

MODERN
ENGLISH
LEXICOLOGY

LIN FU-MEI

安 徽 教 育 出 版 社

现代英语词汇学

林福美 编著

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前 言

我国英语教学，从本世纪初以来，长期采用语法翻译法，仅有若干教会学校曾试用不完全的直接法，关于英语词汇的规则一般都并入英语语法中讲授，仅占语法的一小部分。解放以后，传入苏联斯大林语言学学说，语法和词汇被并列为语言的两大组成部分，而苏联各校内英语词汇学独立设课讲授的办法，也同时介绍到我国各高等院校的英语专业。从五十年代以来，国内不少高校都逐步开出英语词汇学课程，或作为高年级必修课，或列为选修课程之一，教材或采用苏联版本或自编。

南京大学外文系林福美教授讲授英语词汇学课程，先后已将近卅年。她采用了苏联有关书籍中的有用内容，并结合她多年教学中积累的经验，自编教材，经过多次修改，现即将出版问世。据我所知，这还是我国教师用英语撰编的英语词汇学的第一部，值得在此祝贺与推荐。

陈 嘉

1983年12月于南京

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Preface

This book is meant as a text-book in English Lexicology forming part of the curricula of the Foreign Language Departments of colleges and universities in China. It is intended for students, teachers of English, postgraduates and all those who are interested in the English language and its vocabulary.

The book is concerned with the vocabulary of Modern English in accordance with the theory of Modern Linguistics. The emphasis of the book has been placed on the five sub-branches of English Lexicology, namely, Semantics, Etymology, Historical Lexicology, Phraseology and Lexicography. These are closely related to one another in that they all aim at the study of the vocabulary and basic word-stock of English, but differ from one another in that each approaches its subjects from its own points of view. In other words the English vocabulary can be studied semantically, etymologically, historically, idiomatically and lexicographically. From these different aspects the student can acquire a comprehensive view of the lexical phenomena, principles, laws and regulations governing the English vocabulary such as the problems of word structure and word-formation, the semantic structure of English words and relation existing between lexical layers, the replenishment of the vocabulary and idioms, etc.

The book is based on the course of lectures in English

Lexicology delivered by the author for a number of years at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Nanjing University. In preparing this work the author has tried her best to bring up the book up to date by omitting some parts and introducing additional material such as the Word-structure of English, Varieties of English and the Methods of Lexicological Research. Her indebtedness to various books will be readily perceived from the bibliography.

There are some review questions at the end of each chapter. The aim of these questions is to enable the students to go over the main points of the exposition of problem or problems under consideration. Some exercises in Modern English Lexicology have been appended in order to teach the students to observe, analyse and interpret language phenomena.

The author is grateful to those who are teaching English Lexicology in other colleges or universities for their interest in the first draft of this book, and some have even suggested that this book should be published. Thanks to their suggestion the author has revised the first draft. The author is greatly indebted to Professor Chen Jia and her fellow colleagues for their valuable help and advice, especially Professor Liu Zhimo who has read the book in its entirety and has made valuable suggestions for improvement and correction. The author wishes to express her sincere thanks to Jin Zhuyun, Lecturer in English, for proof-reading and making suggestions for correction.

Finally the author is most grateful to Professors Yang

Gongzuo, Gong Xiu-fen and Comrade Yen Han for their valuable help and advice in the process of publishing this book, especially Professor Yang Gongzuo who has read the book and has made comments and corrections for improvement.

Lin Fu-mei

Professor of English

Nanjing University, November, 1983

内 容 简 介

本书包括：词的结构和构词法，词汇的来源，语文学及词的语义分析，习语学，词典学，英国英语和美国英语，词汇学的研究方法等，共十二章。

本书重点是揭示现代英语词汇的规律，说明英语词汇体系在历史上如何形成，分析研究词的性质（包括词的形成、内容及其发展变化）、词与词之间的关系和各种词汇之间的相互关系。为便于读者学习，书中理论部分均有实例说明，各章附有复习思考题和练习题。

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1 What Is Lexicology ?

Lexicology is a branch of linguistics dealing with the vocabulary of a language and the properties of words as the main units of language. The term vocabulary is used to denote the system formed by the sum total of all the words and word equivalents that the language possesses. The term word denotes the basic unit of a given language. The term word equivalent denotes English idioms or word-group representing a semantic unit and it is equivalent to a single word in the sentence. The term lexicology is composed of two Greek morphemes: *Lexi-* meaning — ‘word, phrase’, hence *lexicos* — ‘having to do with words’, and *logos* which denotes ‘a department of knowledge’. Thus, the literal meaning of lexicology is the ‘science of the word’. It is concerned with the study of words in the broad sense of the term. It not only studies the meaning and making of words, but also their ways and manners, the ups and downs in their individual fortunes, where they come from, what they have been through, and the whys and hows of their appearance and disappearance. Itself a branch of linguistics, lexicology has yet five sub-branches. These are closely related to one another in that they all aim at the study of the vocabulary and the basic word

stock of a language, but differ from one another in that each approaches its subjects from its own points of view.

1.2 What Are the Sub-branches of Lexicology ?

Five sub-branches of lexicology are as follows:

1. **Semantics** (Semeaiology) is a branch of linguistics by itself. It is a sub-branch of lexicology. It is the basis of lexicology. Its importance is evident in social intercourse. To get one's meaning clear, and to be able to put across one's idea is the first thing required of a speaker in social intercourse. Without that, social intercourse won't be effective. Semantics also investigates the nature, structure, and the development and change of word-meaning. Polysemy and homonymy, synonymy and antonymy, metaphor and metonymy, etc. — These are all important subjects to be dealt with in semantics (semaiology). What is more, semantics is now coming to the fore as the central problem of linguistic investigation of all levels of language structure.

2. **Etymology** is our next sub-branch. It is closely connected with semantics and is also concerned with the meaning of word. But whereas semantics studies the meaning of words from the point of view of current usage, etymology does this from a historical point of view. Etymology studies the meaning, origin and history of individual words and their development. It is therefore closely related to the history of a language and to the history of the people who speak it.

3. **Historical Lexicology** is the next sub-branch. It must not be confused with etymology. Etymology studies the history of individual words, their original forms and meanings. Historical lexicology studies the development of the vocabulary as a whole on the basis of etymology and other sciences such as the history of the English language and English social history. It studies the history of the constant enrichment and replenishment of the vocabulary, why certain words have been coined, how certain old meanings are now lost to us while new meanings have been added, and in what way foreign loan words have been introduced, assimilated, and taken on native forms, until they are not felt to be aliens at all.

4. **Phraseology** is another sub-branch of lexicology. Lexicology not only studies individual words but also studies set expressions, stock phrases, cast-iron idioms which in their common acceptance have acquired very definite and specific meanings that cannot be made out from the individual words they are composed of. They may therefore be considered word equivalents. Phraseology is to study formation and usage, their classification and characteristics.

5. **Lexicography** is the last sub-branch of lexicology, but not the least. It has a common object of study with lexicology as both deals with the same problems — the form, meaning, usage and origin of vocabulary units. The lexicographer has to have a good knowledge of lexicology because he must consider the degree of usefulness of each word; he has to consider what to enter and what not to enter; he has to leave out the less useful ones, since an ordinary dictionary must needs be limited in

scope and size. Further, he has to supply adequate information on the usage of each word, whether it is literary, or colloquial, or slang, or obsolete, or whether it is official, or dialectal or familiar. Lastly, he has to define the meanings of words, and in the case of polysemantic words, he has to make clear which are direct meanings and which are transferred or figurative meanings.

The subbranches of lexicology — semantics, etymology, historical lexicology, phraseology and lexicography have been briefly examined. It must be pointed out that each of these branches enjoys an independent status and requires a special study of its own; all of them are closely related to one another. Each can be an independent course and a branch of linguistics by itself.

1.3 The Connection of Lexicology with Other Branches of Linguistics and Other Non-linguistic Subjects

Having made clear what lexicology is about, we shall discuss the place of lexicology among the linguistic science as well as its relation to other non-linguistic subjects.

1. **Its relation to General Linguistics** The study of words constitutes an important part of general linguistics, but whereas in general linguistics the word is studied as a unit of language in general, not of any particular language, lexicology is occupied with the study of words of a particular language only. This book, *Modern English Lexicology*, is a book on the study of

words of a particular language only.

2. **Its Relation to Grammar** Lexicology as a branch of linguistics is inseparably bound with grammar. The interrelation between the vocabulary and grammar is not open to doubt. They are organically related to each other. The vocabulary of a language assumes tremendous importance when it comes under the control of grammar, which defines the rules governing the modification of words and the combination of words into sentences and the formation of new words. Words, then, become significant speech-forms only when they are governed by grammar. True, there are isolated words in dictionaries, in text-books, but even there they are not altogether without their grammatical forms. Thus in the word *worker* the *er*-ending is a grammatical form, and so are the *ous*-ending in *previous* and the *y* in *rocky*. Thus even isolated words bear a definite relation to the grammatical system because they belong to some parts of speech. When used in actual speech, words seldom occur in isolation. They are arranged in certain patterns conveying the relations between the things for which they stand; therefore, alongside with their lexical meaning, they possess some grammatical meaning. The two kinds of meaning are often interdependent.

The tie between lexicology and grammar are particularly strong in the sphere of word-formation. The characteristic features of English word formation, the morphological structure of the English words chiefly depend upon the English grammatical system.

3. **Its relation to phonetics** Phonetics investigates the