

# Synonyms

Mukataeva Aiza

# What is a Synonym?

A synonym is a word that has almost the same or similar meaning.

# Synonyms



Synonyms (*Gr. synonymous* “of like meaning”, *syn* – “with”, *onyma* – “name”) are words belonging to the same part of speech, differing in sound form, and possessing one or more identical or nearly identical (similar) denotational meanings.

- ▶ English is very rich in synonyms. An elementary dictionary of synonyms contains over 8 000 synonyms. The existence of the so-called absolute synonyms (e.g. looking-glass/mirror, fatherland/homeland, etc.) is a very rare phenomenon because in the course of language development numerous old names for the same object underwent the process of differentiation and the words came to have either a different shades of meaning or usage. Thus, we divide synonyms into the following groups: ideographic, stylistic, contextual, total and phraseological synonyms.

# Ideographic synonyms

- ▶ Ideographic synonyms denote different shades of meaning or degrees of a given quality. They sometimes called relative synonyms,
- ▶ e.g. beautiful, fine, handsome, pretty, pleasant
- ▶ different, various



# Stylistic synonyms

- ▶ Stylistic synonyms are differ in usage and style,
- ▶ e.g. doctor (official), doc (familiar)
- ▶ examination (official), exam (coll.)
- ▶ to commence (official), to begin (coll.)



# Total synonyms

- ▶ Total synonyms can replace each other in any given context without the slightest alteration in denotative or emotional meaning and connotations. Examples of this type can be found in special literature among terms belonging to this or that branch of knowledge. It must be noted that it is a very special kind of synonymy: neither ideographic nor stylistic oppositions are possible here. Thus, in linguistics the terms noun and substantive, functional affix, flexion and inflection are identical in meaning.

# Phraseological synonyms

- ▶ Phraseological synonyms. The same misunderstood conception of inchangeability lies at the bottom of considering different dialect names for the same plant, animal, etc.
- ▶ Thus, the cornflower is so called because it grows in cornfields; some people call it bluebottle according to the shape and colour of its petals.



# Sources of synonyms

- ▶ There are several sources of synonyms:
- ▶ a) Borrowings from French, Latin and Greek are the most numerous, e.g. to question (Fr.) – to interrogate (L) – to ask (native); devoid (Fr.) – vacuous (L) – empty (native); guidance (Fr.) – instruction (L) – teaching (native), etc.
- ▶ b) Dialectical words which come from local dialects and are used in the English vocabulary as regular, e.g. girl: lass, lassie; radio:: wireless; long ago:: long syne, etc.
- ▶ c) Word-forming process which is productive in the language at a given time of its history. The words already existing in the language develop new meanings and are formed by affixation, conversion, compounding, shortening and form synonyms to those already in use, e.g. to enter – to come in (phrasal verbs), to verbalize – to word (conversion), popular – pop (shortening).
- ▶ d) Euphemisms and vulgarisms employed for certain stylistic purposes, e.g. in one's birthday suit (naked), in the family way (pregnant) – euphemisms; mug (face), bloody (devilish) – vulgarisms.
- ▶ e) Synonyms connected with the non-literal figurative use of words in pictorial language, e.g. walk of life (occupation, profession), star-gazer (dreamer).