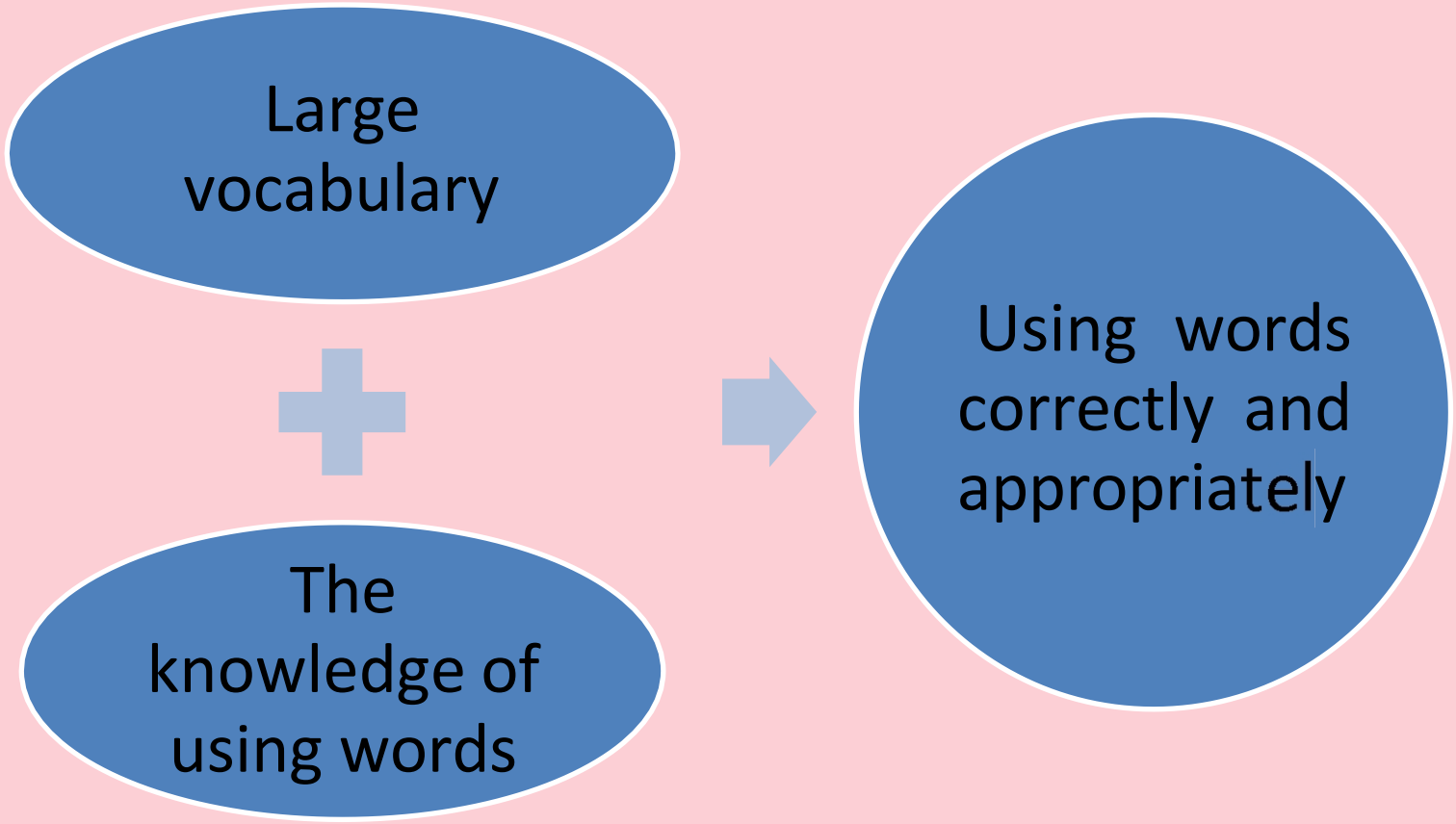
2.1 Lexical Options

- Introduction
- Lexical options refers to the way writers choose their words to express their ideas clearly and effectively.
- There are about one million English words included in *Encyclopedia Britannica.*
- Often used words: 3000-20000

- Using the right word at the right time is rather like wearing appropriate clothing for the occasion: it is a courtesy to others, and a favor to yourself—a matter of presenting yourself well in the eyes of the world.
- 语不惊人誓不休
- 吟安一个字，捻断数根须
- 一字穷岁月，十年成一赋

Two Key Elements



Sources of English Words

- Celtic and Anglo-Saxon origins
- Impact of Latin and French
- Massive borrowing from other countries
- Modern impact of American English

2.1.1 Short & Long Words

- Short words:

  --monosyllabic words

  --Anglo-Saxon origin
- Long words:

  --polysyllabic word

  --Latin, French, Greek origin

- Short words:

  --less conductive, elegant, scholarly or artistic

  --quick and efficient

- Long words:

  --learned

  --slow and inefficient

- “words of learned length and thundering sound” of the village schoolmaster were supposed to “amaze the rustics”.

--Goldsmith: The Deserted Village

- E.g. P99 （3） （4）
- “The cot the man lay on was in the wide shade of a mimosa（含羞草）tree and as he looked out past the shade on to the glare of the plain there were three of the big birds squatted obscenely, while in the sky a dozen more sailed, making quick-moving shadows as they passed.”

- "All right. Now he would not care for death. One thing he had always dreaded was the pain. He could stand pain as well as any man, until it went on too long, and wore him out, but here he had something that had hurt frightfully and just when he had felt it breaking him, the pain had stopped.”

- The effect of Short words in this two paragraph:
- brief
- Peaceful
- Comes to one’s mind easily and

  This is the description of a dying man who doesn’t have enough strength and energy to think

- E.g.

1. I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, sweat and tears.
2. I came, I saw, I conquer.

The effect of short words: forceful

Usually used in persuasive writing or oratory.

- Analyze the passage to see the different rhythm of the prose, the rhetoric effect, the careful choice and arrangement of short and long words.
- See page 100　(6)

2.1.2 Common & Learned Words

- Learned Words: Latinisms (mainly to Latinate words)
- Usually used in scholarly, academic or legal discussions

- Common Words: words of native origin (vernacular/English words of Anglo-Saxon origin) + words borrowed from other-than-Latin languages

- E.g.
- 1. Never do tomorrow what you can do today
- 2. Procrastination(拖延) is the thief of time.
- 3. 你来了，我太高兴了
- 4. 阁下大驾光临，令寒舍蓬荜生辉。

2.1.3 Formal, Informal & Colloquial Words

- Types of writing require formal diction:
- official and legal documents,
- academic and professional writing -- (essays, reports, reviews, etc.),
- editorials,
- formal invitations,
- applications,
- notifications

- The informal/colloquial language could be used among friends or intimates. The more intimate the relationship between people, the more informal the language, apart from considerations of respect for age or seniority.

- The rule to remember:

  not to mix up formal and informal diction in one piece of writing, unless it is for a stylistic purpose.

- E.g.
- 1. According to a Native American myth, the Great Creator had a dog hanging around with him when he created the earth. (?)
- The Great Creator was panied by a dog…..

- 他们又故意高声嚷到，“你一定又偷了人家的东西了！”孔已己睁大眼睛说，“你怎么这样凭空污人清白……”“什么清白？我前天亲眼见你偷了何家的书，吊着打。”孔已己便涨红了脸，额上的青筋条条绽出，争辩道，“窃书不能算偷……窃书！……读书人的事，能算偷么？”
- See page 108 (7)

2.1.4 General & Specific Words

- General words: words referring to groups or classes, to broad nature or general quality
- Specific Words: words referring to individuals, to particularized features or qualities

- Political speeches are seldom specific in praise or blame, unless purposely, they usually contain only general references.

•See P111 (1) the second paragraph

Q: Can you sense the attitude of the author?

- Compare with P112 (2)

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