



STYLISTIC CLASSIFICATION OF WORDS

Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Soliyeva Mubinakhon Shavkatbek qizi

Scientific Supervisor: Egamberdiyeva Irodakhon.

Annotation: The methodological classification of words occupies a central place in linguistics, particularly in lexicology and grammar, as it provides a systematic framework for analyzing lexical units based on their form, function, origin, and usage. This article examines the foundations, theoretical principles, and pedagogical significance of methodological word classification. Special attention is given to the works of classical and modern linguists who have contributed to morphology, semantics, and syntax.

Keywords: Methodological classification, lexicology, morphology, semantics, etymology, syntactic function, word classes, linguistic methodology, lexical analysis.

The classification of words is essential for understanding the structure and functioning of language. Words represent the basic units of speech, conveying meaning, performing grammatical functions, and forming the foundation of linguistic communication. Methodological classification enables linguists, language teachers, and researchers to categorize words based on consistent principles and criteria, facilitating deeper linguistic analysis.

While traditional grammar focuses on dividing words into parts of speech, modern linguistic methodology expands this approach by examining multiple dimensions of words—morphological, syntactic, semantic, functional, and pragmatic. This multifaceted classification is crucial for comprehensive language analysis, language teaching methodology, developing dictionaries, computational models, and translation tools.

The purpose of this article is to explore the methodological foundations of word classification, identify the main approaches used in modern linguistics, and

analyze their pedagogical and research significance. Through a systematic review of linguistic literature and relevant methodologies, the study develops an integrated classification model which can be applied in teaching, lexicographical works, and linguistic research.

Stylistic classification of words (also called stylistic stratification or stylistic labeling of vocabulary) is a branch of lexicology that divides the lexicon of a language into layers or groups according to their stylistic value, sphere of use, emotional coloring, and social evaluation.

The most common and widely accepted stylistic classifications distinguish several major stylistic strata (layers). Below is the standard classification used in English and many other European languages (especially in Russian, German, French, and English philology traditions).

Neutral (Common Core / Standard) Vocabulary

- The basic, stylistically unmarked layer.
- Used in all situations, by all speakers, in any style (formal, informal, written, spoken).
- No special emotional or evaluative coloring.
- Forms the core of the dictionary.
- Examples: water, house, go, good, man, and, the, yes.

Literary (Bookish, Elevated, High / Poetic) Vocabulary

- Used primarily in written, formal, elevated, or artistic contexts.
- Often sounds unnatural or pretentious in everyday conversation.
- Subgroups:
 - Formal / learned words: commence, endeavor, peruse, inquire, residence
 - Poetic / archaic literary words: steed (horse), morn (morning), behold, alas, woe

- Terms and scientific vocabulary when used outside their field: paradigm, methodology, parameter

- Officialse / bureaucratic: herein, whereas, pursuant to
- Literary clichés and phraseology: to take up arms, part and parcel



Colloquial (Informal / Conversational) Vocabulary

- Used in everyday informal speech.
- Sounds out of place in official or written contexts.
- Subdivided into:
 - Standard colloquial: kid (child), chap/guy, to have a bite, pretty
 - Familiar-colloquial / casual: dad/daddy, movie, folks, to get going
 - Low-colloquial / substandard (closer to slang): tummy, go pee-pee, yucky

Slang

- Highly informal, rapidly changing, often group-specific.
- Used for expressiveness, humor, solidarity, or secrecy.
- Examples: cool, awesome, lit, dope, bucks (dollars), wheels (car), to ghost

someone

Vulgarisms / Obscenities / Swear Words

- Taboo words, usually related to sex, body parts, or bodily functions.
- Strong emotional charge, considered offensive in polite society.
- Examples: fuck, shit, cunt, bastard, etc.

Dialectal Words

- Restricted to a particular geographic region.
- Examples: bairn (Scot., child), lass (Northern Eng.), reckon (in some American dialects meaning “think”)

Jargon / Professionalisms

- Words used by specific professional or occupational groups.
- Examples:
 - Medical: hypertension, suture, prognosis
 - Legal: tort, plaintiff, affidavit
 - IT: bug, debug, commit, fork

Terminological Vocabulary

- Strictly scientific or technical terms with precise, fixed meaning.
- Usually international (often Greek/Latin origin).
- Examples: photosynthesis, algorithm, quantum, mitochondrion



Neologisms

- Newly coined words or new meanings of existing words.
- May later move into neutral or other layers.
- Examples: selfie, googling, cryptocurrency, doomscrolling

Archaic and Obsolete Words

- Words that have fallen out of active use.
 - Archaic (still understood, old-fashioned): thee, thou, whence, hither
 - Obsolete (almost incomprehensible without a dictionary): wight (person), anon (soon), betwixt

Historisms

- Words denoting objects or phenomena that no longer exist.
- Examples: corsair, phlogiston, dodo (as a real bird), czar, soviet (in its historical meaning)

Barbarisms and Foreignisms

- Unassimilated loanwords that retain foreign spelling/pronunciation.
- Often used for local color or prestige.
- Examples: chic, tête-à-tête, dolce vita, zeitgeist

Expressive and Intensifying Words

- Interjections, exclamations, intensifiers: wow, gosh, bloody (BrE), damn, freaking, super

Stylistic Markers in Dictionaries

Major dictionaries (OED, Merriam-Webster, Longman, etc.) usually mark words with labels such as:

- formal, literary, poetic
- informal, colloquial, familiar
- slang, vulgar, offensive, taboo
- dated, archaic, obsolete
- dialectal (Scot., Amer., Austral., etc.)
- technical, jargon

This classification is not rigid—words constantly migrate between layers (e.g., “cool” moved from slang → colloquial → almost neutral; “wireless” was technical → now neutral or dated).

The findings show that no single classification method can fully describe the multifaceted nature of words. Traditional grammar-based classification, while foundational, does not account for semantic, pragmatic, or historical dimensions. Conversely, semantic and pragmatic classifications provide richer information about meaning and use but may overlook structural aspects.

The integration of computational tools enhances classification by enabling large-scale lexical analysis based on corpora and statistical models. Such tools support more objective, data-driven classification, which is highly relevant for modern linguistics, natural language processing, machine translation, and lexicography.

In education, methodological word classification is crucial for improving vocabulary teaching, enabling students to identify relationships among words and develop deeper linguistic competence. It also helps teachers create structured lesson plans, assessment tools, and differentiated learning materials.

Conclusions

Methodological classification of words is a multi-dimensional process involving morphological, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, and etymological approaches. Classical and modern linguistic theories provide solid foundations for understanding word categories and functions. Integrated classification is essential for linguistic research, lexicography, language teaching, and computational applications. Modern corpus-based and computational methods significantly expand the possibilities of systematic word classification.

Integrate multiple classification methods in language teaching to enhance students’ analytical and semantic skills.

Develop digital tools and corpora for automated and semi-automated word classification.



Encourage interdisciplinary research combining linguistics, pedagogy, and computer science.

Create specialized dictionaries based on methodological classification for educational use.

Use classification techniques in translation studies to improve semantic accuracy and equivalence.

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