

高等学校英语专业教材

# 英语语言学基础读本

(修订本)

李延福 主编 桂诗春 主审

山东大学出版社

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**英语语言学基础读本**  
(修订本)

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A FIRST COURSE IN  
ENGLISH LINGUISTICS



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## 序

由于四个现代化建设的需要,我国学习外语的人越来越多,要学习语言,就应懂得一些关于语言的知识,这是不言而喻的。但是不少学语言的人却又往往对语言学不感兴趣,甚至视为畏途。究其原因,无非是:一、他们认识不到语言学与语言学习的关系,而且往往把语言学习看得过于简单,以为只要多模仿、勤练习,自然会水到渠成。二、我们这些从事语言学教学的人又不得其法,讲课追求系统性而失之于趣味性,使一门生趣盎然的课变得索然无味;而更重要的是,缺乏好的教材。

山东大学外文系李延福同志是推广语言学知识的热心人,他自己多年从事语言学教学工作,成绩斐然。更为可贵的是,他根据自己的经验和所搜集的资料,编出了一本语言学知识的初级读物。这本读物深入浅出,且辅以注解和练习,深受学者的欢迎。现在李延福等同志又对试用本加以修订,正式付梓。

我认为这本教材所覆盖的内容对学习英语的学者来说,都是十分有用的;对有志于学习语言学的人来说,更是一本很好的入门书。可以预期,它必将受到广大读者的欢迎。

桂 诗 春

1987年10月

于广州外国语学院

## 修订说明

本书于1985年9月由山东大学出版社出版。出版后曾在厦门大学、山东师范大学、山东大学等高校试用,效果良好,受到专家和同行们的好评。1986年10月,根据国家教委教材编审计划,全国高校外语专业教材编委会英语编审组在济南召开了审稿会,参加审稿会的有:主审人桂诗春(广州外国语学院),审稿人吴富恒(山东大学)、许国璋(北京外国语学院)、张健(山东大学)、胡壮麟(北京大学)、何兆熊(上海外国语学院)、黄希哲(厦门大学)、黄浩枢(西安外国语学院)、刘润清(北京外国语学院)、马传禧(山东师范大学)和王守元(曲阜师范大学)等同志。与会同志对原书的选材、编排、练习等方面进行了认真地、全面地审查和讨论,提出了不少宝贵意见。伍铁平(北京师范大学)和廖雅章(北京对外经济贸易大学)两位同志未能出席会议,但分别寄来了详尽的书面意见。在此,我们对诸位专家和教授们的支持表示衷心的感谢。

遵照上述同志提出的意见,我们对全书做了较大的调整和修改:

(一)课文部分,补充了第一单元;以原书第六、十一和十二单元为基础,编写了第十一、十二和第十三单元;将原书第十四单元扩展成第十四、十五单元;更换了第十六单元。

(二)随着课文内容的调整和修改,阅读材料和练习部分也作了相应的变动。

(三)适当增加了课文注释及培养学生实践能力的练习项目。

(四)为节省篇幅起见,阅读材料和注释的出处从简。

(五)个别选文中的体例和符号仍予保留。

编 者

1987.12

## 前 言

英语语言学基础课已列为全国高等院校英语专业高年级必修课之一。在目前尚无全国统编教材的情况下,我们应教学之急需,并受有关兄弟院校之促使,编成此书,供英语语言学基础课的教师和同学参考试用。

本书共分十八个单元。每单元包括课文、注释、讨论与复习题、练习以及补充阅读材料。课文取材于英美语言学原著,结合我国教学实际情况进行了删节或改写,主要介绍有关英语语言学的概念、基本知识和基础理论;注释,用以补充、扩大有关英语语言学的基本知识;讨论与复习题,旨在帮助学生理解有关英语语言学的基本理论;练习的目的在于巩固和检验学生对基本概念的理解、基本知识的掌握和基本理论的运用。

练习编排原则是,先有概念性的单词填充、后有释义性的配句或辨义,再有实践性的应用,最后是检查性的综合填充。补充阅读材料则是对每课课文内容的补充、扩大和深化,同时又自成体系,使学生在学过课文、做过练习之后,再一次获得对英语语言学较为完整的认识,为以后系统和全面地学习英语语言学以及其他语言理论课打下基础。

书末附有外国语言学家简介和术语表,供参阅。

本书由李延福、张清民、温洪瑞、佟光武等同志编写,承黄嘉德、傅超寰等教授审定。参加初稿编写工作的除编者外,尚有李亚非、刘健、傅祿宁诸同志。为本书始稿汇集材料的还有贺永功和李学珍两同志。

在编写过程中,全国英语教材编写组组长许国璋教授和山东大学校长吴富恒教授始终给予很大的支持和鼓励,并作了具体指导。山东大学教务处、科研处及外文系领导对本书的编写与出版也非常关心,给予了各方面的支持。

对上述诸位前辈、各级领导以及所有同志的关怀和帮助,谨此致谢。

由于我们水平所限,疏漏与不足之处在所难免,请读者赐教。

编 者

1984年12月



# Contents

## Unit One

Text: The Nature of Linguistics .....	1
S.R. * : The Study of Language .....	12

## Unit Two

Text: The Origin of Language .....	16
S.R.: The origin of the First Language .....	25

## Unit Three

Text: The Definition of Language .....	28
S.R.: The Nature of Language .....	35

## Unit Four

Text: The History of Linguistics .....	40
S.R.: History of Linguistics .....	50

## Unit Five

Text: The History of English .....	53
S.R.: The Importance of Knowing the History of English .....	62

## Unit Six

Text: The Mechanism of Speech .....	65
S.R.: Phonetics .....	75

---

\* S.R.—Supplementary Reading

## **Unit Seven**

Text: English Vowels and Their Classification .....	77
S.R.: More Than Vowels .....	88

## **Unit Eight**

Text: English Consonants and Their Classification .....	90
S.R.: Manners of Articulation .....	97

## **Unit Nine**

Text: Distinctive Sounds .....	100
S.R.: Phonology: The Sound Patterns of Language .....	106

## **Unit Ten**

Text: Morphology: The Words of Language .....	109
S.R.: Morphology .....	116

## **Unit Eleven**

Text: Traditional Grammar .....	120
S.R.: Parts of Speech .....	128

## **Unit Twelve**

Text: Structural Grammar .....	134
S.R.: Structural Analysis of English Syntax .....	140

## **Unit Thirteen**

Text: Transformational Grammar .....	146
S.R.: Another Way: Theorizing About Language .....	162

## **Unit Fourteen**

Text: Semantics (I) .....	168
S.R.: Semantics (A) .....	175

## **Unit Fifteen**

Text: Semantics (II) .....	180
S.R.: Semantics (B) .....	189

## **Unit Sixteen**

Text: Pragmatics: The Study of Language Use and Communication .....	195
S.R.: Problems with the Message Model .....	206

## **Unit Seventeen**

Text: Human Communication: Three Systems .....	212
S.R.: A Glance at Some Other Communication Systems .....	218

## **Unit Eighteen**

Text : Style as Choice .....	222
S.R.: The Styles of the Five Clocks .....	232

<b>Appendix I Linguists</b> .....	243
-----------------------------------	-----

<b>Appendix II Glossary</b> .....	251
-----------------------------------	-----

## Unit One

### The Nature of Linguistics<sup>1</sup>

Linguistics is the branch of learning which studies the languages of any and all human societies: how each language is constructed; how it varies through space and changes through time; how it is related to other languages; and how it is used by its speakers. Fundamental to all branches of linguistics is the basic question: What *is* language? How does it work? What happens when a speaker says something and a hearer understands him? If we look at a typical act of communication by means of language, two aspects seem quite clear. First, it is obvious that language makes use of *sound*. Second, this sound is used to convey *meaning* from speaker to hearer. We might therefore be tempted to say that a language is a communication system consisting merely of sound and meaning.

If we look a little further, however, it becomes clear that this is not even a first approximation of the way language works. Language does indeed involve sound and meaning; but it clearly involves much more than this since we can easily think of situations in which we can hear the sound and know the meaning and yet really understand nothing of the language. Consider the following example. Suppose that we are in Africa and we see two

people talking together. The first one makes the sounds "Saa ngapi?" whereupon the second pulls out his watch, looks at it, and then makes the sounds "Saa nane." Here two messages have been transmitted. We have heard all the sounds in each message, and can easily guess at the meanings: the first speaker was surely asking *what time it is*, and the second speaker almost surely answered that *it is two o'clock*—since our own watch tells us that this is the time. Yet though we have heard the sound and know the meaning, we do not yet really understand anything of the Swahili language. To learn this we must investigate the connection between sound and meaning. We must find out what parts of the sound correspond to what parts of meaning. Even we must be familiar with the culture related to the communication.<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand a little better how sound and meaning are connected so as to yield language, let us consider a typical speech event in which a speaker says something and is understood by a hearer. How does the speaker formulate his message? How is it transmitted to the hearer? And how does the hearer understand it? There seem to be 11 different stages in the whole process, and we can consider them briefly one by one.

1. *Semantic encoding.* The first thing the speaker must do is to formulate his message in the semantic units his language uses. Since this is like putting a message into proper shape to fit the code in which it is being sent, we can call this stage "semantic encoding." Every language has its own particular set of semantic units; and any message which is to be sent must first be encoded into the particular semantic units of that language such as *saa* in "Saa ngapi?" (Swahili) vs *time* in "What time is it?" (English).

2. *Grammatical encoding.* Once a speaker has chosen the proper semantic units for the message he wants to send, his next task is to find the corresponding grammatical units and to arrange them in the way required by the grammar of his language. For example, if we want to make an English message out of the semantic units *boy*, *buy*, and *book*, we can encode them grammatically—among other ways—as *The boy buys the book*. As we do so, our language forces us to add some further elements of meaning to the message—the kind of meaning that is customarily called “grammatical meaning.” In English we are forced to specify whether *boy* and *book* are singular or plural: *boy* vs. *boys*, *book* vs. *books*. We are also forced to classify both units as either definite or indefinite: *the boy* vs. *a boy*, *the book* vs. *a book*. And we are forced to specify whether the buying takes place in the present or the past: present, *The boy buys the book*; past, *The boy bought the book*. Further, if we make *boy* singular, we must add the grammatical element—*s* to the unit *buy*. *The boy buy –s the book*—though English does not force us to do this if we choose past *bought* rather than present *buy*.

What name should we select for the grammatical units that are used at this stage of the encoding process—for example, for the six units in the sentence *The boy buy –s the book*? The customary name for each such minimal grammatical unit is, in English, the term “morpheme”.

3. *Phonological encoding.* Once a speaker has given the proper grammatical encoding to his message, we can assume that it consists simply of a string of morphemes. What the speaker must now do is to convert this string of morphemes into sound so that

the message can be transmitted to his listener. The simplest way of doing this would be to go directly from morpheme to sound, converting each unit of grammar (each morpheme) into a unit of sound. A sentence such as *Cat eats fish* would then require four different units of sound: one each for the morphemes *cat*, *eat*, *-s*, and *fish*. What every language does is to convert each unit of grammar (each morpheme) not into *one* unit of sound but rather into *one or more* units of sound. Such units of sound are customarily called phonemes. For example, in English we encode the morpheme *if* into two phonemes, /if/; the morpheme *cough* into three phonemes, /kɒf/; *shift* into four phonemes, /ʃift/.

4-8. *Sending, transmission, receiving.* The first three stages in our typical speech event have now been completed: the message has been encoded (1) semantically, (2) grammatically, and (3) phonologically. We are now ready for the next five stages: two for sending, one for transmission, and two for receiving. As encoded thus far, the message consists of a sequence of phonemes. At stage (4) the speaker sends instructions from his brain to his speech organs, telling them what movements to make for each phoneme. At stage (5) the speech organs make these movements and thereby set the air molecules into vibration, producing audible sound. At stage (6) these vibrations fan out from the speaker's mouth and are transmitted to any listener within hearing distance. At stage (7) the vibrations produce corresponding vibrations in the hearer's middle and inner ear. And at stage (8) the energy of these vibrations is carried from the hearer's ear to his brain.

9–11. *Phonological, grammatical, semantic decoding.* At this point the process of decoding begins. As the hearer receives the energy of the message in his brain, he must decode it (9) phonologically, (10) grammatically, and (11) semantically. This, of course, is possible only if he possesses, somewhere inside his head, the same total code as the speaker—that is, if he knows the same language. We shall assume this to be true.

How is this decoding accomplished? To answer this question in detail we would have to look inside the hearer's brain, and this is obviously impossible. Nevertheless, we can make a number of useful indirect observations. Basically what the hearer seems to do is to match what he hears against his own knowledge of the language. In doing this he does not decode the entire message first phonologically, then grammatically, then semantically; instead, he seems to race back and forth from one part of the total code to another, picking up all the clues he can. Let us suppose that he hears, in American English, the partial sentence "He was writing / riding. . . , " with a sound halfway between a / t / and a / d /. From the phonological code he knows that such a halfway sound is not acceptable; it must be decoded as either a / t / or a / d / because the code does not provide for any halfway items. The grammatical code tells him that the word can be either *writing* with / t / or *riding* with / d / , since both of these verbs occur in English. To settle the matter he must refer it on to the semantic code. If the sentence continues "He was writing / riding *a letter*," he knows that it must be the word *writing* with / t / ; but if it continues "He was writing / riding *a horse*," he knows that it must be the word *riding* with / d / .



In the preceding paragraphs we have described a typical speech event in order to show the various aspects of language with which linguistics is concerned. *Semantics* is the study of the semantic code. *Lexicology* studies the total stock of morphemes—the “lexicon”—of a language, particularly those items which have clear semantic references (e.g. , *boy*, *buy*, *book*, as against *the*, *a*, *-s*, *to*). (Note the difference between *lexicology*, the study of the lexicon of a language, and *lexicography*, the art of making dictionaries of various sorts. ) *Grammar* is the study of the grammatical code. *Phonology* (or, in American usage, phonemics) is the study of the phonological code. *Articulatory phonetics* studies the movements of the vocal organs in producing the sounds of speech (the way the sounds of speech are “articulated”); *acoustic phonetics* studies the vibrations of the air molecules; and *auditory phonetics* studies the way the sounds of speech are perceived by the human ear.

Further branches of linguistics are concerned with variations within language, changes in language, and relationships among languages. *Linguistic geography* deals with the way in which a language varies through geographical space. Traditionally, linguistic geography also deals with the variations in linguistic usage of different social classes, though work of this type has recently come to be called *sociolinguistics*.

All of these branches of linguistics are commonly referred to as *synchronic linguistics*—the study of a given language at a given period in time. Opposed to this is *diachronic linguistics*—the study of language change through time. Here the two chief branches are *historical linguistics*, which studies the historical de-