

Lexicology as a Branch of Linguistics



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1. Lexicology: central terms.
2. Parts and areas of lexicology.
3. Two approaches to language study.
4. Lexical units.
5. Varieties of words.

References

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Etymology of the word 'lexicology'

2 Greek morphemes:

lexis - 'word, phrase' ;

logos - 'learning, a department of knowledge'.

The literal meaning of the term «lexicology» is 'the science of the word'.

I. Lexicology: central terms

1. Lexicology – a branch of linguistics;
2. Word - the basic unit of a language;
3. Vocabulary - the system formed by the total sum of all the words

Lexicology is the part of linguistics dealing with the vocabulary of the language and the properties of words as the main units of language.

Basic task :

a systematic description of the vocabulary of a given language in respect of its origin, development and current use.

II. Parts of Lexicology

1. General Lexicology — the study of vocabulary irrespective of the specific features of any particular language;
3. Special Lexicology — the Lexicology of a particular language (English, Ukrainian, etc.), i.e. the study and description of its vocabulary and vocabulary units.

Areas of Lexicology

1. Historical Lexicology.
2. Descriptive Lexicology.
3. Comparative Lexicology.
4. Contrastive Lexicology.
5. Combinatorial Lexicology.
6. Applied Lexicology.

Functional Approach

stands out as describing how words are used in discourse to provide and support meaningful communication.



Modern English Lexicology studies:

1. Semasiology.
2. Word-Structure.
3. Word-Formation.
4. Etymology of the English Word-Stock.
5. Word-groups and Phraseological Units.
6. Variants of The English Language.
7. Lexicography.

III. Two Approaches to Language Study

- ▶ The **synchronic (descriptive) approach** is concerned with the vocabulary of a language as it exists at a given time or at the present time.
- ▶ The **diachronic (historical) approach** refers to *Historical Lexicology* that deals with the evolution of the vocabulary units of a language over time.

IV. Lexical Units

1. **Morphemes** – the smallest indivisible two-facet language unit: stress-full.
2. **Word** – the basic unit of language system.
3. **Word-group** – the largest two-facet lexical unit comprising more than one word: a high tree.
4. **Phraseological unit** – the group of words whose combination is integrated as a unit with a specialised meaning of the whole: a red tape.

1. *flower, wall, taxi* – **words** denoting objects of the outer world;
2. *Black frost* - 'frost without snow',
red tape - 'bureaucratic methods',
a skeleton in the cupboard – 'a fact of which a family is ashamed and which it tries to hide' - **phraseological units**

V. Varieties of Words

The **word** –

a two-facet unit possessing both form and content or soundform and meaning.

Neither can exist without the other.

Paradigm – the system showing a word in all its word-forms.

► **Word-forms** – grammatical forms of words:

e.g. *walk, walks, walked, walking;*

e.g. *singer, singer's, singers, singers'.*

*His brother is a well-known **singer**.*

*I wonder who has **taken** my umbrella.*

Variants of Words

Group One

Lexical varieties - **lexico-semantic variant** – the word in one of its meanings.

e.g. *green*

LSV1 - colour of grass;

LSV2 - not ready to be eaten;

LSV3 - not experienced;

LSV4 - made of green leaves of vegetables;
etc.

Variants of Words

Group Two

1. **phonetic variants:**

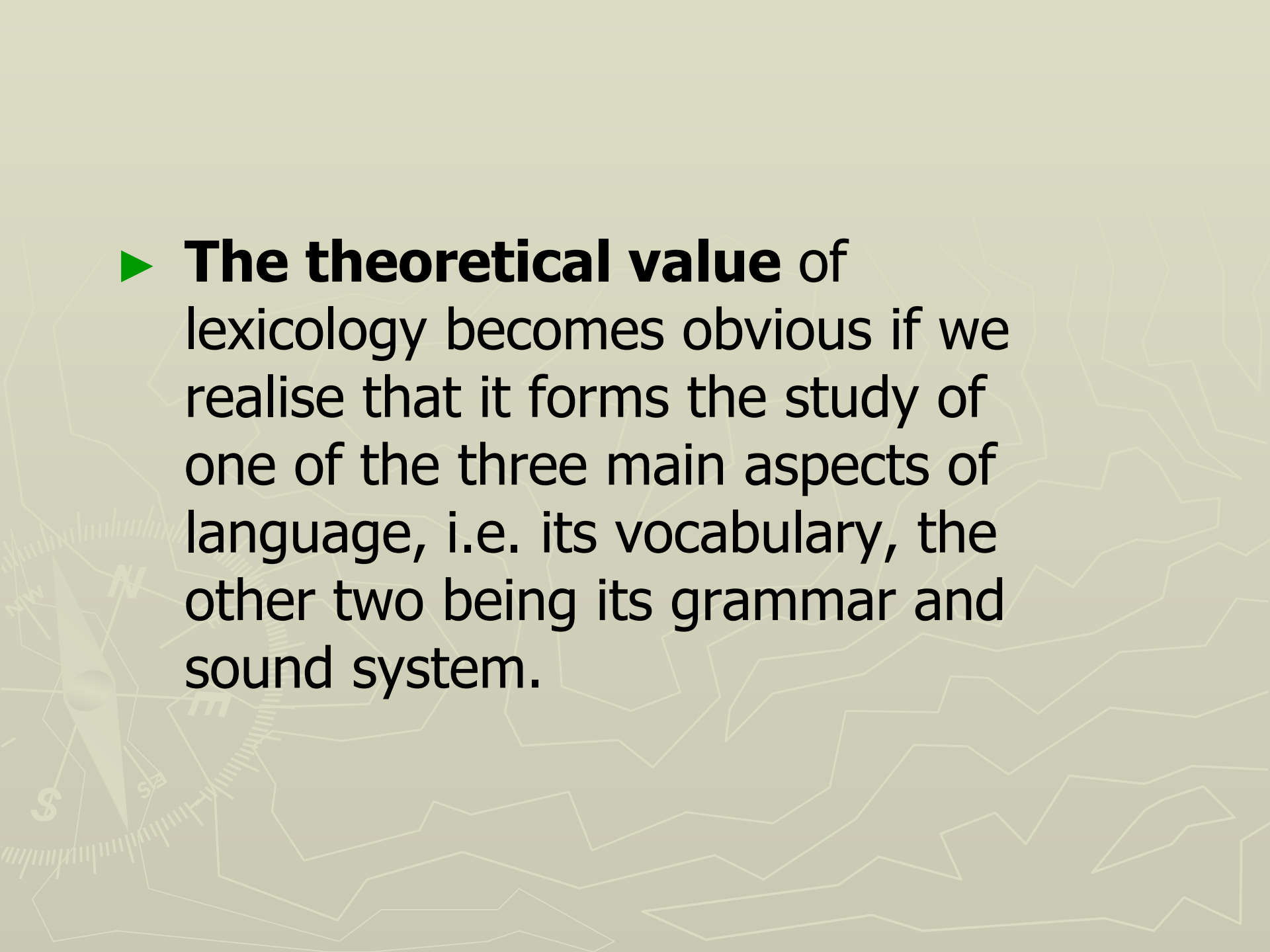
often [ˈO:fn] and [ˈO:ftn];
again [əˈgein] and [əˈgen].

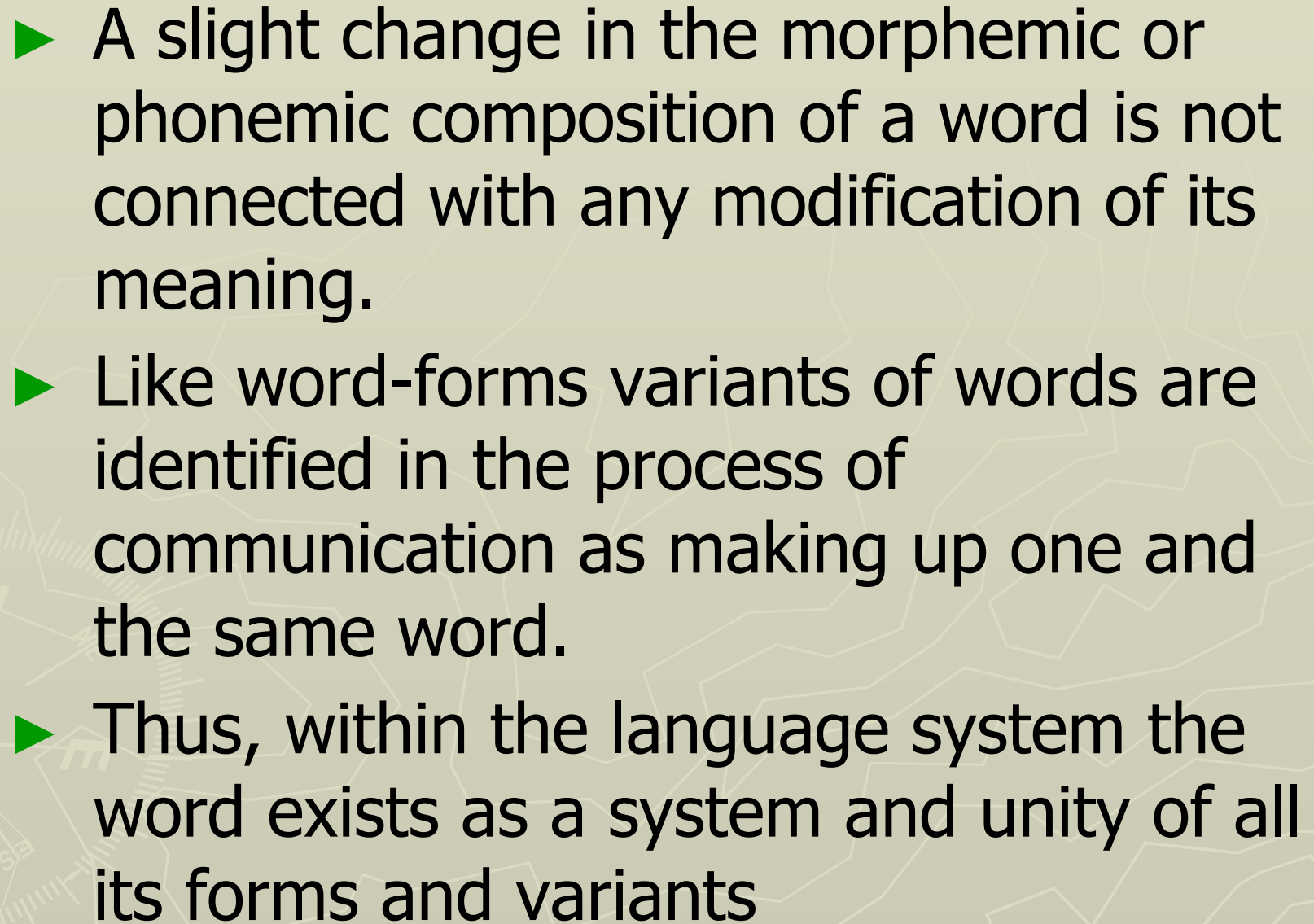
2. **morphological variants:**

learned [-d] and *learnt* [-t];
geologic – *geological*, etc.

Conclusion

- ▶ The importance of English lexicology is based not on the size of its vocabulary, however big it is, but on the fact that at present it is the world's most widely used language.

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- ▶ **The theoretical value** of lexicology becomes obvious if we realise that it forms the study of one of the three main aspects of language, i.e. its vocabulary, the other two being its grammar and sound system.

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- ▶ A slight change in the morphemic or phonemic composition of a word is not connected with any modification of its meaning.
 - ▶ Like word-forms variants of words are identified in the process of communication as making up one and the same word.
 - ▶ Thus, within the language system the word exists as a system and unity of all its forms and variants