

Lexicology

Lexicology

- ▶ Lexicology is a branch of linguistics that studies words.
- ▶ The term vocabulary is used to denote the total sum of the words of the language.
- ▶ The vocabulary can be studied **synchronically**, that is, at a given stage of its development, or **diachronically**, that is, in the context of the processes through which it grew, developed and acquired its modern form.

What is the word?

- ▶ The word is a fundamental unit of the language.
- ▶ The word is the total of the sounds which comprise it.
- ▶ The word is a unit of speech which serves the purposes of human communication. Thus, the word can be defined as a unit of communication.
- ▶ The word is a structure having two aspects: **the external and the internal** structures.

The word as a structure

- ▶ By **external structure** of the word we mean its morphological structure.
- ▶ For example, in the word **disappointment** the following morphemes can be distinguished: the prefix *dis-*, -the root *appoint*, the suffix *-ment* .
- ▶ The morphemes *dis-*, *-appoint*, *-ment* constitute the external structure of the word **disappointment** .

The word as a structure

- ▶ The internal structure of the word is its *meaning*, which is referred to as the word's *semantic structure*.
- ▶ The word's *semantic structure* is certainly the word's main aspect.
- ▶ Words can serve the purposes of human communication due to their meanings.
- ▶ The area of lexicology which studies the semantic studies of the word is called *semantics*.

The word as a structure

- ▶ The word possesses both **external (formal) unity** and **internal (semantic) unity**.

Formal unity

- ▶ Ex. *a blackbird* and *a black bird* semantic unity.
- ▶ The first word is indivisible. We can't insert some other word between the morphemes of the word *blackbird*.
- ▶ *Black bird* can be divided by some other word : *the black small bird*.

The word as a structure

Semantic unity

- ▶ In the word-group *a black bird* each of the meaningful words conveys a separate concept: *bird* - a kind of living creature; *black* – a colour.
- ▶ The word *blackbird* conveys only one concept: the type of bird.

Grammatical employment of the words

- ▶ In speech most words can be used in different grammatical forms in which their interrelations are realised.

Grammatical employment of the words

Examples

I. Blackbird fly, Blackbird fly

Into the light of the dark black night.

/The Beatles song “Blackbird”/

II I’ve read the short story “Four and Twenty Blackbirds” by
Agatha Christie

Comment on the grammatical arrangement of the word **blackbird**

What is the word

Conclusion

The *word* is a speech unit used for the purposes of *human communication*, materially representing *a group of sounds*, possessing *a meaning*, susceptible to *grammatical employment* and characterised by *formal and semantic unity*.

Functional styles of the vocabulary:

formal or informal use of the word

- ▶ The social context in which the communication takes place determines the modes of speech.
- ▶ When placed in different situations, people choose different kinds of words and structures to express their thoughts.
- ▶ The suitability or unsuitability of a word for each particular situation depends on its stylistic characteristics or, in other words, on the functional style it represents.

Functional styles of the vocabulary:

- ▶ *Functional style* is defined as a system of expressive means peculiar to a specific sphere of communication.
- ▶ *Spheres of communication*: an informal talk, professional communication, a lecture, a formal letter, an intimate letter, a speech in court, etc.

Functional styles of the vocabulary:

- ▶ All situations of communication can be roughly classified into two types: *formal* (a lecture, a speech in court, an official letter, professional communication) and *informal* (an informal talk, an intimate letter).
- ▶ Accordingly, functional styles are classified into two groups, with further subdivisions depending on different situations.

Functional styles of the vocabulary:

- ▶ The choice of words is determined in each particular case not only by an informal (or formal) situation, but also by the speaker's educational and cultural background, age group, and his occupational and regional characteristics.

Informal Style

- ▶ Informal vocabulary is used in one's immediate circle: family, relatives or friends.

BUT:

- ▶ the informal talk of well-educated people differs from that of the illiterate or the semi-educated;
- ▶ the choice of words with adults is different from the vocabulary of teenagers;
- ▶ people living in the provinces use certain regional words and expressions.

Informal Style

- ▶ Informal words and word-groups are traditionally divided into three types:
- ▶ *colloquial words and word-groups,*
- ▶ *slang words and word-groups,*
- ▶ *dialect words and word-groups.*

Colloquial Words

Colloquial words are subdivided into:

- ▶ *literary* colloquial words;
- ▶ *familiar* colloquial words;
- ▶ *low* colloquial words.

Literary colloquial words

Examples of literary colloquial words:

- ▶ *pal, chum – friend*
- ▶ *bite, snack – meal;*
- ▶ *hi, hello – good morning*
- ▶ *so long – good bye;*
- ▶ *start, go on – begin*
- ▶ *finish, be through - to end*
- ▶ *to have a crush on somebody - to be in love.*
- ▶ *A bit (of) and a lot (of) - some, few*

Literary colloquial words

- ▶ A considerable number of shortenings are found among the literary colloquial vocabulary: *pram, exam, fridge, flu, prop, zip, movie, etc.*
- ▶ Verbs with post-positional adverbs are also numerous among colloquialisms: *put up, put over, make up, make out, do away, turn up, turn in, etc.*

Familiar colloquial words

- ▶ The borderline between the literary and familiar colloquial is not always clearly marked.
- ▶ Yet the circle of speakers using familiar colloquial is more limited: these words are used mostly by the young and the semi-educated.

Familiar colloquial words

Examples of familiar colloquial vocabulary:

- ▶ *doc* - *doctor*,
- ▶ *ta-ta* – *good-bye*,
- ▶ *goings-on* – *behaviour* (usually with a negative connotation,
- ▶ *to kid smb.* – *tease, banter*,
- ▶ *to pick up smb.* – *to make a quick and easy acquaintance*,
- ▶ *go on with you* – *let me alone*,
- ▶ *shut up* – *keep silent*,
- ▶ *beat it* – *go away*.

Low colloquial

- ▶ Low colloquial is defined as “words characteristic of the speech of persons who may be broadly described as uncultivated.
- ▶ This group is stocked with words of illiterate English.
- ▶ Low colloquial vocabulary closely verges on slang and has something of its coarse flavour.

Slang

- ▶ The Oxford English Dictionary defines slang as “language of a highly colloquial style, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.”
- ▶ “special sense” should be understood *as metaphoric sense*.
- ▶ **All slang words are metaphors.**

Slang

- ▶ Each slang metaphor is rooted in a joke, but not in a kind or amusing joke. This is the criterion for distinguishing slang from colloquialisms: most slang words are metaphors and jocular, often with a coarse, mocking, cynical colouring.
- ▶ A person using a lot of slang words seems to be sneering and jeering at everything.

Slang

Examples of slang words:

- ▶ *mug* – for face,
- ▶ *saucers, blinkers* – eyes,
- ▶ *trap* –mouth (*Keep your trap*),
- ▶ *dogs* – feet,
- ▶ *nut* – head,
- ▶ *to leg* - to walk.

Slang

Examples of slang words:

- ▶ *blighters* – eyes
- ▶ *flippers* – hands.

The circle of users of slang is more narrow than that of colloquialisms. It is mainly used by the young and uneducated. Yet, slang's colourful and humorous quality makes it catching, so that a considerable part of slang may become accepted by nearly all the groups of speakers.

Dialect Words

- ▶ A dialect as a variety of a language which prevails in a district, with local peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation and phrase.
- ▶ England is a small country, yet it has many dialects which have their own distinctive features (e. g. the *Lancashire*, *Dorsetshire*, *Norfolk dialects*).
- ▶ So dialects are regional forms of English.

Dialect Words

- ▶ Dialectal peculiarities, especially those of vocabulary, are constantly being incorporated into everyday colloquial speech or slang. From these levels they can be transferred into the common stock, i. e. words which are not stylistically marked and some of them even into formal speech and into the literary language: for ex. *car*, *trolley*, *tram* began as dialect words.

Dialect Words

Examples of dialect words:

- *brass* — money;
- *to lake* — to play;
- *nivver* — never;
- *summat* — something;
- *nowt* — nothing;
- *baccy* — tobacco;
- *mich* — much;
- *mun* — must;
- *ay(e)* — yes.

Formal Style

- ▶ In general, formal words fall into two main groups: words associated with *professional* communication and the group of so-called *learned (or bookish)words*.
- ▶ Bookish words are subdivided into *literary words, words of scientific prose, words of poetic diction, officialese (канцеляризм), archaic words*.

Literary words

- ▶ Literary words are usually described as "refined".
- ▶ They are mostly polysyllabic words drawn from the Romance languages.
- ▶ Though fully adapted to the English phonetic system, some of them continue to sound foreign.
- ▶ Examples: *solitude, sentiment, fascination, fastidiousness, facetiousness, delusion, meditation, felicity, elusive, cordial, illusionary.*

Words of scientific prose

Examples of the words of scientific prose

- ▶ *comprise,*
- ▶ *compile,*
- ▶ *experimental,*
- ▶ *heterogeneous,*
- ▶ *homogeneous,*
- ▶ *conclusive,*
- ▶ *Divergent.*

Words of poetic diction

Examples of the words of poetic diction:

- ▶ *Alas!* they had been friends in youth;
- ▶ But whispering tongues can poison truth
- ▶ And *constancy* lives in *realms* above;
- ▶ And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
- ▶ And to be *wroth* with one we love,
- ▶ *Doth* work like madness in the brain..."

/Samuel Taylor Coleridge/

Words of poetic diction

- ▶ Poetic words have a lofty, high-flown, sometimes archaic, colouring.