

# ЛЕКСИКОЛОГИЯ

## LECTURE

### THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH WORD-STOCK

Distinction is made between **internal** and **external** ways of replenishing the vocabulary.

New vocabulary units appear as a result of borrowing from other languages (external way), productive or patterned ways of word-formation and non-patterned ways of word-creation, extension of the polysemantic nature of existing words (internal ways).

The main types of lexical naming of concepts (naming strategies) seem to be obvious and universal. They are borrowing words from another language and name creation (derivation) through available linguistic means. A new name may be created by means of different ways of word-formation; morphological word derivation including prefixation, suffixation, conversion, composition. Less productive ways of forming new words in English include clipping, blending, acronyms, abbreviations, back derivation, lexicalization and some others. Besides word-formation a new name may be created by secondary use of a word or its equivalent to denote a different though related category. This process is called *lexical-semantic derivation*, e.g. in English *hand* is used to denote a fore paw.

A new name may be formed by means of lexical-syntactic derivation through lexicalization of a syntactic form or a word group when a multiword expression becomes fixed and its meaning cannot be understood on the basis of its constituent units, e.g. *red tape* (бюрократия).

Generally the connection between a name and a referent is arbitrary. Yet newly created names are based on preexisting names created by the language community for different, though somehow related concepts, and maintain relationships with them for a long time.

With the development of technology, science many “new words” appeared in the English language. Most of them are terms. The layer of terminological neologisms has been rapidly growing since the start of the technological revolution. A **neologism** (from Greek *neo* = "new" + *logos* = "word") is a word, term or phrase which has been recently created (coined) – often to apply to new concepts, or to reshape older terms in newer language form. Neologisms are especially useful in identifying inventions, new phenomena, or old ideas which have taken on a new cultural context. The sphere of the Internet alone gave birth to thousand of new terms which have become international (*network, server, browser, e-mail, e-news, provider, site, facebook, Internet explorer, etc.*). Recent discoveries in biochemistry, genetic engineering, cosmonautics and other sciences demanded new words to name new concepts and ideas. The vocabulary of our everyday usage is also being enlarged by neologisms.

Word-meaning is a changeable category. Linguists investigate **causes, nature and results of change of meaning**.

The word may change its meaning due to **extralinguistic** or purely **linguistic** causes.

Extralinguistic causes are connected with changes in the nature of the object denoted by the word or in concepts about it brought about by changes in the life of the language community (atom, car, pen).

Linguistic causes are due to the language system itself. They include differentiation of synonyms (*tide – time, deer – animal*), linguistic analogy due to which verbs *get, take, grasp*, denoting physical actions developed meanings connected with mental perception, ellipsis (*starve, propose*).

The nature of change of word-meaning is determined by the secondary use of the word-

form to name a different, yet related concept. Conceptual associations of similarity serve as a basis for **metaphor** (*drops of water – diamond drops*). Associations of contiguity between concepts coexisting in time and space are called **metonymy** (*China* meaning dishes made of porcelain).

As to results of change of meaning, they may be numerous and diverse. **Restriction**, narrowing or specialization (*deer, meat*) and **extension**, widening or generalization (*target, bird*) take place in the denotational component of lexical meaning. Changes in the connotational component may result in **amelioration**, or elevation (*knight, lord*) or **pejoration**, or degeneration, degradation (*knave, silly*).

Borrowing has never been the chief means of replenishing the English vocabulary although numerically the borrowed stock of words in Modern English is considerably larger than the native stock. In fact native words comprise only 25-30% of the total number of words in the English vocabulary, but the native words form the bulk of the most frequent words actually used in speech and writing; they have a wider-range of lexical and grammatical valency, they are highly polysemantic and productive in forming word-clusters and set expressions.

**Borrowing** is active mainly in the field of scientific terminology. According to the nature of the borrowing itself the borrowed stock of words may be analysed into: borrowings proper, or true borrowings (*kolkhoz, detente*), words made up of morphemes of Latin and Greek origin (cyclotron, protein) and loan-translations, or translation-loans (*fellow – traveller, self – criticism*).

Words do not only come, but also go out of the vocabulary. **Archaisms** are words already partly or fully out of circulation, rejected by the living language and invariably restricted to the printed page.

*Thou* and *thy, aye* ("yes") and *nay* ("no") are certainly archaic and long since rejected by common usage, yet poets use them even today. We also find the same four words and many other archaisms among dialectisms, which is quite natural, as dialects are also conservative and retain archaic words and structures. Further examples of archaisms are: *morn* (for *morning*), *eve* (for *evening*), *moon* (for *month*), *damsel* (for *girl*), *errant* (for *wandering*, e. g. *errant knights*), etc.

Sometimes, an archaic word may undergo a sudden revival. So, the formerly archaic *kin* (for *relatives; one's family*) is now current in American usage.

The terms "archaic" and "obsolete" are used more or less indiscriminately by some authors. Others make a distinction between them using the term "obsolete" for words which have completely gone out of use. The Random House Dictionary defines an obsolete word as one "no longer in use, esp. out of use for at least a century", whereas an archaism is referred to as "current in an earlier time but rare in present usage".

It should be pointed out that the borderline between "obsolete" and "archaic" is vague and uncertain, and in many cases it is difficult to decide to which of the groups this or that word belongs.

There is a further term for words which are no longer in use: **historisms**. By this we mean words denoting objects and phenomena which are things of the past and no longer exist. Lexical meaning can be studied **syntagmatically** and **paradigmatically**. In syntagmatics the meaning of lexical units is analysed through the linear relations between language units in the flow of speech. Lexicologists study a variety of lexical and grammatical contexts which serve to determine individual meanings of words. Paradigmatically lexicologists define the meaning of a word through its interrelation with other members of numerous subgroups in English vocabulary. **Hyponymy** is one of the most fundamental paradigmatic relations of lexical units based on inclusion. Thus the hyponymic relationship may be viewed as the hierarchical relationship between the meaning of the

general and the individual terms. The “upper” term is the **hyperonym**, the classifier, and the “lower” term is the **hyponym**. Another way of classifying words in English is known as **semantic fields** which is a grouping of words of different parts of speech based on the connection of the notions (concepts) underlying their meanings. The semantic component common to all the members of the field may be described as **the common denominator of meaning**. Words of the same part of speech standing for a common concept are usually referred to as **lexical-semantic groups**. (LSG)

## SEMINAR 2 THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH WORD-STOCK (QUESTIONS AND TASKS)

### 1. Get ready to discuss the following questions:

1. What is motivation? What types of motivation are distinguished in lexicology?
2. What is meant by nomination? How do separate languages differ in the sphere of nomination?
3. What is understood by lexicalization of a concept? What are the main types of lexical naming of concepts?
4. What ways of enlarging and enriching vocabulary are there in English? What is the difference between external and internal ways of replenishing English vocabulary?
5. What is meant by semantic extension?
6. What are the causes of semantic change?
7. What are the main types from the point of view of the nature of change of meaning?
8. What is metaphor based on? What types of similarity between different objects can underlie metaphoric transfer?
9. What is metonymy based on? What types of contiguity underlie metonymic transfer?
10. What are the main results of change of meaning?
11. What processes underlie specialization and generalization of meaning?
12. What semantic changes take place in the case of amelioration and pejoration of the meaning of the word?

### 2. Additional tasks:

1. Make up a scheme of the characteristic features of English vocabulary.
2. Make up a scheme of the changes in English vocabulary.
3. Make up a scheme of the causes, types and results of semantic change.
4. Read the chapter and be prepared to discuss it in class. Summarize the main problems in 200 words: Geeraerts D. Conceptual metaphor and metonymy. In *Theories of Lexical Semantics*. – Oxford University Press, 2010. – P. 203-222.
5. Classifications of semantic change. (ibid.). – P. 25-41.

## SEMINAR THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH WORD-STOCK (ASSIGNMENTS)

### 1. Analyze the meanings of the given words. State what common associations, given by the graphic/sound-clusters sp- , -ash and gl- unite these words.

*Sprinkle* (to shake small amounts of a liquid over the surface of something), *spray* (to send liquid through the air in tiny drops either by the wind or some instrument), *splash* (to wet or soil by dashing masses or particles of water), *spit* (send liquid out from the mouth), *spatter* (to scatter drops of a liquid on a surface), *spilt* (to accidentally pour a liquid out of its container), *spurt* (if a liquid spurts from smth., it comes out in a sudden strong flow).

*Smash* (break violently into small pieces), *dash* (move or be moved violently), *crash* (strike suddenly violently and noisily), *bash* (to hit hard and violently), *gash* (a long deep cut or wound), *slash* (to move in a violent way that causes a lot of damage), *trash* (to criticize in a very strong way).

*Glamour* (a special quality that makes a person, place, or situation seem very exciting, attractive, or fashionable), *gleam* (a bright light reflected from something), *glisten* (to shine and look wet or oily), *glossy* (shiny in an attractive way), *glint* (to shine with quick flashes of light), *glow* (to shine with a soft light), *glimmer* (a soft weak light that is not steady).

## **2. Analyze the meanings of the italicized words. Group the words according to their type of motivation: a) words morphologically motivated; b) words semantically motivated.**

*Driver* – someone who drives a vehicle, especially as his/her job; *careless* – not taking enough care; *leg* – the part of a piece of furniture such as a table or chair that supports it and raises it off the floor; *horse* – a piece of equipment shaped like a large box that is used in gymnastics; *singlehood* – the state of being single rather than married; *wall* – emotions or behaviour that prevent people from feeling close to each other; *hand-made* – made by hand, not machine; *piggish* – selfish; *blue-eyed* – having blue eyes; *sound bite* – a short comment by a politician or another famous person that is taken from a longer conversation or speech and broadcast alone because it is especially interesting or effective; *leaflet* – a small, often folded piece of printed paper, often advertising something, usually given free to people; *streamlet* – a small stream (a natural flow of water).

## **3. Define the kind of association involved in the semantic change.**

**Model:** *glass* (a transparent solid substance used for making windows, bottles, etc.) – *a glass* (a container used for drinking, made of glass) The kind of association involved in the semantic change in the words *glass* – *a glass* is known as metonymy or the contiguity of meaning.

1) the *foot* of a person – *the foot* of a mountain; 2) *jean* (heavy twilled cotton cloth, esp. denim) – *jeans* (trousers made of denim); 3) *Matisse* (proper name) – *a Matisse* (a painting); 4) the *wing* of a bird – the *wing* of a building; 5) the *key* to a door – the *key* to a mystery; 6) *copper* (metal) – *copper* (coin); 7) the *heart* of a man – the *heart* of a city; 8) *crown* (a circular ornamental headdress worn by a monarch) – *crown* (monarchy); 9) a *whip* (a lash used to urge horses on) – a *whip* (an official in the British Parliament to see that members are present at debates); 10) *China* (a country) – *china* (dishes made of porcelain).

## **4. Analyze the meanings of the italicized words. Identify the result of the changes of the denotational aspect of lexical meaning in the given words.**

**Model:** *loan*: ‘a gift from a superior; a thing borrowed’ – ‘a sum of money which is borrowed, often from a bank, and has to be paid back, usually together with an additional amount of money that you have to pay as a charge for borrowing’ The result of the change of the denotational aspect of lexical meaning of the word *loan* is that the word became more specialized in meaning (**restriction of meaning, specialization**).

1) *camp*: „a place where troops are lodged in tents” – „a place where people live in tents or huts”; 2) *girl*: „a small child of either sex” – „a small child of the female sex”; 3) *bird*: „a young bird” – „a creature with wings and feathers which can usually fly in the air”; 4) *arrive*: „reach the shore after a voyage” – „reach a place at the end of a journey or a stage in a journey”; 5) *deer*: „any quadruped animal” – „a hooved grazing or browsing animal, with branched bony antlers that are shed annually and typically borne only by the male”; 6) *rug*: „rough woolen stuff” – „a small carpet”; 7) *barn*: „a place for keeping barley” – „a large farm building used for storing grain, hay, or straw or for housing livestock”; 8) *glide*: „to move gently and smoothly” – „fly with no engine”; 9) *room*: „space” – „a part or division of a building enclosed by walls, floor, and ceiling”; 10) *fly*: „move with wings” – „to move through the air or in the outer space”; 11) *artist*: „master of the liberal arts” – „a person who produces paintings or drawings as a profession or hobby”; 12)

*champion*: „a fighting man” – „a person who has defeated or surpassed all rivals in a competition, especially a sporting contest”; 13) *campaign*: „army’s operations in the field” – „a connected set of actions intended to obtain a particular result, in military operations, in politics and business”.

**5. Analyze the meanings of the italicized words. Identify the result of the changes of the connotational aspect of lexical meaning in the given words.**

**Model:** *villain*: ‘a feudal serf, peasant cultivator in subjection to a lord’ – ‘a person guilty or capable of a crime or wickedness’. The result of the change of the connotational aspect of lexical meaning of the word *villain* is that the word acquired a derogatory emotive charge (**deterioration of meaning**).

1) *cunning*: „possessing erudition or skill” – „clever in deceiving”; 2) *knight*: „manservant” – „noble courageous man”; 3) *fond*: „foolish, infatuated” – „loving, affectionate”; 4) *gang*: „a group of people going together” – „an organized group of criminals”; 5) *marshal*: „manservant attending horses” – „an officer of the highest rank in the armed forces”; 6) *coarse*: „ordinary, common” – „rude or vulgar”; 7) *minister*: „a servant” – „a head of a government department”; 8) *enthusiasm*: „a prophetic or poetic frenzy” – „intense and eager enjoyment, interest, or approval”; 9) *violent*: „having a marked or powerful effect” – „using or involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something”; 10) *gossip*: „a godparent, a person related to one in God” – „the one who talks scandal; tells slanderous stories about other people”.

**6. Explain the semantic processes by which the words in bold acquired their meanings.**

1. **“Bureau”**, a desk, was borrowed from French in the 17th century. In Modern French (and English) it means not only desk but also the office itself and the authority exercised by the office. Hence the familiar bureaucracy is likely to become increasingly familiar. The desk was called so because bureau, a thick coarse cloth of a brown russet.

2. Formally **barn** meant “a storehouse for barley”; today it has widened to mean “any kind of storehouse” for animals or equipment as well as any kind of grain.

**7. Analyze the process of development of new meanings in the words in bold.**

1. I put the letter well into the **mouth** of the box. 2. Those that had been the **head** of the line paused momentarily and looked around. 3. A cheerful-looking girl in blue **jeans** came up to the stairs whistling. 4. I read **a Dickens** the other day. It was funny. They sat on the rug before the fireplace, watching the rising **tongues** of flame. 5. They were already carrying the Renoirs.

**8. Identify the cases of widening and narrowing of meaning.**

1. While the others waited the elderly executive filled his pipe and lit it. 2. Finn was watching the birds. 3. The two girls took hold of one another, one acting gentleman, the other lady.

**9. Using a dictionary determine the direct meaning of the words in bold, which are used here in their figurative metaphorical meanings.**

1. Art is a **vehicle** of propaganda. 2. Raise the **bonnet** of the car. 3. Don't **fumble** for excuses. 4. He's always ready **to shove** the responsibility on others. 5. I'm sure he didn't steal the thing. It had been **planted**. 6. This event is a **milestone** in the history of the country. 7. It will **soil** his reputation. 8. I'll **swelter** in this coat on such a hot day. 9. There is a **snag** in your argument. 10. A smile **creased** his face. 11. I **stumbled** through the text somehow. 12. You have a **fertile** imagination.

**10. The common term for a word's objective reference is denotation. The common term for a word's emotional and stylistic content is connotation. Determine the denotative and connotative meanings in the following pairs of words. Muzzle vs face, fat vs plump,**

*obstinate vs mulish, infant vs kid, beg vs implore, friend vs crony, fragrance vs reek, love vs adore, talent vs genius, famous vs notorious, gobble vs eat.*

**11. Below are listed the original meanings of some simple words in Old English. These meanings are different from those the words have now. Consult dictionaries and say what kind of semantic change was involved in the development of these words.**

Bird, N- OE *brid* - nestling, fledgling; camp, N. - OE *camp* = battle, struggle, contest; deal, V. - OE *daelan* = share, distribute, take part; deer, N. -OE *deor* = animal, beast; dwell, V. - OE *dwellan* - lead astray, deceive, make a mistake; fair, A. - OE *fzer* = beautiful, pretty, sweet; fear, N. - OE *faer* -sudden attack, danger; fowl, N. - OE *fuzol* = bird; lord, N. - OE *leaford* -master; silly, A. - OE *saliz* = happy, blessed, holy.