

# SYNONYMS

## Lecture # 9

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# Synonyms

- *words of the same language*
- *belong to the same part of speech*
- *possess one or more identical or nearly identical **denotational** (основное, точное) meanings*
- *interchangeable, at least in some contexts*

Synonyms are different in outer aspects but identical or similar in inner aspects.

Mother –mom

A lot of borrowings → A lot of synonyms in English

Hearty (native)- Cordial (borrowed)

# Synonyms

- *differ in morphemic shape*
- *differ in phonemic shape*
- *differ in shades of meaning, **connotations***  
*(дополнит-е, сопутств-ующею значение)*
- *differ in style, idiomatic use*

-Was she a pretty girl?

-I would certainly have called her attractive.

‘pretty’ is too good for her –not **pretty** but **attractive**  
essentially they both describe a pleasant appearance

-Think you can play Romeo? Romeo should *smile*, not *grin*;  
*walk* not *swagger*; *speak* his lines not *mumble* them!

Smile (positive)----grin (broad but foolish smile)

Walk – swagger (walking but in insolent manner)

Speak – mumble (speaking but indistinctly)

# Criteria of Synonymy

- conceptual criterion
- the criterion of interchangeability
- semantic criterion

# Conceptual Criterion

## Synonyms

- are of the same category of parts of speech
- convey the same concept
- differ in shades of meaning
- differ in stylistic characteristics

**Washington is the capital of the USA.**

(referent is the same, but there's no linguistic relationship of synonymy)

# Semantic Criterion

## Synonyms

- have the same denotation
- differ in connotations (connotative component)

**denotative component** + **connotative component**

**To glare**

*to look*

+ *lastingly* + *with anger*



# The Criterion of Interchangeability

## Synonyms

- are interchangeable at least in some contexts *without any considerable alteration* in denotational meaning

*A pretty /good-looking / attractive / beautiful* girl,




# But!

I like you but I cannot love you

Romeo should smile but not grin

Substitution of one word for another is impossible!

- 
- He glared at her.
  - He glazed at her.
  - He glanced at her.
  - He peered at her.

- *He looked at her angrily.*
- *He looked at her steadily and attentively.*
- *He looked at her briefly.*
- *He tried to see her better, but something prevented (darkness, weak eyesight).*



# Type classification of Synonyms

(by V.V. Vinogradov)

- Ideographic
- Stylistic
- Absolute

# Classification of Synonyms (by V.V. Vinogradov)

- ***ideographic (denotational)***

words conveying the same concept but differing in shades of meaning

*to look –*

*to see*

*to gaze*

*to glare.*

# Type classification of Synonyms

(by V.V. Vinogradov)

- ***absolute*** – words coinciding in all their shades of meaning and in all their stylistic characteristics

Motherland- homeland

Very rare !!!

# Classification of Synonyms (by V.V. Vinogradov)

- ***stylistic*** – words differing in stylistic characteristics

*Father – Dad - Daddy*

# Types of Connotations

- **connotation of degree or intensity**

*to like – to admire – to love – to adore – to worship*

- **connotation of duration**

*to shudder (brief) – to shiver (lasting)*



# Types of Connotations

- **emotive connotation-** associating with the same nature of the emotion they imply  
*to tremble – to shiver – to shudder – to shake*
- **evaluative connotation** – convey speaker's attitude towards the referent, labeling it as good or bad  
*well-known – famous - celebrated*

# Types of Connotations

- **causative connotation** (different reasons)

*to shiver with a cold, from a chill*

*to shudder with fear, horror*

- **connotation of manner**( different ways and types of doing smth)

*to stroll – to stride – to trot – to pace - to swagger*

*– to stagger – to stumble*

# Types of Connotations

- **connotation of attendant circumstances**  
(*a set of scenery is build in the context*)

**to peep** -to look at smb/smth through a hole /  
from a half-  
closed door, a curtain

**to peer**- **to look** at smb/smth in darkness, through  
the fog, from a great distance

# Types of Connotations

## ■ stylistic connotation

**girl**

*girlie (colloquial)*

*lassie (dialect)*

*bird, birdie*

*skirt (slang)*

*maiden (poetic)*

*damsel (archaic)*

# The Dominant Synonym

All synonymic groups have a “central” word of this kind whose meaning is equal to the denotation common to all synonymic group.

This word is called- *the dominant synonym*


**To make-**

to produce,

to create,

to fabricate,

to manufacture



The dominant synonym expresses the notion common to all synonyms of the group in the most general way, without contributing any additional information as to

- *the manner,*
- *intensity,*
- *duration,*
- *any attending feature of the referent.*

Dominant synonym-

a typical basic-vocabulary word.

# Dominant Synonym

- **high frequency of usage**
- **broad combinability**  
(ability to be used in combinations with various classes of words)
- **broad general meaning**
- **lack of connotations**  
(goes for stylistic connotations)

# Hyponymic structures

## Inclusion-

relations exist between two words if the meaning of one word contains the semantic feature constituting the meaning of the other word

**Flower** ---- rose, tulip, snowdrops...





# Hyponymy

The semantic relations of inclusion –  
**hyponymic relations**

**Vehicle**

-----

**car, bus, taxi, tram...**

**The general term**

*Hyperonym*

**The more specific term**

*hyponyms*

# Sources of Synonyms

- **synonymic attraction** - the referent which is very popular attracts a large number of synonyms
- **variants and dialects of English**
  - lass (Scottish) - girl (English)*
  - long-distance call (USA) – trunk call (British)*

# Sources of Synonyms

## ■ word-building

*lab* ← *laboratory*      **shortening**

*cheery* - *cheerful*      **affixation**

*anxiety* – *anxiousness*

## ■ phrasal verbs and set expressions

to continue – to go on

to smoke – to have a smoke

# Sources of Synonyms

- **euphemisms** – a shift of unpleasant, too direct or rude meaning of a word to a more pleasant or milder one

*drunk – merry*

*naked – in one's birthday suit*

# lavatory

- *Restroom*
- *Washroom*
- *Powder room*
- *Public comfort station*
- *Ladies' (gentlemen's) room*
- *Water-closet \ WC*
- *Public conveniences*

# U-language

- **U-people (upper class)**
- **Non-U people**

*Luncheon-lunch*

*Cycle- bike*

# Slang

- **Hitch-hiker**
- **Guy**

- **Sham**

*Smth or smb that is not true as it seems to be*

- **Chap**

Man

- **humbug**

*Smth or smb to deceive people*

# Phraseological synonyms

Words become identical in their meanings but different in their combinability with other words

- *To be late for a lecture - miss the train*
- *To visit museum – to attend lectures*
- *Teachers question students-  
Judges interrogate witnesses*



# Contextual synonyms

Become synonyms only under some specific distributional conditions

**Buy** -----**get** (*not synonyms out of context*)

**BUT!**

I'll go to the shop and buy some bread.

I'll go to the shop and get some bread.

# Lexical variants (not synonyms)

- **Phonetical**

Vase [veiz] [va:z]

- **Graphical**

To-morrow      Tomorrow