

Lexicology

**Lecture 3. Etymological composition of
the English word-stock**

Outline of the lecture

- I. Words of native origin and their characteristics
- II. Ways of borrowing into English
- III. Criteria and assimilation of borrowings
- IV. Special types of borrowing

1. Words of native origin and their characteristics

Anglo-Saxon origin

the British Isles

the Germanic tribes (the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes)

- 1. Words of the Indo-European stock,*
- 2. words of the common Germanic origin,*
- 3. English words proper.*

Ex, English “star”, German “Stern”, Latin “Stella”, Greek “Aster”.

Semantic groups of words of the Indo-European stock:

- **terms of kinship** (father, mother, daughter),
- **natural phenomena** (Sun, Moon, star, wind, storm),
- **names of animals and birds** (horse, goose),
- **parts of human body** (heart, eye, foot),
- **qualities and properties** (old, young, cold),
- **common actions** (come, sit, stand).

The common Germanic stock

parallels in German, Norwegian, Dutch,
Icelandic

Ex, English “summer/winter”,

German “Sommer/Winter”.

The English element proper

no cognates in other languages

Ex. Lady, always, girl, lord, daisy, boy.

II. Ways of borrowing into English

A loan word or a borrowing *is a word taken over from another language and modified in phonemic shape, spelling paradigm or meaning according to the standards of the English language.*

2 ways:

- through oral speech,

Ex. Old borrowings from Latin: inch, mill, street

- through written speech.

(French “belles-lettres”)

III. Criteria and assimilation of borrowings

The criteria of borrowings are:

- **certain pronunciation and spelling** (ex., “psychology” Greek, “machine” French),
- **unusual morphological structure and grammatical forms** (ex., Pl. bacteria Sg. Bacterium - Latin),
- **specific lexical meaning** (ex., pagoda, rickshaw - Chinese).

3 main ways:

- phonetic assimilation comprising changes in the sound, form and stress

(ex., German “Spitz”/ English “Spitz”),

- grammatical assimilation causing the loss of former grammatical categories and affixes and the acquirement of new paradigms

(ex., Latin “botanicus” was turned into English “botanical”),

- semantic assimilation comprising adjustment to the system of meanings of the voc-ry

(ex., “gay” was borrowed from French with several meanings: noble of birth, bright shining, multicolored. Now it means “joyful” or “high-spirited”).

Loan-words fall into 3 groups:

According to the degree of assimilation loan-words fall into **3 groups**:

1. *completely assimilated words* (ex., French “pain” is readily combined with native affixes “pained, painful, painless”),

2. *partially assimilated words* that may be:

- a) not assimilated semantically (ex., sombrero),
- b) not assimilated grammatically (ex., borrowings from Latin, Greek: formula/ae),
- c) not assimilated phonetically (prestige, memoir -- French),
- d) not assimilated graphically (ex., the final silent “t” in ballet -- French).

3. barbarisms

Words from other languages used by English people in conversation or in writing but not assimilated in any way and for which there are corresponding English equivalents (ex., chaos, adios).

IV. Special types of borrowing

etymological doublets

Etymological doublets – are pairs of words, which have one and the same original form, but which have acquired different forms and even different meanings during the course of linguistic development.

Ex: the words shirt and skirt etymologically descend from the same root. Shirt is a native word, skirt is a Scandinavian borrowing. Their phonetic shape is different, and yet there is a certain resemblance, which reflects their common origin. Their meanings are also different but easily associated: they both denote articles of clothing.

International words (ex., gene, antibiotic).

Translation loans (ex., English “wall newspaper” from Russian “стенная газета”)

The semantic loan Ex., English “pioneer” originally meant “explorer”. Under the influence of Russian word it has come to mean “a member of the young pioneer organization”.