

# General characteristics of English vocabulary

- Peculiar features of English vocabulary
- Changes of English vocabulary
  - Neologisms
  - Archaisms

# English is the world's most important language

- The number of speakers of the language
- The geographical dispersal of the language
- The functional load of the language
- The language of science and literature
- English has become the object of studying

# Peculiarities of English vocabulary

- A great number of mono-disyllabic words

**e.g. *ask, add, age, bad, big, girl***

- Abnormal growth of homonymy

**e.g. *silence (n) – silence (v)***

- Highly developed polysemy

**e.g. *pod***

1. *A long narrow seed container that grows on various plants*
2. *A part of space vehicle that can be separated from the main part*
3. *A long narrow container for petrol or other substances*

# Peculiarities of English vocabulary

- The role of context is great  
**e.g. *to catch* (ловить, поймать), *to wash* (умываться, стирать, мыть)**
- Phrasal verbs, set expressions are very common in English  
**e.g. *to hurry up*, *to look after*, *to take a shower***

# Peculiarities of English vocabulary

- Rich synonymic sources

**e.g. *to gather (E) – to assemble (F) – to collect (L)***

- A great abundance of borrowed words

***Yacht, tattoo***

***Seminar, hamburger***

***Cuisine, elite***

***Mosquito, macho***

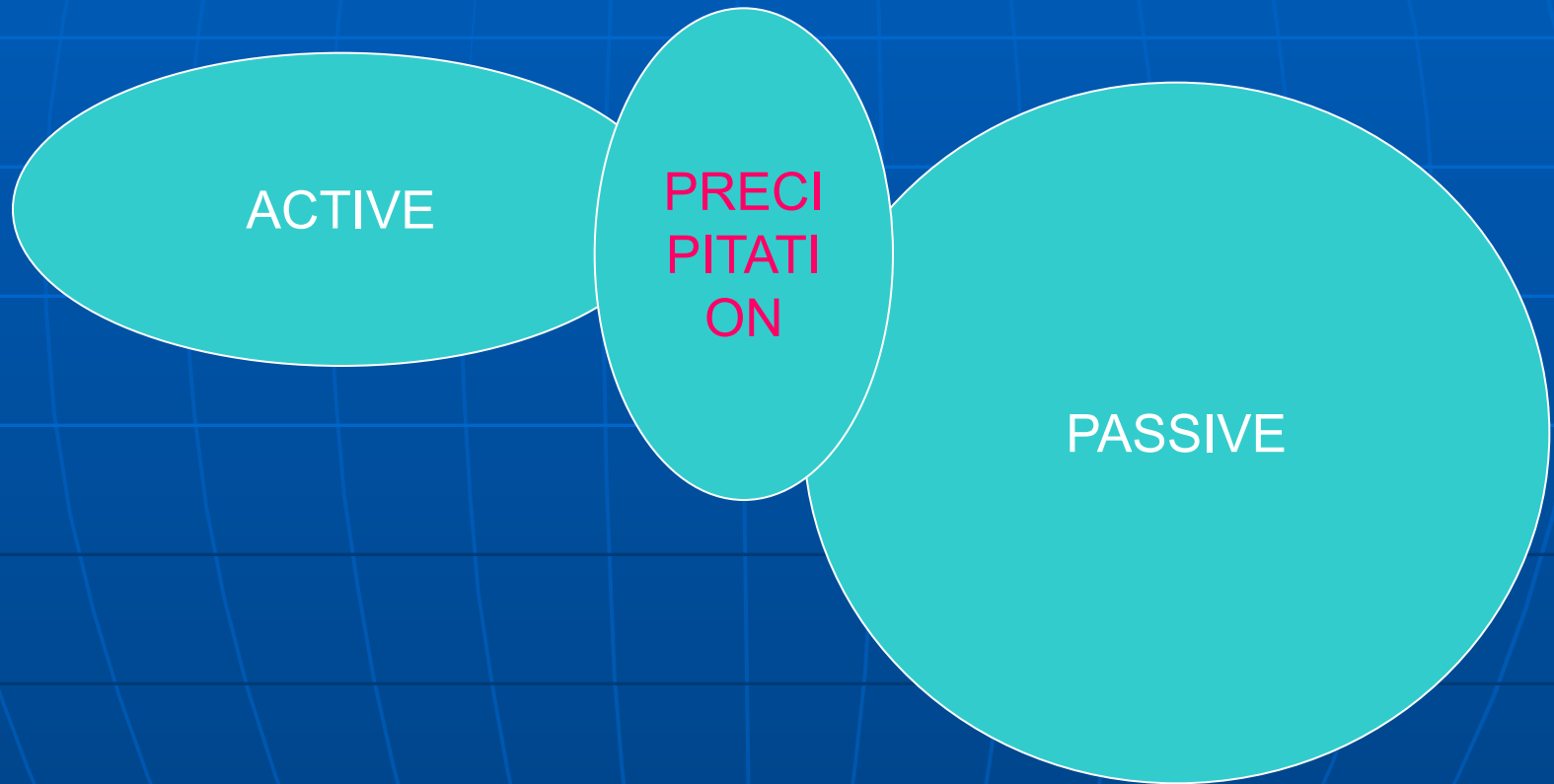
***Casino, piano, ballerina***

***Tundra, tsar, pelmeni, blini***

# English vocabulary

- How many words are there in English?
- How many words does an average native speaker of English use in his/her everyday speech?
- How many words did Winston Churchill use in his writing?

# Individual vocabulary of a person



# Changes of the English vocabulary

- The word-stock of any language is always developing
- Vocabulary is sensitive to the changes in political, social and cultural life of the society

***e.g. political, politics, parliamentary, the Secretary of state; lyric, epic, dramatic, fiction, critic (16 th century)***

***Jet-plane, X-rays, broadcasting, nuclear fission, antibiotics (19 th century)***



# Changes in different conceptual spheres

- **Social life**

**Concept communitarism is very popular**

**It means collaborative living in one global and entire world**

**e.g. collective thinking, think tank, collective responsibility**

# Changes in different conceptual spheres

- **Criminal sphere**
- Due to the appearance of the concept comunitarism the criminal subsphere was enlarged by new words

**gangsta**

steaming, wolf-pack, wilding,  
side-walking, jamming, drive-by

# Changes in different conceptual spheres

- **Health care**

New concepts were added: the 20<sup>th</sup> century syndrome (agoraphobia) and tight/sick building syndrome

# Changes in different conceptual spheres

- **Women's lib**
- The vocabulary in this sphere has totally changed in the last few years due to the tendency to uni-sex

House-wife – homemaker

Fisherman – fisher

Names of professions

Stewardess – flight attendant

Hairdresser – hairologist

# Changes in different conceptual spheres

Being **politically correct** is important

Prison – correctional facility

Prison guard – correctional officer

Garbage collectors – sanitation  
engineers/sanitation personnel

Negroes, black people – non-white,  
coloured, Afro-American,  
Afro-Caribbean

# Changes in different conceptual spheres

- **Homo sapiens**

Homo loquens (coach potato, mouse potato)

Homo agens (do-it-yourselfism, do-it-yourself, DIY shop, all-at-once-ness)

**Life-boat ethics**

Hard-liner, bridge-builder, gut-lifer

# Neologisms

- Neology
- A neologism is a new word, new in form and content
- 800 words appear annually. This factor creates some problems for the linguists

# Problems

- Finding the right ways of identification of new words
- Analysing the factors which cause the emerge of new words in connection with pragmatic needs of society
- Studying the models of creating the limits of using new words
- Elaboration of principles of the attitude to new words in different social, professional and age groups



# The appearance of new words

- The needs of society
- The result of new associations
- The result of elimination of homonymy

# Stages of creating a new word

- In the course of communication
- The stage of socialization
- The stage of lexicalization
- The acquisition of the word by the native speakers

A new word has a quality of neologism, i.e. it has a temporal connotation of newness, until the people react to it as something new

# Examples of trendy words

- DINKY
- SINBAD
- PC
- WRINKLIES
- Clubbing
- Glass ceiling
- Spend more time with my family
- Overtired an emotional
- Economical with the truth
- Plastic

# Development of vocabulary

- Vocabulary is an open system
- Some words come in, others drop out
- The general tendency of vocabulary development is its enrichment and enlargement

# Ways of vocabulary enlargement

- **Word-building**

e.g. **superbrand, self-gift, to butter, e-book**

- **Borrowing** new words from other dialects, professional and social spheres of communication

e.g. **lox**

# Ways of vocabulary enlargement

- **Semantic change/semantic derivation**

Semantic change takes place when new meanings are developed for familiar notions and words. The process of semantic change is based on developing a primary meaning of the word and creating a new secondary figurative meaning

e.g. **bird** (any flying object), **паралич власти, гастролер**

- **Forming phraseologisms**

# What word can be a neologism?

- **Paul McFedries** (American linguist and writer) defined the following criteria for neologisms:
  - The word is not included in the dictionaries
  - The first usage of the word was registered not earlier than in 1980
  - The word had already appeared in three different sources and was used by three different authors

# Peculiar features of a neologism

- **Paul McFedries** singled out several features of a neologism:
  - The word should be easy for pronunciation and using in speech  
e.g. **democrazy** (absurd democracy)
  - The word should be easy to understand  
e.g. **pollutician** (a politician who stands for the policy doing harm to the environment)



# Peculiar features of a neologism

- The new word should be easily picked up and memorized by the people

e.g. **gynobibliophobia** (neglecting women writers)

- The new word should not create a gap for the people of other generations

e.g. **girlfriend, boyfriend, lover**

# Types of neologisms

## Classification by Dubenez, E.M.

- Proper neologisms – new words and expressions which were coined to name a new object or phenomenon  
e.g. **bio-computer** (computer which can imitate the nervous system of a human being)
- Transnominations – new words which appear to name the existing things or phenomena (semantic coloring)  
e.g. slum=ghetto=inner town

# Types of neologisms

## Classification by Dubenez, E.M.

- Semantic neologisms – the lexical units change their primary meaning to name new things or objects of reality  
e.g. **umbrella** is used in the meaning of “political shelter”
- Occasional neologisms – words created by writers, journalists, ordinary people and children

# Occasional neologisms

- Occasional neologisms are not created because of some necessity to give a new name to an object, but as a result of somebody's developed imagination or even mistake (ghost word)

e.g. **dord** (плотность) must have had another form **D or D**. It was wrongly registered in a dictionary.

# Examples of occasional neologisms in Russian

- **Широкошумные дубровы** (А.С. Пушкин)
- **Огнекистные веточки бузины** (М. Цветаева)
- **Открывалка, распакетить, перегрустить.**
- **Я намакоронился. Смотри как налужил дождь. Я уже не мальчишечка, а большишечка.**

# Causes of creating new words

- Linguistic factor (it's necessary to give a name to a new object of reality)
- Extra-linguistic factor (the development of new technologies, Internet, the brain of people producing words – “mini-word producing factory”)

# Appearance of a neologism in communication

"Did you read MacWhoozit's column today?"

"Year, the man is a master at stating the obvious."

"I know. I counted no less than four, uh, **obviosities.**"

"Obviosities? Is that a word?"

"Hmmm, let's see. If you can describe something as curious, then you can call that thing a curiosity, right? So, if you can describe something as obvious, then why not call the thing an **obviosity.**"

Okay. But is it really a word?

"Well, it is now."

# Archaisms

- A certain amount of words may drop out of the language in the course of its history. This is a gradual process. Words grow old and perceived by the speakers as archaic. The disappearance of words may be caused by two factors:
  - Extra-linguistic factor
  - Linguistic factor



# Extra-linguistic factor

- Extra-linguistic factor is the disappearance of a thing or a notion because it became outdated and has no value for the nation. Words denoting such things are called **historisms**. These are numerous names for ancient weapons, types of boats, carriages, musical instruments, agricultural implements e.g. **sword, sabre, diligence, phaeton**

# Linguistic factor

- Linguistic factor – a new name is introduced for the notion that continues to exist

Two words with exactly the same meaning can not exist in the language for a long time. One of them is bound to change its meaning or disappear.

# Three stages of turning a word into an archaism

- Obsolescent words – they sound a bit old-fashioned but they can still be used in the speech of the older generation, in literary works, in documents.

e.g. **fraught with** (full of), **kin** (relative), **to swoon** (to faint)

# Three stages of turning a word into an archaism

- Archaisms proper – words are hardly ever used in the speech, but understandable to the speakers  
e.g. **methinks** (it seems to me), **nay** (no), **nether** (low), **very** (real)

# Three stages of turning a word into an archaism

- Obsolete words – the words have dropped out of the language. They are no longer understood by the speakers.

e.g. **lozel** (никчемный человек)