

LECTURE 8

SYNONYMIC AND ANTONYMIC RELATIONS IN ENGLISH

- Synonyms, their classification and sources.
- Antonyms and their classifications.

Synonyms

are two or more words of the same language, belonging to the same part of speech, possessing one or more **identical meaning, interchangeable at least in some contexts without any considerable alteration in denotative meaning, but differing in morphemic composition, phonemic shape, shades of meaning, connotation, affective value, style, emotional coloring and valence peculiar to one of the elements in a synonymic group.**

I.V. Arnold

the classification of Academician V.V. Vinogradov

➤ ideographic synonyms

e.g. glance _v, *look* _v, *glimpse* _n

➤ stylistic opposition of synonyms

e.g. slay – poetic & archaic, *kill* – neutral

Stylistic synonyms can appear by means of
abbreviation:

e.g. «examination», «exam».

Synonyms may also differ *in emotional colouring:*

Lonely is emotional as compared with
alone.

e.g. He was lonely now as everybody turned away from him.

He has to be alone today, his colleague fell ill.

➤ Total (absolute) synonymy

e.g. to moan, to groan; homeland, motherland etc.

Sometimes one of the *absolute synonyms* is *specialized* in its usage and we get stylistic synonyms

- *e.g. «to begin»/ native/, «to commence» /borrowing/.*
- *e.g. «welkin» - небо, небосвод /bookish/, «sky» /neutral/.*

Phraseological synonyms are identical in their meanings and styles but different in their combining with other words in the sentence

e.g. «*to be late for a lecture*»

but «*to miss the train*»

e.g. «*to visit museums*»

but «*to attend lectures*» etc.

the synonymic dominant

a word with the most general meaning,
which can substitute any word in the group.

e.g. «*slice*» /thin, wide, flat piece of smth, bread or meat/, «*lump*» /hard or compact mass, usu. without a regular shape/, «*morsel*» /tiny piece/ - кусочек.

e.g. «*to look at*» is the synonymic dominant in the group «*to stare*», «*to glance*», «*to peep*».

The synonymic dominant should not be confused with a generic term

e.g. animal – *wolf, dog, mouse, etc.* (not synonymous), *dog* – *bull-dog, collie, poodle, etc.* (not synonymous).

Sources of synonymy

Borrowings

| English | French | Latin |
|----------|-------------|----------------|
| to ask | to question | to interrogate |
| to end | to finish | to complete |
| to rise | to mount | to ascend |
| teaching | guidance | instruction |

Dialects

USA

gimmick – trick

long distance call – trunk call

radio – wireless

charm – glamour.

Synonyms are also created by means of all word-building processes. The words already existing develop new meaning.

- ❖ **Affixation:** *anxiety – anxiousness; effectivity – effectiveness.*
- ❖ **Loss of affixes:** *amongst – among; await – wait.*
- ❖ **Conversion:** *commandment – command; laughter – laugh.*
- ❖ **Compounding:** *arrangement – layout; reproduction – playback.*
- ❖ **Shortening:** *memorandum – memo; microphone – mike; popular – pop*

A noun with a verbal stem is combined with a verb of generic meaning a set-expression which differs from the simple verb.

- ❖ **Set-expression (verb + noun)** to walk – to take a walk; to smoke – to have a smoke; to love – to fall in love.
- ❖ **Phrasal verbs:** to continue – to go on; to choose – to pick out; to enter – to come in; to give up - to abandon; to cut down - to diminish.
- ❖ **Euphemisms** *lavatory* – powder-room, wash-room, rest-room, comfort-room, WC, water closet, Windsor Castle; *to be pregnant* – to be in interesting (delicate) condition

Antonyms

are words belonging to the same part of speech, identical in style, expressing contrary or contradictory notions.

V.N. Comissarov

✓ absolute or root antonyms

/«late» - «early»/

✓ derivational antonyms

/ «to please» - «to displease»/

Absolute antonyms express contrary notions

e.g. in the group *ugly – plain – good-looking – pretty – beautiful*, the antonyms are «*ugly*» and «*beautiful*»

Leonard Lipka

- **complementary**
e.g. male -female, married - single
- **antonyms**
e.g. good -bad
- **converseness**
e.g. to buy - to sell

If a word is *polysemantic* it can have several antonyms

e.g. the word «*bright*» has the antonyms «*dim*», «*dull*», «*sad*».

In complementarity the denial of the one implies the assertion of the other, and vice versa.

e.g. «John is not married» implies that «John is single».

An important linguistic difference from complementaries is that antonyms are always fully gradable

e.g. hot, warm, tepid, cold

Not every word in a language can have antonyms.

It can be met

- **in qualitative adjectives and their derivatives**

e.g. beautiful- ugly, to beautify - to uglify, beauty - ugliness

- **in words denoting feelings and states**

e.g. respect - scorn, to respect - to scorn, respectful - scornful, to live - to die, alive - dead, life - death

- **among words denoting direction in space and time**

e.g. here - there, up - down, now - never, before - after, day - night, early - late etc

- **set-expressions can be grouped into antonymic pairs**

e.g. by accident – on purpose; by all means – by no means; in general – in particular.

If a word is polysemantic it can have several antonyms

e.g. the word «bright» has the antonyms «dim», «dull», «sad».