

# Lexicology

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

# Outline of the lecture

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- 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

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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.*

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

# Semantic groups of words of the Indo-European stock:

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- **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).

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## ***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

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**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

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#### **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:

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- 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:

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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:

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- 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*

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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

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## 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.

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**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”.