

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
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КОНСПЕКТ ЛЕКЦІЙ

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Lecture 8
STYLISTIC DIFFERENTIATION OF THE ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN
VOCABULARIES

1. Basic Vocabulary of English and Ukrainian.
2. General Characteristics of Informal vocabulary.
 - 2.1 Slang
 - 2.2 Dialectal words
3. General Characteristics of Formal Worlds.

Recommended literature

Верба Л.Г. Порівняльна лексикологія англійської та української мов: навч. посібник для перекладацьких відділень вузів / Л.Г. Верба. – Вінниця: Нова книга, 2003. – 203 с.

1.

The social context in which the communication is taking place determines both the mode of dress and the modes of speech. When placed in different situations, people instinctively choose different kinds of words and structures to express their thoughts. The suitability or unsuitability of a word for each particular situation depends on its stylistic characteristics or, in other words, on the functional style it represents.

The term functional style is generally accepted in modern linguistics. Professor Irina Arnold defines it as "a system of expressive means peculiar to a specific sphere of communication".

By the sphere of communication we mean the circumstances attending the process of speech in each particular case: professional communication, a lecture, an informal talk, a formal letter, an intimate letter, a speech in court, etc.

All these circumstances or situations can be roughly classified into two types: formal (a lecture, a speech in court, an official letter, professional communication) and informal (an informal talk, an intimate letter).

Besides formal and informal words, there's a considerable number of words in the vocabulary of any language which are stylistically neutral.

Stylistically-neutral words	Stylistically-marked words	
	Informal	Formal
Basic vocabulary	I. Colloquial words A. literary, B. familiar, C. low. II. Slang words.	I. literary-bookish words

	III. Dialect words.	
		II. Professional terminology.

Stylistic neutrality of the Basic vocabulary makes it possible to use them in all kinds of situations, both formal and informal, in verbal and written communication. It is a stable layer of words, which changes very slow, if it changes at all, and comprises the basis for the further growth of the vocabulary. We call them **basic stock** or general vocabulary.

These are frequently used words, indispensable in the most ordinary intercourse among people and have been such for a long period of time, they form the core of the vocabulary. For example: names of things and phenomena of the surrounding nature (*sun, moon, water, fire, earth, snow, rain*), names of human beings and of dwelling places, parts of human body (*man, woman, mother, father, house, head, hand*), names of the main spectral colours and of the processes of life activity (*red, green young, go, come, drive, live, make, etc.*)/ *structural elements of the language* {in, on, to, and, but).

Most of the words of these divisions are old native words. These words are known to all English speaking people. Basic stock words can be recognized not only by their stylistic neutrality but also by lack of connotations. For instance, the verb *to walk* means merely "to move from place to place on foot" whereas in the meanings of its synonyms *to stride, to stroll, to trot, to stagger* and others, some additional information is conveyed as they each describe a different manner of walking, a different gait, tempo, purposefulness or lack of purpose and even length of paces. Thus, *to walk*, with its direct broad meaning is a synonymic dominant.

Thus the meanings of the stylistically neutral words are general, they directly convey the notion. However, it is hard to establish the borderline between the basic stock of words and the rest of the vocabulary. Such borderlines are flexible

Informal vocabulary

Informal vocabulary is used in one's immediate circle: family, relatives or friends. One uses informal words when at home or when feeling at home.

Informal style is relaxed, free-and-easy, familiar and unpretentious. But it should be pointed out that the informal talk of well-educated people considerably differs from that of the illiterate or the semi-educated; the choice of words with adults is different from the vocabulary of teenagers; people living in the provinces use certain regional words and expressions. Consequently, the choice of words is determined in each particular case not only by an informal (or formal) situation, but also by the speaker's educational and cultural background, age group, and his occupational and regional characteristics.

Informal words and word-groups are traditionally divided into three types: *colloquial*, *slang* and *dialect words and word-groups*.

■ Among other informal words, *colloquialisms* are the least exclusive: they are used by everybody, and their sphere of communication is comparatively wide. There are three groups of colloquial words: literary, familiar and low colloquial. *Literary colloquial words* are informal words that are used in everyday conversational speech by educated people of all age groups. *e.g. bite, snack – meal*

to have a crush on smb – to fall in love with smb

phrasal verbs - *to put up, turn up, do away*

shortenings – *pram, exam, flu*

The sphere of communication of literary colloquial words also includes fiction, vast use of informal words is one of the prominent features of 21st century English and American literature. It is quite natural that informal words appear in dialogues in which they realistically reflect the speech of modern people:

"You're at *some sort of* technical college?" she said to Leo, not looking at him

"Yes. I hate it though. I'm *not good enough at maths*. There's a *chap* there *just down from* Cambridge who *puts us through* it. I can't *keep up*. Were you good at maths?"

"Not bad. But I imagine school maths are different."

"Well, yes, they are. I can't *cope with this stuff* at all, it's the whole way of thinking that's beyond me... I think I'm going to *chuck it* and take *a job*."

(From *The Time of the Angels* by I. Murdoch)

However, in modern fiction informal words are not restricted to conversation in their use, but frequently appear in descriptive passages as well. In this way the narrative is endowed with conversational features. The author creates an intimate, warm, informal atmosphere, meeting his reader, as it were, on the level of a friendly talk, especially when the narrative verges upon non-personal direct speech.

Literary colloquial words are to be distinguished from familiar colloquial and low colloquial.

Familiar colloquial is more emotional, free and careless; it is characterized by a great number of ironical or jocular expressions: Would a duck swim? Go fly a kite! That cat won't jump

shut up (for *keep silent*), *to kid, rot, dead tired, to be scared to death, to have heaps of time, have a good laugh, a drag*.

Low colloquial is a term used for illiterate popular speech, it contains vulgar words and elements of dialect.

2.

2.1 Much has been written on the subject of slang that is contradictory and at the same time very interesting.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines slang as "language of a highly colloquial style, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense."

Slang words are expressive sub-standard substitutes for words of standard vocabulary. Most slang words are metaphors with a jocular ironical colouring: face: clock, biscuit, dish, façade, index, kisser, smiler. This is one of the common objections against slang: a person using a lot of slang seems to be sneering and jeering at everything under the sun.

The bulk of slang is formed by shortlived words. After a slang word has been used in speech for a certain period of time, people get accustomed to it and it ceases to produce that shocking effect for the sake of which it has been originally coined. Most slang words will either disappear from use within a generation or become standardized and they are no longer slang: snob, fan, mob, bet, hitch hiker were once slang words. For the most part they sound somewhat vulgar, cynical and harsh, aiming to show the object of speech in bad light. The slang words have a relatively limited semantic range: there are many slang words for food, alcohol drinks, stealing, jail, death, madness, drug use: Notions that for some reason or other are apt to excite an emotional reaction attract as a rule many synonyms: slang words for money, such as beans, brass, dibs, dough, dead presidents; the slang synonyms for word head are attic, brain-pan upper storey, compare also various synonyms for the adjective drunk: boozy, cock-eyed, high, soaked, tight and many more. Slang has often attracted the attention of lexicographers. The best-known English slang dictionary is compiled by Eric Partridge.

Traditionally slang is subdivided into **general** which comprises low-colloquial words easily understood by all English speakers (four-eyes (a person wearing glasses) , head (attic, roof, upper storey), cabbage, bread (money) Big cheese /bug important person) , airhead (stupid person) go bananas (go mad) and **special** slang (jargonisms), i.e. words typically used by particular social or professional groups. Special slang words show that the speaker belongs to this group, as different from other people. Originally jargons were used to preserve secrecy within the social group, to make speech incomprehensible to others — such is the thieves' jargon or argot) There is also teenagers' slang/jargon тащить (go ape (over/ about) something), чувак-kiddo, дискотека (a go-go), school slang, army slang, prison slang (to cool someone, to ice someone (замочить) joint, stick, rocket-порция наркотиков, book-a life sentence.

Rhyming slang (trouble and strife –wife, bees and honey-money, frisky-whisky, plates of meat –feet, dog and bone- telephone. In speech one of the elements can be omitted: I got on the dog to speak to my trouble.

Then why do people use slang?

For a number of reasons. To be picturesque, arresting, striking and, above all, different from others. To avoid the hackneyed "common" words. To demonstrate one's spiritual independence and daring. To sound "modern" and "up-to-date".

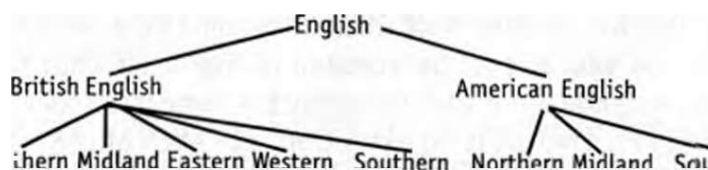
The circle of users of slang is more narrow than that of colloquialisms. It is mainly used by the young and uneducated. Yet, slang's colourful and humorous quality makes it catching, so that a considerable part of slang may become accepted by nearly all the groups of speakers.

2.2 Dialect as "a variety of a language which prevails in a district, with local peculiarities of vocabulary and pronunciation". England has many dialects which have their own distinctive features. Dialectal peculiarities, especially those of vocabulary, are constantly being incorporated into everyday colloquial speech or slang. From these levels they can be transferred into the common stock, i. e. words which are not stylistically marked) and a few of them even into formal speech and into the literary language. Car, trolley, tram began as dialect words.

Dialectal words reflect the geographical background of the speaker. Differences in language use depend on an individual's social and geographical background.

Dialect is a language variety peculiar to one region of the country in which the language is spoken. A dialect is traditionally opposed to Standard English.

The English language has several important dialectal subdivisions, which will be considered in the next topic:



Dialectal words are constantly being incorporated into colloquial and standard English. Nevertheless, regional differences in lexical items exist. For example, a large roll with a variety of meats and cheeses may be called a grinder, a sub, a hero, or a poor bor depending on the region of the USA. Similarly, a carbonated soft drink is called soda in many parts of the USA, in other parts it is called pop, and yet in others it called tonic or soda pop.

A formal (lofty, bookish) style is required in situations of official or restrained relations between the interlocutors, who try to avoid any personal and emotional colouring or familiarity, and at the same time to achieve clarity of expression (to avoid any ambiguity and misunderstanding). General literary words are associated with written speech. This style is used in poetry and fiction (in descriptions), official (legal, diplomatic, etc.) documents, scientific works, publicistic works or public speeches, etc..

Formal words fall into two main groups: words associated with professional communication and literary-bookish or *learned words*. Bookish words are mostly polysyllabic words drawn from the Romance languages and, though fully adapted to the English phonetic system, some of them continue to sound singularly foreign. Here are some examples: *solitude, sentiment, fascination, hereby, commence, cordial, endeavour, assist*.

Among literary-bookish words a group of poetic words is singled out. These words are lofty, high-flown colouring. Most of them are archaic. They are used only in poetry and have stylistically neutral synonyms: woe (sorrow), behold (see), quoth (said), steed (horse)

Yet, generally speaking, educated people in both modern fiction and real life use learned words quite naturally and their speech is certainly the richer for it.

On the other hand, excessive use of learned elements in conversational speech presents grave hazards. Utterances overloaded with such words have pretensions of "refinement" and "elegance" but achieve the exact opposite verging on the absurd and ridiculous.

Writers use this phenomenon for stylistic purposes. When a character in a book or in a play uses too many learned words, the obvious inappropriateness of his speech in an informal situation produces a comic effect,

Gwendolen in the play *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* declaring her love for Jack says:

"The story of your romantic origin as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deepest fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your nature makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me..."

Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* by B. Shaw engaging in traditional English small talk answers the question "Will it rain, do you think?" in the following way:

"The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation."

Terms

Hundreds of thousands of words belong to special scientific, professional or trade terminological systems and are not used or even understood by people outside the particular

speciality. Every field of modern activity has its specialised vocabulary. There is a special medical vocabulary, and similarly special terminologies for psychology, botany, music, linguistics, teaching methods and many others.

Term, as traditionally understood, is a word or a word-group which is specifically employed by a particular branch of science, technology, trade or the arts to convey a concept peculiar to this particular activity.

So, *bilingual, interdental, labialization, palatalization, glottal stop, descending scale* are terms of theoretical phonetics.

- terms should be monosemantic (polysemy may lead to misunderstanding)
- independent of the context
- have only denotational meaning
- terms should not have synonyms

There are linguists in whose opinion terms are only those words which have retained their exclusiveness and are not known or recognised outside their specific sphere.

Therefore, exchange between terminological systems and the "common" vocabulary is quite normal, and it would be wrong to regard a term as something "special" and standing apart.