialized) domains of science and technique. Their totality goes by the name of terminology. Examples : motor-shaft (tehn. "arbore-motor"), imperforation (med. "atrezie"), pneumolysis (med. "pneumoliză"), hyoid (anat. "osul hioid"), to expectorate (fiziol. "a expectora"), Pliocene (geol. "pliocen"), marsupial (zool. "marsupial"), aphaeresis (lexic. "afereză"), hatch (mar. "tambuchi"), trellis-work mast (mar. "cafas"), etc.

The circulation of terms is limited, although their proportion in the sum total of the vocabulary is very great in modern languages (see, for example, the English-Russian and Russian-English scientific and technical dictionaries usually listing more than 30,000 entries in such works as Dictionary of Agriculture, Engineering Dictionary, Dictionary of Chemistry, Dictionary of Geology, etc.) A number of terms, on the contrary, are very widely circulated and therefore actively used by the great mass of the population of a country, e.g. rocket, cosmonaut, atomic energy, etc. - all this proving the ever greater influence of science and technique in the life of the contemporary world.

In point of style, terms have a non-emotional character and, as a rule, cannot be used figuratively. These features, to which one should add the extremely definite, precise meanings they convey, account for the fact that against the background of a stylistically 'neutral' context, they are not 'neutral'; they become 'neutral' only within scientific and technical texts, brimming with such lexical units.

The stylistical 'dryness' of terms is even more striking when they are compared with 'poetisms' (words specifically used in poetry and poetical language), although it would be altogether wrong to consider terms as 'unfit' for poetical contexts. English poetry, for instance, has numerous examples

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to offer in this respect - pieces of poetical prose and poems in which the old and anti-realistic conception that poetry must only be written in a kind of 'special' poetical language is successfully discarded, e.g.

From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape...
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof.

.....

I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores...
(S h e l l e y , The Cloud.)

The girl-graduates chatter stony names
Of shale and hornblende, etc.
(T e n n y s o n , The Princess.)

Walt Whitman, the great progressive American writer, who saw in scientific and technical progress an important means to make man's life easier and more comfortable, used a great number of terms in his poems, e.g. pump, derrick, stereotyping, geologist, pig-iron, etc.

Literary language, therefore, does not leave terms outside its pale. The only exception to this rule is a peculiar stratum of words, which, though semantically akin to terms, cannot be treated as 'literary'. These are the so-called professionalisms, words as limited in point of circulation as terms, yet characterized by stylistical values proper to slang, e.g. gallows (tech. "orice suport asemănător ca formă cu o spînzurătoare"), peacock ore (mineral. "bornit"), etc.

4. Colloquialisms

Colloquialisms, or colloquial words and phrases, are characteristic of conversation and informal writing, e.g. movies ('moving-pictures'), stocky ('adhesive' - "cleios"), to bamboozle ('to dupe'), rattletrap ('rambling old coach' - "hodorogă"), so long ('good-bye'), to give somebody a set-down (to 'dismiss smb.'), number one ('I' - "subsemnatul"), etc. Many complex

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(while attaching to them superlative importance in the economy of the English language), that it is by no means easy to disentangle their essential features. Here are a few illustrations :

William Freeman, in his English for Foreigners writes: An idiom is "... an established word or phrase with a special meaning that is independent of the dictionary's definition and frequently of the rules of grammar as well... Idioms have become a fundamental part of our language; they are frequently nothing more than vigorous abbreviations of common phrases... They are a terror to any student with a logical and orderly mind. Many of them, indeed, are beyond any common-sense explanation whatever... Others are based on passages from the Bible, Shakespeare, on proverbs, and, in fact, on anything which can be employed to convey one's thoughts briefly and effectively,"¹ etc.

Disregarding the rules of a scientific classification, Treble and Vallins divide idioms (An ABC of English Usage, London 1945) into four categories :

a) Grammatical Idioms, those in which 'grammar and idiom agree', e.g. There is a ladder there. There are several apples in the basket.

b) Ungrammatical Idioms, those in which 'grammar and idiom disagree', e.g. It's me. Who did you see ? then whom; try and go; more than pleased; in less than no time.

c) Prepositional Idioms (sic !), implying the use of prepositions in idiomatic phrases, e.g. by chance, at last, after all, in fact, in time, for good; to fall out, to hold off, to lay in.

d) Metaphorical Idioms, based on metaphors, e.g. a broken reed, a sly dog, etc.

In Hornby's Dictionary, idiom has two meanings: a) a group or succession of words that must be learnt as a whole because it is difficult or impossible to understand the meaning from a knowledge of the words considered separately, e.g. to give way; in order to; to be hard put to it; b) a form of

1 W. F r e e m a n , English for Foreigners, London, 1945, p. 72-73.





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expression peculiar to a people, country, district, group of people, or to one individual, as the French idiom (-language); Shakespeare's idiom (i.e. the method of expression used by him and peculiar to him).

Webster's New World Dictionary defines it as follows :

a) the language or dialect of a people, region, class, etc.;
b) the usual way in which the words of a language are joined together to express thought; c) an accepted phrase, construction, or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having a meaning different from the literal; d) the style of expression characteristic of an individual: as, the idiom of Carlyle.

In A Guide to the English Language we read : "Idioms are special forms of speech that are peculiar to the instincts of a language... Idiom... is only a feeling for language (Sprachgefühl), which can guide unerringly... It is, however, impossible to classify idioms, since they are really innumerable," etc.

Leaving aside a number of fallacies contained in the definition or explanation of idioms in the above quotations, it is important to note that the criteria used by the respective authors are different, e.g. Treble and Vallins speak about 'grammatical' and 'ungrammatical idioms', implicitly involving their 'correctness' or 'incorrectness'; in one of his definitions (the first) Hornby applies the semantic criterion; the Guide to the English Language resorts to idealistic psychological-linguistic criteria, etc.

Since the word idiom does exist in the English language and enjoys so wide a circulation, its two main meanings (idiom in the sense of 'language' etc. has no concern here) might be interpreted as follows :

-in a broad, non-scientific sense - an idiom is a long-lived group of words characteristic of a language (sometimes impossible to translate ad litteram into another language), comprising grammatical collocations and phrases (fusions, unities, and free combinations), most of the latter being based on degraded metaphors;

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-in a strict, scientific sense - an idiom is tantamount to a phraseological fusion.

6. Slang

The same as in the case of idioms, the definitions and explanations given to slang by English and American authors are extremely varied and quite often misleading : The Slang Dictionary, London, Chatto and Windus, 1925, calls slang 'the language of street humour, of fast, high and low life', including a number of simple colloquialisms in the alphabetical list; Hornby defines it as a) words or phrases which are in common use but which are not considered suitable for use on serious occasions, b) the language of a particular class of people; other authors include in it mere vulgarisms (vulgar words or phrases), still others make no clear distinction between slang and idiomatic English, etc.

Taking into account both diachronical and synchronical criteria, we shall consider slang as an extreme, short-lived form of colloquial English (words or phrases), mainly based on metaphors of the live type, and rejected by literary language. Like colloquialisms, slangy words and phrases are always stylistical synonyms of current words and phrases (terms included, since their slangy equivalents are professionalisms), being never brought into existence by new notions, phenomena, actions, etc.

The Soviet linguist I.V. Arnold classifies slangy words and phrases into two big groups:

a) general slang, universally understood and widely spread graphical words and phrases with a strong emotional colouring, e.g. bed-sitter ('bed-sitting room'), bob ('shilling') to booze ('to carouse'), hide ('human skin'), dope ('narcotic drops'), to work the steam off ('to rid oneself of excessive energy'), etc.

b) special slang, that is to say words and phrases belonging to this or that special or professional vocabulary :

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the slang of sailors, of sportsmen, actors, lawyers, students, etc. and the slang of different social groups, for example cockney (the dialect of the ordinary London people), the high-life jargon, the thieves' cant (cant is generally a 'secret kind of language'), etc.¹

In point of form, the following classification may be adopted :

1) Slang proper, e.g. rot-gut ('bad, small beer'), to shave a customer ('to charge a customer more for an article than the marked price'), whisperer ('a constant borrower'), etc.

2) Back slang, mainly based on spelling the words backwards - or rather, on pronouncing them rudely backwards, e.g. to cool ('to look'), doog ('good'), edgabac ('cabbage'), eno ('one'), etc.

3) Rhyming slang, based on words and phrases rhyming with the actual word or phrase they mean to express, e.g. Abraham's willing ('a shilling'), Charing Cross ('a horse'), plates of meat ('feet'), to read and write ('to fight'), etc.

4) Centre slang, formed by making the central vowel of a word its initial letter, and adding vowels and consonants sufficient to make the sound imposing, e.g. ugmer or hugmer ('mug' - 'fool'), etc.²

7. Other Categories

Dialecticisms are words and phrases characteristic of a dialect or another, e.g. loch (Scottish : 'lake'), maun (Scottish : 'must'), ilka (Scottish: 'such'), etc.

Euphemisms (Greek euphemos, 'of good sound or omen') words or phrases that are less expressive or direct but considered less distasteful, offensive, etc. than those they re-

1 I. V. A r n o l d , Leksikiloghia anglijskovo jazyka, Moscow, 1959.

2 The slang dictionary, Chatto and Windus, London, 1929, p. 347 et seq.

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place, e.g. remains (instead of 'corpse'), to decease, to pass away, to join the silent majority (instead of 'to die'), good people ('fairies, brownies, pixies', etc. - the phenomenon of taboo is present here : the name is given by superstitious country folk, evidently from fear of offending by using direct words), etc.

Poetisms are words and phrases characteristic of 'poetical language', e.g. weary ('tired'), brine ('sea, 'ocean'), oft ('often'), ere ('before'), o'er ('over'), ever ('always'), etc. A great number of archaisms are used as poetisms.

The different lexical strata of a language form part and parcel of the functional styles of that language, thus: terms are characteristic of scientific style, poetisms (archaisms included) - of poetical style, colloquialisms - of colloquial or conversational style, etc. However important its specific vocabulary, a functional style is characterized by other elements as well: presence or absence of figures of speech, sometimes specific grammatical constructions, etc. In this way, functional styles properly belong to stylistics or style, exceeding the boundaries of lexicology.

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V. LEXICOGRAPHY

General Remarks

Lexicography (Gk. lexikos - 'referring to the word', grapho - 'I write') is "both dictionary-making and a section of linguistics, which, with the help of lexicology, formulates the theory of compiling dictionaries and scientifically substantiates both their types and the principles underlying their structure."¹

The importance of dictionaries can hardly be overestimated: they are the general reader's immediate reference - book and the indispensable instrument of work for the learners of a language, translators, writers, philologists, etc. Hence the importance of lexicography, which, although still considered a branch of lexicology, tends to become a linguistic discipline apart, with its own specific problems and methods of work and investigation.

Types of Dictionaries

In the proper and most usual sense of the term, a dictionary is a book containing a list of the words of some language arranged in a definite order, commonly following the alphabet, together with the definitions, explanations, or translations of these words. Formerly the word lexicon was an absolute synonym of dictionary; at present it usually means either a dictionary of an ancient language (particularly Greek, Hebrew, or Arabic), or a special vocabulary, as of

¹ I. V. Arnold, Leksikologhia sovremennovo anglijskovo jazyka, Moscow, 1959, p.322.





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an author, science, etc. e.g. Shakespeare Lexicon, by A. Schmidt (Berlin, 1902).

A vocabulary is just a list of words, usually with definitions, explanations, or translations, used in a language, a particular book, a special branch of study, etc. A glossary differs from a vocabulary in that it usually is a list of difficult words, with notes, definitions, and explanations, either appended to a book or printed separately (e.g. many editions of Robert Burns' poems are supplied with glossaries of Scottish words used by the poet). Frequently enough a glossary is a bare list of words, which, by means of figures, etc. refers the reader back to the text where these words are explained and interpreted (such a glossary is, properly speaking, an index). A concordance is an alphabetical list of all the important words of a book or author, with references to the passages in which they occur, e.g. A Concordance to the Plays of Shakespeare by W.H. Davenant Adams (London, Routledge and Sons).

An encyclop(a)edia is a comprehensive type of dictionary furnishing ample information from one or several domains of human knowledge, e.g. The Encyclopaedia Britannica in 24 volumes, first published in 1768, The Everyman's Encyclopaedia in 12 volumes, etc. Cyclop(a)edia is just short for encyclop(a)-edia, although it sometimes limits its area of investigation to a single subject with which it deals comprehensively if not exhaustingly, e.g. Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature in 3 volumes.

The term dictionary may be applied loosely to all lexicographical works mentioned above, with the same 'extension of meaning' which makes it also possible to speak of biographical dictionaries (the so-called Who's Whos), dictionaries of proverbs, of quotations, etc.

Dictionaries proper should only be called those of the purely linguistical type, forming the main study of the lexicographer.

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Types of Linguistical Dictionaries

Linguistical dictionaries present so varied a range that it would be impossible to enumerate and so much the less to analyse all of them here. It is the most important types, therefore, that will be mentioned in the following.

The broadest classification is into general and special dictionaries, both types depending, at the same time, on their being dictionaries of one language (monolingual) or dictionaries of two (bilingual) or more languages.

Monolingual general dictionaries may be :

1) E x p l a n a t o r y, i.e. meant to explain the meanings of words with the help of definitions, characterizations, etc. sometimes with the supplementary aid of pictures, plates, tables, etc. Such dictionaries are, for instance, The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English by A.S.Hornby, E.V.Gatenby, and H.Wakefield (London, 1958); The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, by H.W.Fowler and F.G.Fowler; Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language¹ (Cleveland and New-York, 1956), etc.

2) E t y m o l o g i c a l, dealing with the origin and history of words (mainly from the phonetical point of view), as is, for example, A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language by Walter W.Skeat. Distinction must be made between (explanatory) dictionaries on etymological principles, i.e. giving some elementary etymological information about words (e.g. their oldest form) and etymological dictionaries proper, which, besides specifying the origin and several stages in the evolution of words and their meanings, also mention forms related to the primary word, parallel foreign forms, etc.

3) H i s t o r i c a l, describing both the etymology of words and the history of their meanings (their semasiological history), usually with the specification of the year or at least of the century when a word or meaning came into existence or died out. The most important English historical dic-

1 The 'American' language is a misnomer, there being no special American language distinct from English. The proper term is 'American English' in contrast with 'British English'.

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tionary is A New English Dictionary (NED), also called The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), made up of 12 volumes and one additional volume containing the new words. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is an abridged edition of OED (2 volumes).

4) Pronouncing or Phonetic, giving the standard pronunciation or pronunciations of a word, often with dialectal, colloquial, etc. variants, by means of special phonetic symbols. Daniel Jones' An English Pronouncing Dictionary is now the classical English work of this type, the phonetic symbols it makes use of enjoying almost universal recognition. The International Phonetic Alphabet has found its way into a number of explanatory dictionaries, e.g. A.S. Hornby's An Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English.

5) Of Synonyms. There is no unitary conception as to the content of dictionaries belonging to this type. A dictionary of synonyms may simply register synonyms (generally grouped round a nucleus word or main word in a synonymic series); it may also contain analogous words and antonyms; it may discriminate synonyms by means of explanations and examples, etc. P.M. Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (various editions) contains ample lists of synonyms and antonyms grouped in accordance with notional categories¹, as well as an alphabetically arranged index at the end of the volume, but no indication as to when they can or cannot be used instead of one another. Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms (e.g. the 1951 edition), on the contrary, abounds in explanations and examples.

Monolingual special dictionaries deal with a certain part of the vocabulary of a language, specific to one branch of knowledge (geography, engineering, radio, etc.) or to one lexical stratum (familiar English, slang, etc.), e.g. M. Pei and F. Gaynor's Dictionary of Linguistics (New-York, 1954); Chatto and Windus' The Slang Dictionary (London, 1925); Eric Partridge's A Dictionary of the Underworld (London, 1950);

1 Dictionaries of this subtype are often called ideographic dictionaries or thesauri (thesauruses.)

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H.W. Fowler's A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (Oxford, 1957 – an 'English grammar' dictionary), etc.

Bilingual dictionaries are chiefly based on the translation of words and phrases from one language into another, e.g. the English-Rumanian and the Rumanian-English dictionaries published by Editura Științifică, Bucharest; the English-Russian Dictionary by V.K.Müller (Moscow, 1960); the Russian-English Dictionary by A.I.Smirnitsky (Moscow, 1958); the English - German and German-English dictionaries by Muret-Sanders (various editions), Berlin; the English-French and French - English dictionaries by Mansion (Harrap's), etc.

Bilingual dictionaries may also be of a special type, e.g. the English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary by A.V.Kunin (Moscow, 1955); the English-Russian Dictionary of English and American Abbreviations by V.O.Bluwstein et al. (Moscow, 1957); the English-Russian Polytechnical Dictionary by M.P.Multanovsky and A.Ivanova (Moscow, 1958); the English-Russian Nautical Dictionary by A.M.Taube and V.A.Schmidt (Moscow, 1961), etc., etc.

Problems Connected with the Compilation of Dictionaries

The problems connected with the compilation of dictionaries are numerous and, sometimes, difficult enough. Any dictionary, be it monolingual or bilingual, general or special, requires of its compiler sound philological and general information, power of selection, analysis, and synthesis, a good command of one or several languages, familiarity with at least the general aspects of style, etc.

Practical lexicography (i.e. compilation of dictionaries) is at present inconceivable without a theoretical basis¹.

1 "Without a study of problems connected with the theory of lexicography and lexicology it is impossible to compile good dictionaries." (Leksikologičeskij sbornik ,





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It is general explanatory monolingual and bilingual dictionaries which commonly raise 'theoretical' problems, all of them conditioned by their final object, by the exact needs and requirements of those for whom these dictionaries are intended; so much so that, as a matter of fact, these theoretical problems as well as many of their solutions ought to start from the reader.

The reader of, say, a general monolingual or bilingual dictionary should be Everyman, for the self-evident reason that such a work may be equally wanted by scholars and pupils, writers and translators, young and old, etc. Here are a few suggestions connected with the compilation of such a dictionary.

Number of Words. The dictionary should cover a rather extensive lexical field; words and phrases used in everyday conversation, in newspapers, magazines, literature, science, etc. A limited number of archaisms and poetisms might be added.

Number of Meanings. Omission of a word in a general dictionary is not so grievous a slip as omission of a sense within an entry. When a reader does not find a word he needs he closes the dictionary and there is an end to it; whereas if he does not find a meaning, he may be prompted into accepting another meaning and taking it for granted. Hence, the requirement of a maximum number of senses with the avoidance of archaic, dialectal, and, generally, very rare meanings. As has already been pointed out, polysemy in contemporary English has become astounding, particularly in such words as come, go, get, do, thing, etc. (mostly, words belonging to the basic word-stock).

Synonymy. Synonymy is a key-problem in a general, especially bilingual dictionary, as already shown on p.88.

Order of Meanings. Roughly, there are two criteria resorted to in the arrangement of meanings : empirical and his-

Moscow, 1957, p.3); "Practical lexicography must have its scientific lexicographical basis." (G.V. S t e p a n o v ,
Preface to Casares' Introduction to Modern Lexicography,
Moscow, 1958, p.9), etc.

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torical. In accordance with the empirical criterion, the first meaning of a word is the most usual one in the contemporary usage of the language; the other meanings are arranged in a decreasing order of frequency and importance. In accordance with the historical criterion, first the etymology of the word is given, then the meaning nearest to it (even if it is obsolete), then all the other meanings up to the last which represents the most recent use of the word.

Both criteria offer advantages and disadvantages: the empirical criterion helps the reader in finding easily the meanings he is interested in but it is not very scientific; to say nothing of the fact that it is difficult sometimes to establish the order of frequency in certain meanings. The historical criterion is scientific, but it neglects the immediate necessities of the general reader.

Since the immediate necessities of the general reader prevail over the semasiological history of words in which, as a rule, only specialists are interested, the empirical criterion is commonly observed in dictionaries of the general type.

Grammar. Correct grammatical information is an essential requirement in a general dictionary, although the difficulties it involves are sometimes greater than those facing the author of a descriptive grammar book; for a grammarian may evade the words whose morphological function is debatable, whereas the author of a dictionary must give a morphological status to all the words it contains.

Final Remarks

Julius Caesar Scaliger, the Italian Renaissance scholar (1484 - 1558), used to speak of the 'tortures' inherent to dictionary-making... Dictionary work is difficult, indeed, but, as a Soviet lexicographer points out, "... it is all the more fascinatingly interesting. It offers both the joy of creative, scientific work and the satisfaction of putting into practice

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the results of theoretical investigations. For lexicography, alongside pedagogical activity and textbooks, is that domain of linguistics where theory finds its way into practice and is translated into life."¹

With all the efforts of the lexicographers, no dictionary can be 'perfect': between the first moments of its compilation and the moment of its printing, new words and meanings make it lose its 'up-to-dateness'. But, quoting Dr. Johnson: "Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none". To say nothing of the poetry they contain – at least according to Oliver Wendell Holmes: "When I feel inclined to read poetry I take down my dictionary. The poetry of words is as beautiful as that of sentences. The author may arrange the gems effectively, but their shape and lustre have been given by the attrition of ages. Bring me the finest simile from the whole range of imaginative writing, and I will show you a single word which conveys a more profound, a more accurate, and a more eloquent analogy."²

It goes without saying that the above quotation may be successively applied to the whole of Lexicology.

1 N. I. F e l d m a n , Ob analize smyslovoj strukture slova, in Leksikologičeskiĭ sbornik, Moscow, 1957, p.35.

2 The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, Preface.

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Holograph list
of the
40 languages
used by James
Joyce
in writing
*Finnegans
Wake*

Director
Lidia Vianu

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