
Lecture 11

Vocabulary as a system

Types of groupings

I. Semantic groups.

**II. Paradigmatic relations in the vocabulary
(homonymy, synonymy, antonymy,
paronymy, hyponymy).**

III. Syntagmatic relations (types of contexts)

§ 1. Vocabulary studies

deal with ways of grouping and classifying words.

Though vocabulary is defined as a lexical system, the present state of knowledge is insufficient to present the whole of the vocabulary as one articulated system.

It is rather **a set of interrelated systems.**

Types of groupings

1) According to function

form words

(functional words)
7% of vocabulary

He is a student.

notional words

a cat, to go, milk

substitute words

*this, that, they, there, then,
thus, he, here, how, who,
what, where, whither,
nobody, never, not*

2) Morphological groups

according to morphological structure

*root-words, derivatives,
compounds*

word-families

*dog, doggish, doglike,
doggie, to dog,
dogged, doggedly,
doggedness,
dog-biscuit*

according to a common suffix or prefix

*gladsome, gruesome,
handsome, lonesome,
tiresome, troublesome,
wearisome, wholesome*

3) Parts of speech and their subdivisions **(lexico-grammatical groups)**

noun

verb

*personal names, animal names, collective names
(for people); collective names (for animals), abstract
nouns, material nouns, object nouns, proper names
for people, toponymic proper nouns*

4) Semantic groups

thematic groups

*terms of kinship, colour
terms*

terminology

semantic fields

ideographic groups

5) According to emotional colouring

coloured

neutral

6) According to word-origin

native

borrowed

words beginning with a **w**
are mostly native; with a **P**
are borrowed from Greek

7) Non-semantic grouping

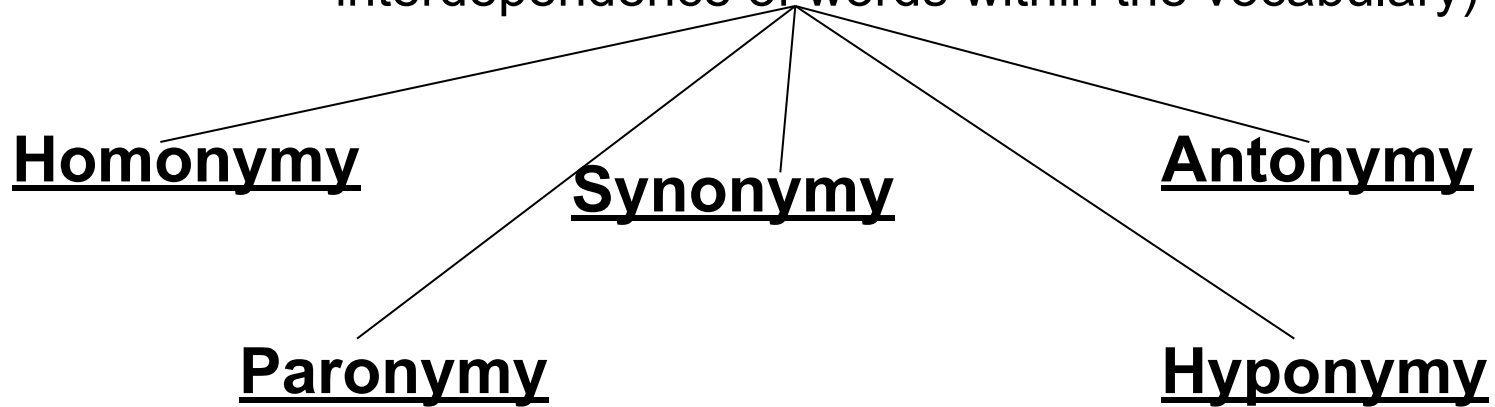
rhyming

alphabetical

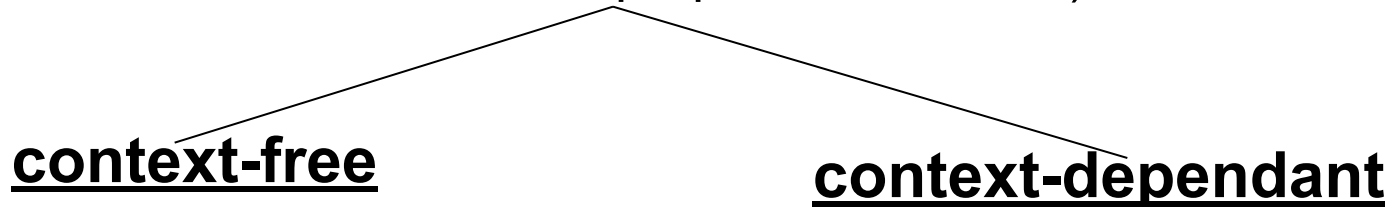
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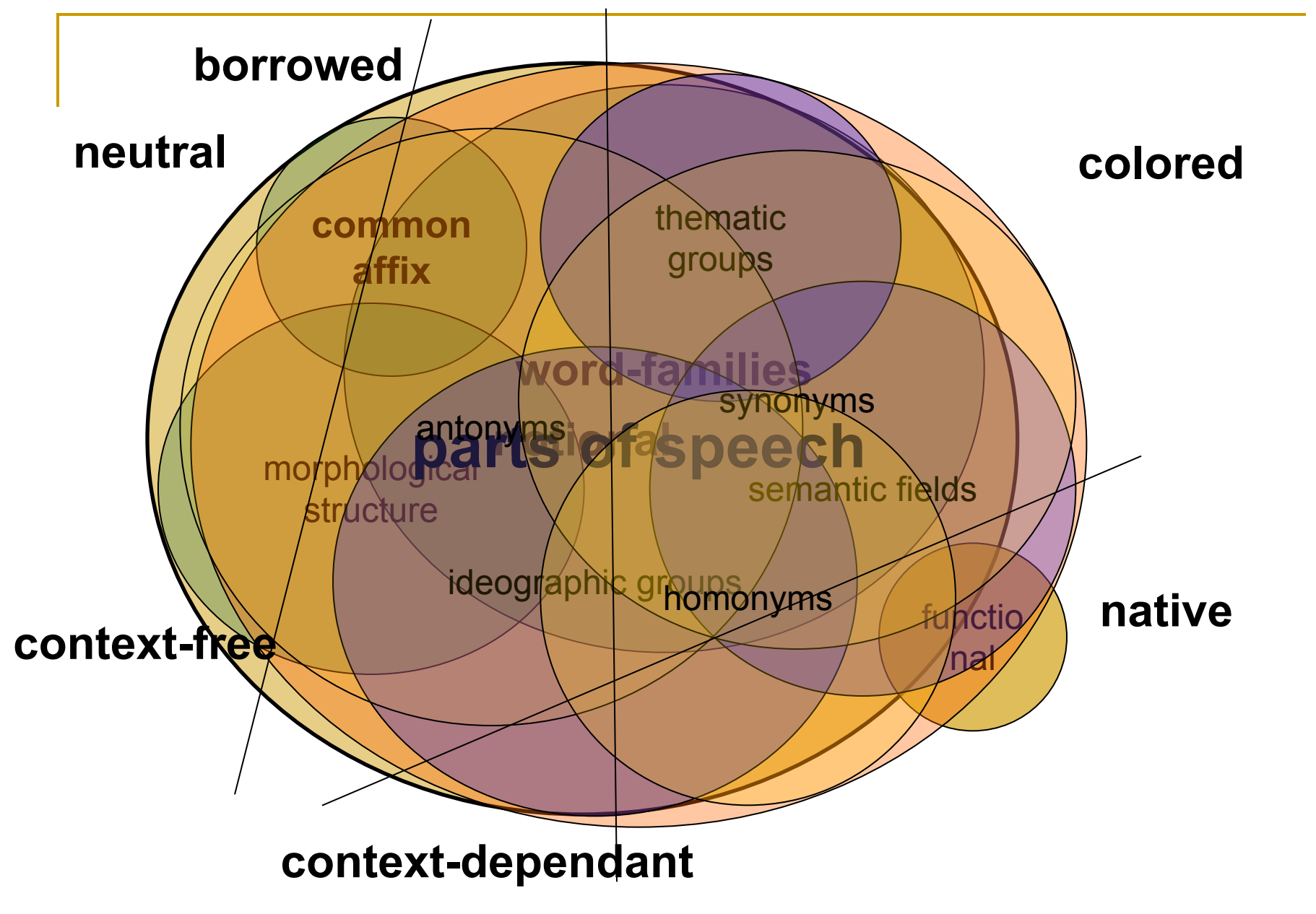
statistical
frequency of use

8) Paradigmatic groupings (based on the contrastive interdependence of words within the vocabulary)



9) Syntagmatic groupings (based on the combinatorial properties of words)





Semantic groupings – attempts to describe vocabulary systematically

- 1) **Thematic subgroups** are formed on the **extra-linguistic basis**: the words are associated, because the things they name occur together and are closely connected in reality; these words often **co-occur in certain repeatedly used contexts (topical vocabulary)**:

tree-grow-green;

journey-train-taxi-bags-ticket

names for parts of the human body, terms of kinship,

Adj-ves for shape, colour, physical or mental qualities, speed, size

- 2) **Ideographic groups** - groups uniting words of different parts of speech but thematically related according to their signification, i.e. to **the system of logical notions**, the significance of each unit being determined by its neighbors. These groups are supposed to **reflect the system of notions in our mind**:

- *light n, bright a, to shine*

- *an airport, to delay, a flight, a terminal, a gate, to check in, a boarding pass, luggage, a porter, an airline, a traffic controller, a lounge, on board, a pilot, to fasten belts*

3) **Semantic fields** – closely knit sectors of vocabulary each characterized by a **common concept**, is the **organization of related words and expressions into a system which shows their relationship to one another**:

Health: strength, power, potency, robustness, force, vivacity, stingo, energy, vigor

Movement: go, ride, crawl, fly, run, jump

Sense perception: see, observe, notice, feel, hear, listen

Food: bread, cheese, milk, meat,

A lexical gap – absence of a logically necessary element in a system.

Horse = stallion + mare

??? = cow + bull

The words which often occur in the text together are semantically related (co-occurrence criterion), have the same valency potential (combine with the same words), have similar grammatical properties.

Terminology as a special vocabulary sphere

Terminology constitutes the greatest part of every language vocabulary.

A term is a word or word-group used to name a notion characteristic of some special field of knowledge, e.g., linguistics, oil-and-gas production, engineering, culture, economics.

Basic characteristics:

- monosemantic
 - does not depend upon the micro-context
 - constant meaning
 - no emotional colouring or evaluation (unless used in literary or colloquial speech)
 - reflects the system of notions of a science
-

§ 2. Homonymy

Homonyms - words which have identical sounding or spelling but have nothing in common in their meaning.

A penny is one cent.

The soap has a nice scent.

She sent me a letter.

2.2. Main sources of homonymy

- **break of polysemy** (split polysemy)

Different meanings of one and the same word may lose their semantic connection and may form different words. Unlike homonymy different meanings of one word are mutually dependent.

owing, provided

- **loan words which were adopted** to the English standards in their pronunciation and spelling

Fair (a market) was borrowed from Latin “feria”, and fair (light colour, not dark) was developed from native “faeger”.

- **shortening** of words:

flue, short for influenza is homonymous to flew, past tense of the verb “to fly”.

- **conversion**

a ban --- to ban

~~a shoulder --- to shoulder~~

2.2. Classifications of homonyms

according to their spelling and sound form

1. **perfect homonyms** (identical in sound and in spelling):
key /ki:/ - ключ, key /ki:/ - клавиша and key /ki:/ - амер. островок, особ. коралловый риф;
2. **homophones** (words with the same sound but different spellings):
read (past tense) - red, pair - pear, principle - principal, capital - capitol, heir – air, write and right, night and knight, sea and see
3. **homographs** (words accidentally identical in spelling but different in sound):
*bow/bou/ - a weapon for shooting arrows, bow/bau/ - an inclination of the body or head in salutation.
lead/led/ - the heaviest of the base metals, lead /li:d/ - to conduct;
row /rou/ - a line of people, row/rau/ - a quarrel.*

according to their spelling and sound form, and grammatical meaning

- **lexical** (no link between their lexical meanings, but one part of speech):

can – мочь and can – консервировать;

*post – столб, post – почта, post – должность,
post – сигнал на горне*

- **grammatical** (belong to different parts of speech, formed by conversion):

milk - to milk, practice - to practice

- **lexico-grammatical** (no link between their lexical meanings and they belong to different parts of speech):

tear (n) - tear (v), bear (n)-bare (a), a pullover – to pull over

according to the characteristics of the paradigm

- **full homonyms** (identical in sound in all their forms or paradigms)

ear «ухо» - ear «колос».

- **partial homonyms** (identical in sound in several forms)

to lay (laid; laid “класть, положить” - to lie (lay; lain “лежать”), to lie (lied; lied) - to lie (lay; lain).

Is homonymy a disease of the language, an annoying lack of distinction between words?

It is widely used for stylistic purposes in puns (word plays):

“Waiter, waiter, what's this?”

“It's bean soup”.

“I can see that. But what is it now?”

§ 3. Description of English Synonymy

A **synonym** is a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word.

English is rich in synonyms for the historical reason; its vocabulary is made up of Anglo-Saxon words on one hand and of French, Latin and Greek on the other.

The native words are often shorter and **stylistically neutral**, while French borrowings are **literary** and Latin/Greek - **learned**:

belly – stomach – abdomen

to end - to finish - to complete

teaching - guidance - instruction

division - part - branch;

buy and purchase,

world and universe,

A **synonymic dominant** of a synonymic group is the most general word that expresses the **notion common** for all the members of the group. It belongs to the **basic stock** of words, is stylistically **neutral**, has high frequency of usage and vast combinability, lacks connotations.

WORK: *toil, drudgery, labour, grind, job, task;*

FAMOUS: *celebrated, distinguished, eminent;*

FASHIONABLE: *chic, dressy, elegant, modish, smart, stylish, trendy.*

Each LSV (meaning) of one word has its own synonyms:

*Compare the following groups synonymous to five different meanings of the adjective **fresh**:*

A fresh metaphor — *fresh : : original : : novel : : striking.*

To begin a fresh paragraph — *fresh : : another : : different : : new.*

Fresh air — *fresh : : pure : : invigorating.*

A freshman — *fresh : : inexperienced : : green : : raw.*

3.1. What are synonyms?

Lexical synonyms are different words 1) of the same part of speech having the same grammatical distribution, which 2) have **some** common denotational components of meaning, but 3) **differ either in some denotational component(s) or in some connotational components** of meaning and thus usually have different lexical valency.

What's the difference between synonyms?

- belong to different varieties of the language:

fall (USA) and autumn (UK);

- different combinability:

both *to win* and *to gain* may be used in combination with the noun *victory*, but with the word *war* only *win* is possible: *to win a war;*

- different stylistic reference:

to die vs. to pass away ≈ умереть vs. почить

fairly and *rather* are used to express an opinion meaning “moderately”. We use *fairly* to suggest our approval;

- interchangeability in linguistic contexts (*eye-doctor/oculist, radio/wireless, telegram/wire*), but only in certain environments:

«*the rainfall in April was abnormal*» and «*the rainfall in April was exceptional*»

«*my son is exceptional*» and «*my son is abnormal*»

3.2. Classification of synonyms

- **Ideographic or denotational:** the difference in the meaning concerns the notion expressed:
change (become or make different) – alter – vary (undergo change or change something within a range of possibilities);
understand - realize;
to walk - to pace - to stroll - to stride.
- **Ideographic-stylistic synonyms** have the same denotational components but differ in connotational components of meaning:
imitate - monkey;
terrible – horrible - atrocious.
intelligent -shrewd - clever - bright - sagacious;

Typical groups of stylistic synonyms:

archaic/ modern (oft - often);

neologisms / common (baby-moon – artificial satellite);

British/American (post-mail);

euphemisms (die – pass away).

■ **absolute synonyms** of exactly the same meaning can replace each other in any given context, without the slightest alteration in denotative or emotional meaning and connotations:

the terms *noun* and *substantive*; *functional affix*, *flexion* and *inflection*

phraseological synonyms which are used in different collocations:
language - tongue (only mother tongue)

contextual synonyms that are similar in meaning under some specific distributional conditions (e.g. *get* and *buy*).

Translation cannot serve as a criterion of synonymy!

words as also, too and as well, all translated by the Russian word може, are never interchangeable.

Euphemism - a shift of meaning a word of more or less pleasant or at least inoffensive connotation becomes synonymous to one that is harsh, obscene, indelicate or otherwise unpleasant

naked : : in one's birthday suit;

pregnant : : in the family way

drunk : : merry

§ 4. Lexical Oppositions and Antonymy

Types of lexical opposition doubtfully referred to antonymy:

- **complementarity/contradictory:**

single – married; alive – dead;

(not antonyms because antonyms are **gradable**)

- **converseness** - mirror-image relations of functions

teacher - student, host - guest, give – take, buy - sell;

logical conversives: *man and woman, husband and wife*

- **autoantonymy** – a word combines two opposite meanings

Unlike antonymy these LSV are used with different words and/or with different prepositions.

an odor – 1) an agreeable scent; fragrance; 2) a disagreeable smell.

a public school - 1) a state school (USA); 2) a private school (UK).

4.1. What's an antonym? Forms of antonymy

Antonyms are words 1) of the same part of speech 2) having common denotational component of meaning but 3) expressing contrasting opposite points of the same notion.

*wide/narrow, admit/deny, produce/consume, old/young
bitter/sweet*

Types of relations referred to antonymy

- **contradictory**, *mutually opposed and denying one another:*

alive means 'not dead' and impatient means 'not patient';

- **contrary relations** (qualitative or gradual) opposition;

old and young are the most distant elements of a series like: old : : middle-aged : : young,

*hot and cold form a series with the intermediate cool and warm;
high - low*

- **vectorial opposition**

to widen - to narrow

What's characteristic of English Antonymy

- Almost every word can have one or more synonyms. Comparatively **few words have antonyms**.
- Antonyms **do not differ stylistically**, in emotional colouring or distribution; an antonymic substitution never results in a change of stylistic colouring.

4.2. Classifications of antonyms

Morphological and semantic basis

- a) **root antonyms** expressing contrary notions:
bad - good, tall - short, slow - fast, ancient – modern;
 - b) **derivational antonyms** expressing contradictory notions:
like - dislike, efficient - inefficient, useful - useless, logical – illogical;
-

§ 5. Hyponymy and Paronymy

Hyponymy is a paradigmatic relation of sense between a more specific, or subordinate lexeme, and a more general, or superordinate, lexeme:

Hyponym is a word the meaning of which may be said to be included in that of another word.

Thus, hyponymy is based on logical and semantic **relationship of inclusion**.

cow (a specific term, or a *hyponym*) : : **animal** (a general term, or a hyperonym, a **superordinate**),

rose, chamomile, dandelion (co-hyponyms) : : **flower**,

honesty: virtue,

buy: get,

crimson: red.

Paronyms are words that are kindred both in sound form and meaning and therefore liable to be mixed but in fact different in meaning and usage and therefore only mistakenly interchanged.

to affect ('to influence') and *to effect* ('to bring about, to result in');

prosecute and *persecute*;

policy and *politics*;

moral and *morale*;

respectfully and *respectively*;

human and *humane*;

economy and *economics*;

conscience, conscious, consciousness and *conscientious*.

§ 6. Syntagmatic relations. Combinability

J. R. Firth: You shall know a word by the company it keeps.

Functioning of a word in speech is determined by the environment in which it occurs (collocation), by its grammatical peculiarities (part of speech it belongs to, categories, functions in the sentence, etc.= colligation), and by the type and character of meanings included into the **semantic structure** of a word.

A collocation (≈lexical context) is the habitual association of a word in a language with other particular words in sentences, it's part of the meaning of a word, the so called «the mutual expectancy of words».

Lexical valency is the possibility of lexico-semantic connections of a word with other words.

a high level of radiation (poverty, significance, etc)

on a level with smth

a level teaspoon

have a level head, life (reasonable)

to speak in level tones (calm)

Lexical valency of words **is restricted** by the inner structure of the language and extralinguistic factors (notional combinability):

Linguistic limits:

the verbs lift and raise are considered to be synonyms, but only raise can collocate with the noun question.

a buxom woman/waitress, but not a buxom bachelor,

a pretty girl but a handsome boy;

to commit a murder and not commit a task,

monumental ignorance and not monumental brilliance;

to be green with envy,

a book has a purple passage (витиеватый).

Extralinguistic limits

V+N pattern:

to read a book, but not to eat a book,

to write a letter, but not to write a fish

Different nations have different standards for notional combinability:

hostage of war

стоимость эксплуатационных издержек

«The mutual expectancy of words» can be well demonstrated with the names of groups of animals in English:

a herd of cows, a flock of sheep, a dam of whales, a colony of ants, a pride of lions, a parliament of owls

- a. *Our neighbors are throwing a party tonight.*
- b. *They were very grateful to the rescue party.*
- c. *The Conservative Party has lost many votes.*
- d. *The lawyer refuted the arguments of the other party.*
- e. *Your party is on the line/an old party with spectacles.*

A colligation (≈grammatical context) is the occurrence of lexical items in this or that syntactical construction or function. In other words it is the position that lexical units may occupy in the sentence. The corresponding type of meaning is called grammatical valency.

The verbs suggest and offer can be followed by a noun, but only offer can be followed by the infinitive of a verb.

To make (when followed by a Complex Object) has causative meaning.

Practical tasks # 11-12-13.

1. Which pair of phrases provides examples of homonymy, synonymy, antonymy?

a) *I have only one apple in my basket. The red team won the game.*

b) *"— Was she a pretty girl?
— I would certainly have called her attractive."*

c)... *The writer should seek his reward in the pleasure of his work and in release from the burden of his thought; and indifferent to aught else, care nothing for praise or censure, failure or success (From The Moon and Sixpence by W. S. Maugham).*

2. Which type of paradigmatic relations of words in the vocabulary is the basis for the following jokes (homonymy, polysemy, rhyme)?

- a. When asked what they do with all their fruit the Californians answer: we eat what we **can** and what we **cannot** we **can**.
- b. What has one **horn** (рог, гудок) and gives milk?
A milk truck (грузовик).
- c. A man, after being hurt, calls 911 for help.
Man: Operator, operator, **call me an ambulance!**
Operator: Okay, sir, you're an ambulance!
- d. What has a lot of **keys** but can not open any doors?
A piano.
- e. Where can a man buy a **cap** (кепка, коленная чашечка) for his knee,
Or the key to a **lock** (замок, копна волос) of his hair?
Can his eyes be called an academy
Because there are **pupils** (ученик, зрачок) there?
-

3. Homonymy or polysemy?

Customer:

- Do you **serve shrimps**?

Waiter:

- We serve anyone, sir...

NOTES:

To serve (обслуживать; подавать (на стол))

A shrimp (креветка; маленький, слабый человек)

4. From the lexemes in brackets choose the correct one to go with each of the synonyms given below (make typical collocations):

a) acute, keen, sharp (knife, mind, sight);

b) deep, profound (ignorance, river, sleep);

d) diminutive, petite, small, tiny (camera, house, speck, suffix, woman)

5. Which types of vocabulary groupings are these sets of words (rhyme, ideographic group, word-family, synonyms, homonyms, borrowed by origin):

- a) loath, resent, dislike, abhor, hate, detest, to be sick of
- b) power, powerless, superpower, powerful, powerfully, power station
- c) weather, whether
- d) bet, let, met, set, net, wet
- e) an axe, to cut, wood, to chop, a blade, a handle
- f) concert, photo, cliché, yacht, beauty, common, paradise

6. Which word is the dominant in the synonymic group above?
