

Подсекция «Английский язык»

УДК 811.111'373.42

Учащ. В. А. Байкова

Науч. рук. С. Б. Говор, учитель английского языка
(ГУО «Средняя школа № 34 г. Гродно»)

TRICKY WORDS OF ENGLISH

The topic of this article is “Tricky words of English” and it is devoted to the homonyms in English.

Homonymy is a notion when a word is similar in form with another word either in pronunciation or in spelling, or both, but differs from it in meaning.

While studying English, we always meet a lot of words that seem alike either in spelling, or just with one different letter, but with different meanings. These are “tricky words of English” or homonyms, that can make the learners confused because they can be pronounced or spelled the same way. For example, when we see the homonym “bark”, we can think about the outer covering of a tree or the sound made by dogs (кора-лаять).

I was very interested in this topic and found out that a homonym is a general term that comprises all its forms such as **homophones, homographs, heteronyms, heterographs and capitonyms.**

Homophones are words with the same pronunciation, sometimes the same and sometimes different spelling and always different meaning. Examples are ‘threw/through (бросил – через), sight/site’ (достопримечательность – место), waist – waste (талия – тратить впустую). Pairs of words with one different letter are also homophones, for example ‘rite-write’ (ритуал – писать).

Homographs are the words with the same spelling, sometimes the same, sometimes different pronunciation and always different meaning. Examples of homographs are ‘bow (кланяться – лук), close (закрывать-близкий), tear (рвать – слеза)’. Here we see the same spelling and almost the same pronunciation with a little distinction in sounds. Homographs may also have different pronunciation but the same spelling, for example, wind (ветер- заводит часы)

If a homograph can change its pronunciation due to another stress, it becomes a **heteronym**, which is a word with the same spelling but different pronunciation and meaning. Examples are ‘сOntent – contEnt (содержание – довольный), lead – lead (вести – свинец), live – live (жить – в прямом эфире), minute – minute (минута – крошечный), prEsent – presEnt’ (подарок – представлять).

Heterographs are words with the same pronunciation, but different spelling and meaning. Thus, they are the opposites of homographs and heteronyms and can be partly similar to homophones. Examples are ‘bear-bare (медведь – голый), bored-board (соскучившийся – доска), cereal-serial (хлопья – сериал)’.

Capitonyms are words that share the same spelling but have different meanings when capitalized and may or may not have different pronunciations. Examples are ‘polish-Polish (лак – польский), march-March’ (марш – март), turkey – Turkey (индейка – Турция).

Homographs and heteronyms, homophones and heterographs are the forms of homonyms, they are constituent parts of homonyms, which is a general term of the words with different meanings.

If we take a homonym as a lexical item, it has certain types, such as complete (full), partial, lexical, grammatical and lexico-grammatical homonyms (some scientists give such names as ‘homonyms of word forms’ and ‘word homonyms’). All forms of homonyms are considered partial homonyms, as they are not exactly alike as complete homonyms. The most commonly used and familiar types are full and partial. Full homonyms sound and are written in the same way, for example, ‘bark (лягать- кора), bank (банк – берег реки)’. Partial homonyms are not exactly alike according to a certain feature.

It is quite difficult to draw the line between homonymy and polysemy. This problem can be solved by the recognition that the different senses of the word are related historically. Many linguists consider a polysemantic word if it has one dictionary entry, and homonyms if it has several dictionary entries.

So, why is it important to study and learn homonyms and all their forms mentioned above? Homonyms are important because words that look alike and/or sound alike can mean completely different things. It is important that you pay attention to context when you are reading so as not to misinterpret what is being said because of homonyms. They are not immediately recognized, you have to use context in order to figure out which word to put in the sentence since they are spelled the same. Lastly, learning these words will not only improve your English vocabulary box and make you feel smarter, but will also help you appreciate the tricky qualities of the English language.