



# Formal and informal speech and writing, word register

**SYNONYMY, OUTDATED WORDS**

# WORD REGISTER

- a **register** is a variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. For example, when speaking in a formal setting an English speaker may be more likely to adhere more closely to prescribed grammar, pronounce words ending in -ing with a velar nasal instead of an alveolar nasal (e.g. "walking", not "walkin'"), choose more formal words (e.g. *father* vs. *dad*, *child* vs. *kid*, etc.), and refrain from using the word ain't than when speaking in an informal setting.



## REGISTER IS ALSO CALLED AS:

- Jargon
- Tenor
- Style
- Genre
- Text types



# MARTIN JOOS – 5 STYLES IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

- **Frozen** – printed unchanged language (wedding vows, ritualistic, monotone)
- **Formal:** One-way participation, no interruption. Technical vocabulary or exact definitions are important. Includes presentations or introductions between strangers.
- **Casual:** In-group friends and acquaintances. No background information provided. Ellipsis and slang common. Interruptions common. This is common among friends in a social setting



- **Consultative:** Two-way participation. Background information is provided — prior knowledge is not assumed. "Back-channel behavior" such as "uh huh", "I see", etc. is common. Interruptions are allowed. Examples include teacher/student, doctor/patient, expert/apprentice, etc.



- **Intimate:** Non-public. Intonation more important than wording or grammar. Private vocabulary. Also includes non-verbal messages. This is most common among family members and close friends.



FORMAL

X

INFORMAL

- **Formal** English is used in "serious" texts and situations — for example, in official documents, books, news reports, articles, business letters or official speeches.
- **Informal** English is used in everyday conversations and in personal letters.



# FORMAL

- NO CONTRACTIONS (he's, they aren't)
- LESS ACTIVE VOICE (more passive „The message has been received successfully
- LESS phrasal verbs – many are avoided
- No slang
- Usage of plural not singular





- I can help you to solve this problem, call me.
- We can assist in the resolution of the matter



- |                  |   |   |                       |
|------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| ○ about          |   | x | regarding             |
| ○ Because<br>of/ |   | x | as a result<br>due to |
| ○ Sorry          |   | x | we regret             |
| ○ Get            | x |   | receive               |
| ○ Enough         |   | x | sufficient            |
| ○ Have to give   |   | x | submit                |
| ○ Tell           | x |   | disclose              |



# Synonymy



## SYNONYM:

The word comes from Ancient Greek:

- *syn* (σύν) ("with")
- *onoma* (ὄνομα) ("name")



# SYNONYMY (EQUIVALENCE RELATION)

Synonymy is a kind of semantic relation.

- **Synonyms** are different words with almost identical or similar meanings.
- There is no such a thing as a perfect synonym.



# FULL SYNONYMY

- Full synonymy is rare
- E. g. greenhouse = hothouse
- kind = sort
- noun = substantive



- Synonyms can be any part of speech
- (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions), as long as both members of the pair are the same part of speech.
- More examples of English synonyms are:
- Noun:
  - "student" and "pupil"
  - "petty crime" and "misdemeanor"
- verb :
  - "buy" and "purchase"
- Adjective:
  - "sick" and "ill"
- adverb :
  - "quickly" and "speedily"
- Preposition:
  - "on" and "upon"



Synonyms are defined with respect to certain senses of words;

- for instance, *pupil* as the "aperture in the iris of the eye" is not synonymous with *student*.
- Similarly, *he expired* means the same as *he died*, yet *my passport has expired* cannot be replaced by *my passport has died*.





- In English,
- many synonyms evolved from the parallel use,
- in the early medieval period, of Norman French (from Latin) and Old English (Anglo-Saxon) words, often with some words being used principally by the Saxon peasantry ("*folk*", "*freedom*", "*bowman*")
- and their synonyms by the Norman nobility ("*people*", "*liberty*", "*archer*").



Some lexicographers claim

that no synonyms have exactly the same meaning  
(in all contexts or social levels of language)

because etymology,

orthography,

phonic qualities,

ambiguous meanings,

usage,

etc. make them unique.



- Different words that are similar in meaning usually differ for a reason:
- *feline* is more formal than *cat*;
- *long* and *extended* are only synonyms in one usage and not in others  
(for example, a *long arm* is not the same as an *extended arm*).

Synonyms are also a source of euphemisms.



## EUPHEMISM

= the substitution of a mild, inoffensive, relatively uncontroversial phrase for another more frank expression

that might offend or otherwise suggest something unpleasant to the audience.

e.g. casket for coffin

pass away for die

under the weather for ill

adult video for pornography



# DIFFERENT SYNTACTIC BEHAVIOUR OF SYNONYMS:

- E.g.
- The plane leaves/ departes from Gatwick, not Stansted.
- We left museum at seven.
- We departed the house at seven.



# SLANG AND SYNONYMES

- Money:

Dough, bread, dosh, loot, brass

- Lavatory:

Loo, lay, bog, john

- Drugs:

Fix, dope, grass, stone, snow, uppers

- Drunk:

Pissed, sozzled, paralytic, legless

- Stupid:

Wally, prat, nerd, jerk, plonker, pillock



## ANTONYMS:

= words with opposite or nearly opposite meanings

For example:

- *short* and *tall*
- *dead* and *alive*
- *increase* and *decrease*
- *add* and *subtract*



## OUTDATED WORDS

- The introduction of 2,000 new words into the forthcoming edition of the dictionary has meant that some of the lesser known and used words have become endangered and face being lost from the publication.





## EXAMPLES OF OUTDATED WORDS

- *Muliebrity* - the condition of being a woman
- *Niddering* - cowardly
- *Nitid* -bright, glistening
- *Olid* - foul-smelling
- *Periapt* - combative, antagonistic or contrary
- *Recrement* - waste matter, refuse dross
- *Roborant* - tending to fortify or increase strength
- *Vaticinate* - to foretell, prophesy
- Fusby- short, stout or squat
- Skirr - a whirring or grating sound as made by the wings of birds in flight.



# TOP 10 FUNNIEST OUTDATED WORDS

**Guttersnipe:** (noun) somebody from lower class - *There was no place in the village for the likes of a guttersnipe.*

**Hoi polloi:** (noun) the masses, ordinary people - *After receiving his Oscar the actor decided to mingle with the hoi polloi.*

**Balderdash:** (noun) senseless or pointless talk or writing  
- *In an attempt to make his point the journalist's article was total balderdash.*

**Flibbertigibbet:** (noun) flighty person, irresponsible, scatterbrained  
- *The professor was more of a flibbertigibbet than an intellectual*



# TOP 10 FUNNIEST OUTDATED WORDS

**Rigmarole:** (noun) needless motion, complex, excess steps

- *Have you seen all the rigmarole you have to go through at airport security these days?*

**Gobbledygook:** (noun) nonsense or jargon

- *This manual is full of gobbledygook.*

**Malarkey:** (noun) insincere talk - *The politician's speech was full of malarkey.*

**Bamboozle:** (v.) cheat somebody - *The sales person tried to bamboozle us into purchasing the defective items.*

**Cockamamie:** (adjective) trivial, ridiculous - *It was a cockamamie idea to begin with.*

**Mollycoddle:** (transitive verb) pamper and spoil somebody - *The king insists his royal staff mollycoddle his children.*



Thank you very  
much for your  
attention

