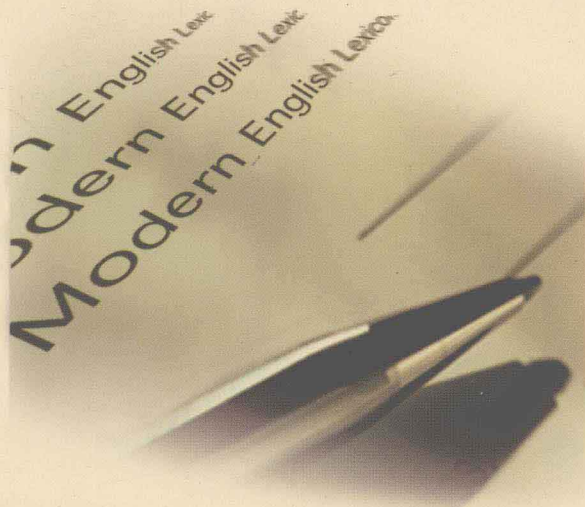


*Modern English Lexicology*

# 现代英语词汇学

杨艳华 张树凡 编著



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藏书章

张树凡 编著

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## 内 容 提 要

本书以简练的语言、实用的例子系统地介绍了英语词汇学方面的知识,重点介绍了英语词汇的来源、词的结构、词的构成方法、词的理据、词的语义分类、词与词之间的语义关系、词义的变化、词义与语境、英语习语、美国英语等。

本书适合从事英语教学的教师、英语专业学生、非英语专业高级阶段学生等阅读和参考。

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## 前 言

自中国加入世界贸易组织后，英语学习者有了更多与说英语国家的人们进行口头及书面交流的机会。在交流的过程中，交流的双方不可避免地要使用英语词语。然而一些英语学习者对英语词汇知识缺乏一个较系统、全面、深刻的了解，因此不可避免会错误地理解或错误地使用一些词语，最终影响跨文化交际的顺利进行。

为了激发英语学习者对英语词语学习的兴趣，对英语词汇有一个较系统的、全面的、深刻的认识，本书系统地介绍了英语词汇学理论知识，主要包括英语词汇的来源、词的结构、词的构成方法、词的理据、词的语义分类、词与词之间的语义关系、词义的变化、词义与语境、英语习语、美国英语等。

为了能使广大英语学习者更好地理解词汇学理论知识，将所学基本理论知识应用到词语学习的实践中，本书采用了新颖的练习形式，即在练习题中给出了新闻英语、广告英语、演讲英语等篇章段落。英语学习者可以通过阅读篇章段落挖掘出词汇学理论知识在其中的体现，如英语转换词、复合词、缩写词的形象生动的运用，词的理据（即词的语音形式、结构形式等所能传达出的词语意义）知识，词本身所具有的一些意义（内涵意义、情感意义、文体意义、搭配意义、地方意义等），篇章中词与词之间的关系（同义关系、反义关系、上下义关系的妙用），词的意义变化（如用来形

容男子词语的词义升格、用来形容女子词语的词义降格等), 语境决定词义现象等有趣的英语词汇学理论知识。

本书可以使英语学习者了解英语词汇学理论知识, 拓宽其英语词语知识面, 培养其欣赏英语词语的能力, 激发其对英语词语学习的兴趣, 使其感受到英语词语学习的乐趣, 最终提高英语学习者运用和理解英语词语的能力。

本书第三、四、五、六、七、八、九章由杨艳华编写, 第一、二、十、十一章由张树凡编写。

由于编者水平所限, 书中有不妥之处, 诚请读者给予指正。

编著者

2007 年 7 月

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Definition of 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. It covers the following subbranches: morphology, semantics, stylistics, etymology, etc. Morphology studies the internal structures of words and rules, by which words are formed. Semantics is the study of meaning. Etymology studies the origins of words or expressions. Stylistics deals with the study of style.

All the words in a language together make up what is known as its vocabulary.

### 1.2 Definition of a word

The definition of a word has drawn the attention of many linguists for centuries. Many linguists have given their definitions for word, but none is perfect so far. Putting the definitions given by some linguists together, we can get the definition that a word is the basic unit of speech and minimal free form which has a given sound and meaning and syntactic function.

### 1.3 Classification of English words

Words can be classified in different ways. Here we will focus on words classified according to origin, level of usage and notion.

As far as the origins of English words are concerned, some words are native words which are of Anglo-Saxon origin, and some are words borrowed from other languages.

As to the level of usage, some words are common or popular words, literary words, colloquial words, slang words and technical words.

Common or popular words which cover ordinary things or activities necessary to everyday life are stylistically neutral and used both on formal or informal occasion. Literary words are mainly used on formal occasion, especially in writing. Colloquial words are commonly used in spoken English, as in conversations among friends. Slang words which are highly colloquial are words of a vigorous, colorful or taboo nature, invented for specific occasion or uses. They are often considered as below the level of standard educated speech. Technical words are words used in various special fields such as in art, sports, scientific fields, etc.

When words are classified according to notion, it deals with function words and content words. Function words are often short words like determiners, prepositions, conjunctions, etc. Content words are often used to name objects, qualities, actions, processes or states, etc.

## **1.4 Aims and significance of the English lexicology course**

English lexicology is aimed to give a systematic description of the word-stock of modern English. It studies the sources of words, word-structure, word-formation, the meanings of words, the semantic relations between words, changes in word meaning, idioms, etc.

The study of modern English lexicology is of great significance to learners of English language. A good command of word-structures and word-formation can help learners to enlarge their vocabulary and develop their ability to guess the meaning of words. The understanding of different types of word meaning and the semantic relations between words enables learners to become aware of word meanings in different contexts and to use words correctly.

In brief, the study of English lexicology will greatly benefit learners in their English study.

# Chapter 2

## Sources of English vocabulary

English vocabulary is made up of the native words and borrowed words which are the two main sources of English vocabulary. The native words often refer to words of Anglo-Saxon origin, belonging to the original English stock. The borrowed words, on the other hand, refer to words taken over from other languages.

### 2.1 Native words in modern English

The study of English vocabulary must obviously begin with the native words which were brought to Britain in the 5th century by the German tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes who eventually overran the Britons. Before about 450 A. D. there was no English language in Britain. English language was just the language spoken by Anglo-Saxons.

The native words form the foundation and framework of the modern English vocabulary. When speaking of the role of the native words in English language, linguists usually confine themselves to the small Anglo-Saxon stock of words, which is estimated to make up 25% ~ 30% of the English vocabulary. Though small in number, the native words are most frequently used in everyday speech and writing.

Words of Anglo-Saxon origin belong to very important semantic

groups. They stand for fundamental things: the most intimate family relations (*father, mother, sister, son, daughter, wife*); most natural phenomena (*sun, day, snow, rain, wind, fire, spring*); many common animals (*horse, deer, cow, sheep, hen, dog*); most plants (*oak, birch, elm, willow*); parts of the body (*head, hand, arm, eye, ear*); staple food (*bread, barley, wheat*); size and color (*black, white, big, small*); concrete actions (*make, go, come, hear, drive, bite, ride, rise, shine, bow, fly, stand, let*); most auxiliaries and modal verbs (*shall, will, should, would, must, can, may*); pronouns (*I, you, he, my, your, his, who*); prepositions (*in, out, on, under*); conjunctions (*and, but, still, as*) and most numerals.

The native words have the following fundamental features:

(1) National character. Native words belong to the people as a whole. They are known to every person in that society, no matter what social position he or she occupies.

(2) Great stability. As native words denote the commonest things necessary to life, they are likely to remain unchanged. However, the stability is relative because changes may take place in native words.

(3) Word-forming ability. Most words of native origin are very active in forming new words. For example, the word *hand* has brought such derivatives and compounds as *handy, handle, handcraft, handful, handbook, hand-to-mouth* (having or providing only the bare essentials), etc.

(4) Wide collocability. Many native words combine readily with other words to form phrases and idioms. For example, the word



*heel* enters the following expressions: *heel of Achilles* (a vulnerable point), *heel over head* or *head over heels* (upside down), *cool one's heels* (be kept waiting), *take to one's heels* (run away).

(5) Plurality of meanings. Most native words have undergone changes in semantic meaning, and as a result are highly polysemantic. For example, the verb *tell* expresses the following meanings: 'to make known'; 'to express'; 'to explain'; 'to utter'; 'to direct'; 'to distinguish'; 'to count'; 'to reveal'; 'to scold'.

(6) Stylistically neutral. Stylistically speaking, most native words are neutral. For instance, in the pair of synonymous words *begin* and *commence*, the former as a native word is neutral in meaning, but the latter as a borrowed word is often used on formal occasion.

(7) High frequency value. The native words constitute the greater part of the most frequent words used in any style of speech. They make up no less than 80% of the 500 most frequently used words.

## 2.2 Borrowed words in modern English

In the study of vocabulary, words taken over from foreign languages are known as loan words, borrowed words or borrowings. The borrowed words have greatly enriched English vocabulary. The sources and scope of foreign words depend on historical factors. The Roman invasion, the introduction of Christianity, the Danish and Norman Conquest, and the development of colonialism and imperialism combined result in