

LECTURE 7

ENGLISH HOMONYMY

- Homonyms and their classifications.
- Sources of homonyms.

Homonyms

are words different in meaning but identical in sound or spelling, or both in sound and spelling.

Walter Skeat

according to their spelling and sound forms

- **perfect homonyms** that is words identical in sound and spelling, such as: «*school*» - «*косяк рыбы*» and «*школа*»;
- **homographs**, that is words with the same spelling but pronounced differently, e.g. «*bow*» - /bau/ - «*поклон*» and /bou/ - «*лук*»;
- **homophones** that is words pronounced identically but spelled differently, e.g. «*night*» - «*ночь*» and «*knight*» - «*рыцарь*».

A.I. Smirnitsky

added one more criterion: grammatical
meaning

- **perfect** which are identical in their spelling, pronunciation and their grammar form, such as: «spring» in the meanings: *the season of the year* – ‘весна’, *a leap* – ‘прыжок’, *a source* – ‘источник’
- **homofoms** which coincide in their spelling and pronunciation but have different grammatical meaning, e.g. «reading» - *Present Participle, Gerund, Verbal noun.*

I.V. Arnold

classified only **perfect homonyms** and suggested four criteria of their classification:

- ✓ lexical meaning
- ✓ grammatical meaning
- ✓ basic forms
- ✓ paradigms

- homonyms identical in their grammatical meanings, basic forms and paradigms and different in their lexical meanings

e.g. «board» in the meanings «a council» - КОМИССИЯ, СОВЕТ and «a piece of wood sawn thin» - доска;

- homonyms identical in their grammatical meanings and basic forms, different in their lexical meanings and paradigms

e.g. to lie - lied - lied, and to lie - lay - lain;

- homonyms different in their lexical meanings, grammatical meanings, paradigms, but coinciding in their basic forms

e.g. «*light*» - *свет* /«lights»/, «*light*» - *светлый* / «*lighter*», «*lightest*»/

- homonyms different in their lexical meanings, grammatical meanings, in their basic forms and paradigms, but coinciding in one of the forms of their paradigms

e.g. «*a bit*» and «*bit*» (from «*to bite*»)

sources of homonyms

```
graph TD; A[sources of homonyms] --> B[phonetic change]; A --> C[borrowing]; A --> D[word building]; A --> E[split polysemy]; D --> F[• conversion]; D --> G[• shortening];
```

phonetic change

borrowing

word building

- conversion

- shortening

split polysemy

phonetic change

- ❖ “Night” and “knight”, for instance, were not homonyms in Old English (O.E.) as the initial “k” in the second word was pronounced.
- ❖ The verb “to write” in O.E. had the form “to writan” and the adjective “right” had the form “reht” or “riht”.

borrowing

- ❖ in the group of homonyms *rite* *n* – to write – right *adj.* the second and third words are of native origin, whereas "*rite*" is Latin borrowing (Latin "ritus");
- ❖ *bank* *n* ("a shore") is a native word, and *bank* *n* (a financial institution) is an Italian borrowing.

word building

the most important type of it being
conversion.

Such pairs of words as

- “*comb*”_n – “*comb*”_v;
- “*pale*”_{adj.} – “*pale*”_v;
- “*make*”_v – “*make*”_n, etc.

are numerous in vocabulary.

shortening

e.g. “*fan*” is a shortening produced from “*fanatic*” [f nætɪk]. Its homonym is a Latin borrowing “*fan*” – an element for waving and producing some cool wind.

e.g. “*rep*”, a kind of fabric (репс), has 4 homonyms:

- *rep* = repertory;
- *rep* = representative;
- *rep* = reputation;
- *rep* = repetition

(*in school slang* smth, need to know by hard)

split polysemy

The 3 following homonyms of the word “*spring*”, means:

- the act of springing, leap;
- a place, where a stream of water comes up out to the sky;
- a season of the year.

Historically all three originate from the same verb with meaning ‘to jump, to leap’. This is the Old English word “*springun*”.