高等院校研究性学习英语系列教材

英语语言学实用教程

陈新仁 • 编著

English Linguistics: A Practical Coursebook

苏州大学出版社

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前言

语言是我们生活的一部分，是人类拥有的一种独特资源。英语是一门国际性语言，在中国拥有广大的学习者。把握语言、学好英语对于每个英语专业学生来说都意义重大。

“英语语言学概论”是高校英语专业课程设置中的一门必修课，其目的就在于揭示语言的基本规律，系统描述英语的结构层次、构成规则、使用原则、社会变异、文化属性等，从而深化学生对语言的认识，提高英语学习效率。

国内为“英语语言学概论”课程编写的教材有多种版本。总体来看，这些教材采用典型的理论课程教材编写思路，理论性、系统性强。然而，过强的理论性容易引发“一言堂”、“填鸭式”的教学程式，容易让课堂陷入沉闷，学生提不起兴趣，教师难以获得教学成就感。为此，编者广泛、深入研究了国内外大量语言学入门教材，研读了一些理论课程的教学研究成果，决定另辟蹊径，引入先进的研究型教学理念，以学生需求为导向，以师生互动为手段，以促进英语学习和培养学生的研究性思维和能力为目标，博采众长，推陈出新，从内容组织到编排方式进行大胆的革新，力图为英语专业学生和教师提供一个全新的选择。

本教材的主要特色为：

- 面向中国学生和教师。从中国学生学习英语、使用英语的实际出发，根据课程教学大纲，结合中国学生的实际需求，提供精选的、难度适中的语言理论知识。为中国教师着想，以讨论性、开放性活动组织教学内容，便于教师开展活泼、生动的课堂教学，获取良好的教学效果。
- 面向英语的语言学。从各种渠道选取大量有趣、典型、题材各异的英语素材，全方位探索英语的基本规律，体现真正的“英语”语言学，同时适当联系汉语，增进学生对英语个性的把握，从而服务于英语学习和交际。
- 面向教学全过程。课前部分有适量的浅易阅读材料（Pre-Class Reading），为课堂讲解、讨论作铺垫，并通过一些真伪习题予以检查阅读情况；课内有充足的包含语言学知识点的开放性互动话题（In-Class Activities），融理论知识的讲解和应用于课堂活动中。在多数章节中，

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提供了3个操作性强、可供学生进行课外合作性学习、课内团队汇报的话题(Presentation Topics)。课后设计了丰富多样的探索性、研究性习题(Exercises),以巩固、深化相关章节的学习效果。教师可以根据学生水平和课时情况,有选择地使用教材中提供的讨论内容和练习。另外,为了拓宽学有余力者的语言学知识面,第1章至第12章还分别提供了2篇精选的、配有思考题的原汁原味读物(Recommended Readings)。

- 注重语言理论与语言事实的结合。以语言现象为驱动,采集大量鲜活、一手的英语语料,贴近生活,力避空洞、抽象的概念讲解,力戒理论与实践的脱节,以语言事实演绎语言理论,以语言理论解读语言事实,让学生直接感受本课程的适用性、实用性和趣味性。
- 注重语言学知识传授与语言研究能力培养的结合。从课堂讨论到练习设计,注重培养学生的批判性思维,并专辟两章讲解语言研究方法论,促进学生研究能力的发展。
- 注重传统语言学理论知识与现代语言学前沿成果的结合。本教材在保留传统语言学基本内容的基础上,密切跟踪、反映当代语言学的最新发展,深入浅出地吸纳了认知语言学、语用学、会话分析、二语习得等领域的最新成果,如原型理论、隐喻理论、构块语法、词汇语用学、语块理论等。同时,引进语料库语言学的研究手段,为开展英语教学和研究提供服务。

本书共由14章组成。第1章为绪论,介绍自然语言的属性、功能、谱系、习得等。第2章至第11章从语音、结构、语义、语用、语体等角度系统解析英语。第12章介绍影响中国学生英语学习的各种因素,剖析中国学生在学习和使用英语方面存在的问题和原因。第13、14章分别讨论了从事语言实证和思辨性研究的方法。

编写本教材的思路由来已久,编者近年来一直在"英语语言学概论"课程教学中尝试本教材的部分内容和方法,取得了良好的效果。现将讲稿进行充实、扩充、修订,以教材形式出版,与读者分享。

成书之际,本人衷心感谢南京大学外国语学院英语系美籍专家唐斯诺博士(Dr. Don Snow)帮助审校全部书稿;感谢苏州大学外国语学院徐健博士为本书付出的辛劳。

由于编者水平有限,书中一定存在不少瑕疵和谬误,敬请读者和同行赐教。

编　者

2006年10月于南京大学

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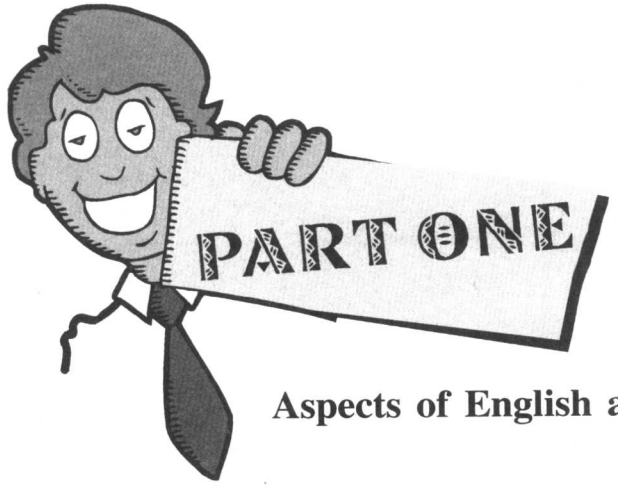


Aspects of English as a Natural Language

Linguistic phenomena can be described in terms of small collections of *discrete units*. These discrete units are governed by *rules: rules of combination* and *rules of use*.

—Adrian Akmajian et al

Unit 1 Some Preliminaries about Language

The question "What is language?" is comparable with—and, some would say, hardly less profound than—"What is life?"

—John Lyons

*1.1 The languages of the world
*1.2 The functions of language
*1.3 The defining features of language
*1.4 The origin of language
*1.5 The acquisition of language

Pre-Class Reading

1.1 The languages of the world

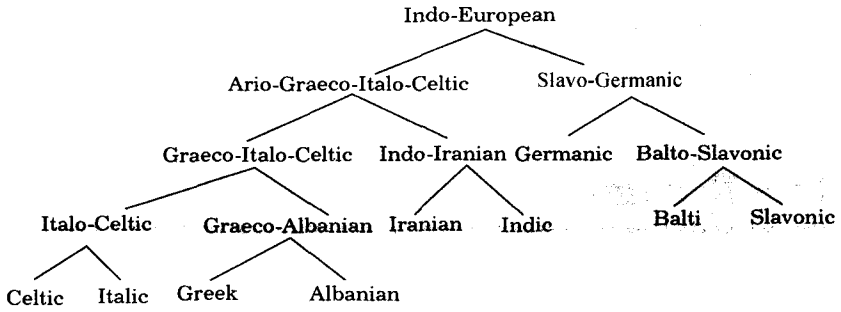
People have been called social animals and thinking animals. Understandably, humans are also language animals. The possession of language is an essential trait unique to humans, but absent in other animals. Thanks to language, we are able and apt to think. Thanks to language, we can talk about something in the past or imagine something in the future; we can describe something present, far away or non-existent. Thanks to language, we can express our ideas and emotions, and understand those of others.

There are some 6,800 known languages spoken in 200 countries of the world. In 2003, the total number of languages in the world was estimated to be 6,809, of which 2,261 have writing systems (the others are only spoken). 90% of these languages are spoken by less than 100,000 people. There are 357 languages which have less than 50 speakers. The Leco language (Bolivian Andes) has about 20

speakers. Mati Ke (in northern Australia) had four speakers in 2003. A total of 46 languages have just a single speaker. The most widely spoken languages include Chinese, English, Russian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean, and Italian, with English and French being the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat.

There are over 100 language families in the world. Top ten language families are as follows:

The Indo-European Family: The most widely studied family of languages and the family with the largest number of speakers. Languages include English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, Russian, Greek, Hindi, Bengali; and the classical languages of Latin, Sanskrit, and Persian.



The Uralic Family: A family found in Europe (Hungarian, Finnish) and Siberia (Mordvin) with complex noun structures.

The Altaic Family: A family spread from Europe (Turkish) through Central Asia (Uzbek), Mongolia (Mongolian), to the Far East (Korean, Japanese). These languages have the interesting property of vowel harmony.

The Sino-Tibetan Family : An important Asian family of languages that includes the world' s most widely spoken language, Mandarin. These languages are monosyllabic and tonal.

The Malayo-Polynesian Family: A family consisting of over 1,000 languages spread throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans as well Southeast Asia. Languages of this family include Malay, Indonesian, Maori and Hawaiian.

The Afro-Asiatic Family: This family contains languages of northern Africa and

the Middle East. The dominant languages are Arabic and Hebrew.

The Caucasian Family: A family based around the Caucas Mountains between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Georgian and Chechen are the main languages. They are known for their large number of consonants.

The Dravidian Family: The languages of southern India (in contrast to the Indo-European languages of northern India). Tamil is the best known of these languages.

Austro-Asiatic Family: This family consists of a scattered group of languages in Asia. They are found from eastern India to Vietnam. Languages include Vietnamese and Khmer.

Niger-Congo Family: This family features the many languages of Africa south of the Sahara. The many languages include Swahili, Shona, Xhosa and Zulu.

Over time, many languages have dropped out of use and many others are near extinction today. With the increase of mass communications (rapid flights, radio, television, telephone, the Internet), many of the smaller languages are in real danger of extinction. Over the last 500 years 4.5% of the world's described languages have disappeared. Even so, some countries and regions are still rich in linguistic diversity. Mexico has 52 languages spoken within its borders. The island of Papua New Guinea has over 700, virtually a different one in each valley. India has over 800 languages in several families (Indo-European, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic).

Many languages today are already placed on the endangered list. Linguists attempt to preserve these languages by studying and documenting their grammars—the phonetics, phonology, and so on—and by recording for posterity the speech of the last few speakers. This is significant, because the grammar of each language provides new evidence about the nature of human cognition. Also, the literature, poetry, ritual speech, and word structure of each language store the collective intellectual achievements of a culture, offering unique perspectives on the human condition. The disappearance of a language is tragic; not only are these insights lost, but the major medium through which a culture maintains and renews itself is gone as well. For this reason, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) passed a resolution in 1991 stating that "as the disappearance of any one language constitutes an irretrievable loss to mankind, it is for UNESCO a task of great urgency to respond to this

situation by promoting ... the description—in the form of grammars, dictionaries, and texts—of endangered and dying languages".

1.2 The functions of language

By and large, language is a tool of communication and thinking. Specifically, language can serve the following functions:

phatic: *Hello!*

directive: *Get out of my way!*

informative: *The earth revolves around the sun.*

interrogative: *Do you know his hobby?*

expressive: *I hate her.*

evocative: *How do you like Jack?*

performative: *I hereby declare the meeting open.*

M. A. K. Halliday put forward a tripartite classification of language functions, namely the **ideational function** (language can be used to represent the world), the **interpersonal function** (language can be used to encode interpersonal relations) and the **textual function** (language can be used to construct texts). An utterance in context fulfils the three **metafunctions** simultaneously.

Language may serve communicative purposes and play a role in group identity. These two functions are complementary. With their ability to communicate, human beings can build communities, which then provide, among other things, a powerful source of identity for their members. Language can be tool of inclusion and exclusion. It is a vital component in a group's identity.

1.3 The defining features of language

Language, as a system of communication, falls within the scope of **semiotics**, the science of signs, about which there has been extensive discussion in the past decades. Unlike other systems of communication, language has the following design features:

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