

21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材

总主编 虞建华

英语语言学

English Linguistics

主编 朱 跃 胡一宁



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语言学家对语言的研究首先从语音开始,并以语音为出发点进一步研究语言的结构、意义,进而形成了语音学、音系学、词素学、句法学、语义学、语用学等一系列的分支学科。语言的研究与社会学、心理学等学科的有机结合又产生了社会语言学、心理语言学等交叉学科。而语言理论在实际中的运用促使应用语言学的问世。通过学习英语语言学的基本概念、研究重心及核心问题,学生可以了解关于语言的知识及语言理论知识,可以掌握英语语言使用的基本原理,并能初步运用这些原理解决英语使用中的问题,从而使学生不仅知其然,而且知其所以然。在一定意义上,英语语言学课程不仅能够帮助学生获取关于英语语言本身的知识,更开拓了学生语言应用的视野。正因如此,英语语言学被列为英语专业本科阶段的一门必修课。

虽然英语语言学对学生学习使用英语有着理论指导意义和实践意义,但是由于种种原因,很多学生认为语言学课程内容抽象、枯燥,对学习英语语言学的兴趣不大,甚至有抵触情绪。要改变这种尴尬的局面,教材的改革十分必要。我们在总结前人英语语言学教材编写经验的基础上,将归纳法引入教材的编写之中,学生通过分析语言事例,去探索、发现、总结语言使用规律,发展理性思维。教材编写强调基础性、实用性、启发性、自足性和时代性;强调理论性与实践性相结合,学术性与趣味性相结合;同时,注重把启发式、讨论式、发现式和研究式的教学理念运用于教材编写之中。

学生在学习英语语言学教材时应注意宏观与微观相结合、理解与

记忆相结合和比较与对比相结合的原则。首先要仔细阅读教材目录。目录是全书内容的高度浓缩和概括,它不仅包括本学科所涉及的主要内容,而且也涉及内容与内容之间的联系。在整体把握课本内容的基础上,再从宏观进入到微观学习。通过细节的学习来加深对课本宏观内容的把握,而对课本宏观的把握又会有助于课本细节的学习,做到“既见森林,又见树木”。

要理解语言学的基本概念,就要注意分析课本中围绕基本概念所提供的各种例子,多思考,细析辨。只有在理解基础上的记忆才会变得长久。学习者应能结合自己的语言实践提供更多的例子来理解和解释有关理论,以达到理论和实践的结合。

比较和对比是该课程学习中不可缺少的两种方法。通过比较,可以找出不同概念之间的相似性,通过对比可以理解不同概念之间的相异性。比较和对比的结合有助于弄清概念之间的异同及其内在的联系。

《英语语言学》是集体的智慧。除了主编与副主编外,参加教材编写工作和校对工作的还有段婷婷、李剑、李义成、李奕华、王俊、张佳易、周同、朱军等(以姓氏笔画排序)。在此,我们向他们表示感谢。由于我们水平有限,教材中错误难免,恳请广大教师与读者多提宝贵意见和建议,以便我们对教材作进一步修订。

朱 跃

2010年1月于安徽大学

Table of Contents



前 言	1
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1. What is linguistics?	1
1.1 Definition of linguistics	1
1.2 Main branches of linguistics	2
1.3 Why study language?	4
2. What is language?	6
2.1 Definition of language	6
2.2 Design features of language	8
3. Important distinctions in linguistics	11
3.1 Prescriptive vs. descriptive	11
3.2 Synchronic vs. diachronic	12
3.3 Speech vs. writing	13
3.4 Langue vs. parole	14
3.5 Competence vs. performance	16
Exercises	17
Further Readings	18



Chapter 2 Phonetics 19

1. The phonic medium of language 19
2. Phonetics 20
 - 2.1 What is phonetics? 20
 - 2.2 Organs of speech 22
 - 2.3 Classification of English speech sounds 25
- Exercises 31
- Further Readings 31



Chapter 3 Phonology 32

1. General introduction to phonology 32
2. Basic concepts of phonology 36
 - 2.1 Phone, phoneme and allophone 36
 - 2.2 Phonemic contrast, complementary distribution and minimal pair 38
 - 2.3 Broad transcription and narrow transcription 40
3. Some phonological rules 42
 - 3.1 Sequential rules 42
 - 3.2 Assimilation rules 44
4. Suprasegmental features: stress, tone and intonation 46
 - 4.1 Stress 47
 - 4.2 Tone 47
 - 4.3 Intonation 48
- Exercises 49
- Further Readings 49



Chapter 4 Morphology 51

1. Morphology 51

2. Morphemes	52
3. Types of morphemes	53
3.1 Free morphemes	53
3.2 Bound morphemes	54
4. Allomorph	58
5. Word formation rules	59
5.1 Compounding	60
5.2 Derivation	61
5.3 Conversion	62
5.4 Clipping	62
5.5 Initialism	62
5.6 Acronym	62
5.7 Blending	63
5.8 Back-formation	63
Exercises	64
Further Readings	64



Chapter 5 Syntax 65

1. Syntactic categories	65
2. Combinational rules	66
3. Sentence structure	69
3.1 The structural approach and IC analysis	69
3.2 Advantages and problems of IC analysis	70
3.3 Transformational-generative grammar	73
4. Universal grammar	82
4.1 The observational basis of UG	82
4.2 General principles of UG	83
4.3 General parameters of UG	87
Exercises	91
Further Readings	92



Chapter 6 Semantics..... 93

1. General introduction	93
2. Approaches to semantics	95
2.1 The naming theory	95
2.2 The conceptualist theory	97
2.3 Contextualism	99
2.4 Behaviorism	101
3. Lexical meaning	103
3.1 Sense and reference	103
3.2 Major semantic relationships between words	105
4. Sentence meaning	115
5. Analysis of meaning	117
5.1 Componential analysis—a way to analyze lexical meaning	117
5.2 Predication analysis—a way to analyze sentence meaning	118
Exercises	121
Further Readings	121



Chapter 7 Pragmatics 123

1. What is pragmatics?	123
2. Context	124
3. Entailment	126
4. Presupposition	127
5. Speech acts	129
6. Conversational implicatures	130
7. The cooperative principle	132
8. Deixis	135
9. Politeness principle	136
Exercises	139
Further Readings	139



Chapter 8 Language and Society 140

1. Speech community 140
2. Relationships between language and society 142
3. Language varieties 145
 - 3.1 Dialects 146
 - 3.2 Register 160
 - 3.3 Mixture of varieties 161
- Exercises 166
- Further Readings 166



Chapter 9 Language and Culture 167

1. General introduction 167
 - 1.1 The relationship between language and culture 167
 - 1.2 The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis 169
2. Cross-cultural communication 171
 - 2.1 Meaning as sign 171
 - 2.2 Cultural clash 173
 - 2.3 Stereotype 176
- Exercises 178
- Further Readings 178



Chapter 10 Language and Acquisition 179

1. Behaviorism 179
2. Innatism; how languages are learned 181
3. Interactionist theory; how languages are learned 182
4. Interlanguage; how languages are learned 184
5. Acquisition vs. learning 187
6. Competence vs. performance 189

7. Universal grammar	191
8. Language transfer	193
9. Comprehensible input	195
10. Critical period hypothesis	196
Exercises	198
Further Readings	199



Chapter 11 Language and Methodology 200

1. Approaches to language teaching	200
2. Contribution of linguistics to language teaching	204
3. Language testing	207
3.1 Basic considerations of language testing	207
3.2 Main types of language tests	209
Exercises	212
Further Readings	212



References 213

Chapter



Introduction

1. What is Linguistics?

1.1 Definition of Linguistics

• Relevant Language Use Observations and Questions to Ponder Over



1) What do you think linguistics is about?

2) Discuss with your partner how we can study language in a scientific way?

3) In your opinion, what's the goal of a linguist?

• Summaries to Make and Linguistic Viewpoints to Learn

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. The word “language” with no article implies that linguistics studies languages in general, not any particular language. The word “study” means “investigate” or “examine” instead of “learn”. Linguistics endeavors to answer the questions of what language is and how it is represented in the mind.

A scientific study of language is based on the systematic investigation of data, conducted with reference to some general theories of language structure. Linguists focus on describing and explaining language and are not concerned with the prescriptive rules of the

language. Linguists are not required to know many languages and linguists are not interpreters. The underlying goal of the linguist is to try to discover the universals concerning language, that is, the common elements of all languages. The linguist then tries to place these elements in a theoretical framework that will describe all languages and also predict what can not occur in a language.

The scientific processes of linguistic study are:

- ① Certain linguistic facts are observed, and generalizations are formed;
- ② Hypotheses are formulated;
- ③ Hypotheses are tested by further observations;
- ④ A linguistic theory is constructed.

• Definition to Clarify

Linguistics: Linguistics is the scientific study of language.

1.2 Main Branches of Linguistics

• Relevant Language Use Observations and Questions to Ponder Over



1) In the previous section, we have learnt that linguistics is the scientific study of language. Learning linguistics means that we will learn about many aspects of human language. List some of the aspects you know which could be included in the study of linguistics.

2) As language is a social phenomenon, linguistics must have close links with other branches of social studies. Discuss with your partners and try to list some of the social sciences which may be related to the study of language.

• Summaries to Make and Linguistic Viewpoints to Learn

Learning linguistics means learning about many aspects of human language, including the physical properties and structures of sounds, words and sentences. It can involve looking at how languages change over time; how they vary with different social factors, such as age, sex, class, educational background and our birth place; how people use

language in context to effect successful communication; or how people acquire or learn language.

• Definitions to Clarify

Phonetics is the scientific study of speech sounds, e. g. of how they are made (articulatory phonetics), transmitted (acoustic phonetics) and received (auditory phonetics). Phonetics has broad applications in a number of areas, including speech recognition, speech synthesis, forensic linguistics, speech therapy and language instruction.

Phonology analyses how sounds are organized in a language (phonological structure) and attempts to discover the principles that govern sound systems in languages in general.

Morphology examines the structure or form of words, and how they are constructed of smaller units (called “morphemes”) which have meaning (for example, *singer* is composed of *sing* + *er*).

Syntax investigates how words (and grammatical elements) are combined to form sentences, what speakers know about the grammatical structure of their language, how sentences are interrelated and what are the general grammatical and cognitive principles which explain these arrangements, relationships and knowledge.

Semantics is the study of the abstract or inherent meaning in isolation, not in context.

Pragmatics is concerned with how the meaning of linguistic acts depends on the context in which they are performed. It looks at language from the points of view of the users, the choices they make and constraints on those choices in social interaction. (For example, pragmatics studies what can make the sentence “Can you open the door?” count as a question in one situation and as a request for action in another.)

Sociolinguistics probes into the relationship between language and society. This involves variation in language use which correlates with such things as the age, gender, social class, ethnicity and general social attributes of speakers and hearers. Sociolinguists also deal with attitudes towards language, social aspects of language change and linguistic aspects of social issues.

Applied linguistics is the application of linguistic methods and findings to

a number of areas. It is especially associated with language teaching methodology and second-language acquisition, but also involves language and the law, language and classroom education, child development, language and reading, speech therapy, language and public policy, translation, advertising and the like.

Historical linguistics studies how and why languages change.

Discourse analysis examines how language is structured beyond the sentence and thus involves topic and comment, narrative structure, cohesiveness, written vs. spoken language, and conversational analysis.

Psycholinguistics investigates the interrelationship between language and human cognition (the role of language as it affects memory, perception, and learning) and the effects of psychological constraints on language (on its use, production and comprehension). The best known area of psycholinguistics is the study of **child language acquisition**, how children acquire their native language.

Anthropological linguistics deals with the relationship between language and culture; also it involves the study of little-known languages in their cultural settings.

Computational linguistics or **mathematical linguistics** is the branch of linguistics which looks at languages essentially as formal systems, and applies computational techniques and concepts to understanding issues such as automatic machine translation and parsing. The goal of research in these areas is to uncover the logical and mathematical structures that underlie linguistic systems.

1.3 Why Study Language?

• Relevant Language Use Observations and Questions to Ponder Over



1) What good is the scientific study of language? Why does anyone do it? Why should you care about it? These are the sorts of questions you have a right to ask about any university course.

Discuss with your partner the possible reasons why we should study language.

2) Language is a part of everyone's life, but it is more central to some people than to others. Can you cite some examples to show that language is more important to some people than to others?

• Summaries to Make and Linguistic Viewpoints to Learn

A second-language teacher needs to be able to focus on problem areas, for example, by giving lots of practice or by simplifying other aspects of the language being learned. It is difficult, if not impossible, both to understand the source of the problem and to come up with ways of addressing it without understanding the nature of the material being learned, that is, what linguists and other language scientists study.



As a native language speaker, you will also face evaluations of your language by other people—teachers, colleagues, supervisors, even family and friends—throughout your life. You will get better at using language to accomplish your goals if you understand what sort of problem is involved (if there really is a problem). This is where linguistics can help.

You might work as a speech therapist, dealing with people with speech disabilities of one kind or another. Here the relevance of the scientific study of language is obvious. You first need to know what the norms of a language are before you can hope to address the ways in which your clients or patients deviate from these norms.

Language is such an important part of our lives that learning about the languages of other people, including how those languages differ from ours, is in a very real sense learning about those people. As with any other aspect of culture, lack of knowledge can lead to intolerance. Looking more closely at languages, in particular at languages that might seem exotic to us, can make us more tolerant.

Language is what we use to influence the beliefs of one another. This happens in arguments, in advertising, in education, in politics, etc. Obviously an educated person needs to be able to sort out the nonsense,

to see how bias and ideology are behind what is being claimed, to be a critical reader and listener, and to make informed decisions. All these are impossible without understanding the role that language plays in knowledge, belief and persuasion.

Linguistics provides students with valuable training for many different kinds of opportunities. Linguistics knowledge is required in the work on speech recognition, search engines, and artificial intelligence; those with a background in linguistics may teach at the university level or work in education, developing curricula and materials, teaching students, training teachers, and designing tests and other methods of assessment, etc. They may work as a translator or interpreter. They may work with dictionaries as knowledge of phonology, morphology, historical linguistics, dialectology, and sociolinguistics is key to becoming a lexicographer, to name just a few.



2. What is Language?

2.1 Definition of Language

• Relevant Language Use Observations and Questions to Ponder Over



1) Look at the following definitions of language, do you agree?

① The expression of ideas by writing, or any other instrumentality;

② The forms of speech, or the methods of expressing ideas, peculiar to a particular nation;

③ The characteristic mode of arranging words, peculiar to an individual speaker or writer; manner of expression; style;

④ Any means of conveying or communicating ideas; specifically, human speech; the expression of ideas by the voice; sounds, expression of thought, articulated by the organs of the throat and mouth;