

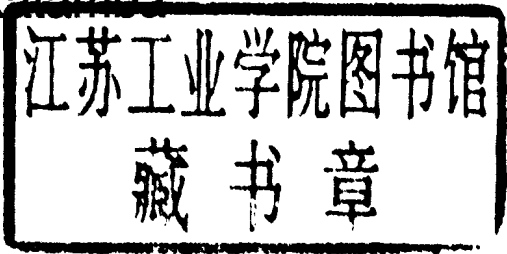
English Words

Francis Katamba



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Preface

This book developed out of a course on English words that I have taught at Lancaster over the last few years. It is intended to arouse curiosity about English words and about language in general, especially among students who are not intending to specialise in linguistics.

Is it not strange that we spend so many of our waking hours talking and yet we know so little about words? Putting words under a microscope and peering at them seems to be a dead boring and absolutely unrewarding subject. Most people know more about sport, cars, computers, gardening, virtually about anything than they know about words. If you are one of them, then read on.

This book was written for you. It is intended to disabuse you of the false impression that investigating words is tedious, dry and totally unenjoyable. *English Words* takes you on a voyage of discovery during which you find out how words are structured, how they convey meaning, how their spelling relates to pronunciation, how new words are manufactured, how the meaning of words changes as time passes and how words are imported from other languages. Finally, in the concluding chapter we marvel at the ability you and I have to store tens of thousands of words in our minds and to retrieve the right words instantaneously in conversation. All this is exciting stuff.

Traditionally, the student is not offered a single course or course-book that covers all the various topics that I have listed above. My aim in departing from normal practice by covering such a wide range of topics in one book is to provide a synthesis of what linguists and students of neighbouring disciplines such as psychology have found out about words. So, this book gives a panoramic view of words in the English language. I think there is

some virtue in making sure that students do not concentrate so hard on seeing the trees that they miss the forest.

Another feature of the book is that it is primarily a descriptive study of words in the English language. It is only very occasionally that the structure of words in other languages is discussed.

No previous knowledge of linguistics is assumed. I keep linguistic theory and jargon mostly in the background and focus on the description. Studying the contents of this book will not turn you into a morphologist, but it will teach you a lot of things about English.

Your involvement in learning about English words is important. You will not be invited to watch all the interesting things about words from a distance as a mere spectator. Plenty of examples and exercises are provided for you to do some of the investigations yourself.

It is my pleasure to thank many people who have helped me in various ways during the preparation of this book. First, I acknowledge the help of my family. The writing and preparation of the book would have been an even more arduous task without their constant support and active help in hunting for examples and illustrations.

I am also grateful to various other people whose comments, advice and support have been very useful. I thank Claire L'Enfant, Senior Editor at Routledge, who started it all when she invited me to undertake this project and would not take no for an answer. In addition, I would like to thank the editorial and design staff at Routledge, in particular Beth Humphries and Emma Cotter for their advice and help in the preparation of this book. Next, I would like to thank in a special way first-year undergraduates on *Course LING 152: English Words* at Lancaster over the last couple of years who have been such co-operative, critical and really excellent guinea pigs.

I am also grateful to a number of colleagues and friends. I thank Jenny Thomas, Mick Short and Keith Brown, who commented on part of an early draft. And I thank Ton That Ai Quang from whom I received the Vietnamese data. Finally, above all, I am indebted to Dick Hudson and an anonymous American reader who went through the entire manuscript thoroughly and provided numerous useful comments and suggestions on matters of substance and presentation. The book is much better in every way than it

would otherwise have been without their assistance. Any imperfections that still remain are my responsibility.

*Francis Katamba
Lancaster, 1993*

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Abbreviations

Adj.	Adjective
Adv.	Adverb
Af.	Affix
Ag.	Agent
BVS	Basic verbal suffix which is normally <i>-a</i>
Class.	Classifier
Det.	Determiner
FLH	Full Listing Hypothesis
Fr.	French
habit.	Habitual
indic.	Indicative mood
Instr.	Instrumental case
ME	Middle English
N	Noun
NP	Noun Phrase
Obj.	Object
OE	Old English
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
ON	Old Norse
3p.	3rd person singular
P	Pronoun
part.	Participial mood
Pat.	Patient
Pl./pl.	Plural
PP	Prepositional phrase
Pres.	Present
RP	Received Pronunciation
S	Sentence
1s.	1st person singular

Sing./sg.	Singular
Subj.	Subject
V	Verb
V_{en}	Verb ending in -en (past participle)
V_{ing}	Verb ending in -ing (present participle)
VP	Verb phrase
WP	Word-and-paradigm

Key to symbols used

1. SYMBOLS FOR PHONEMES

A key word for each phoneme is given, first in ordinary spelling and then in phonemic transcription. The phonemic transcription represents the pronunciation in British Received Pronunciation.

Vowels

ɪ	sit	/sɪt/	i:	seed	/si:d/
e	set	/set/	ɑ:	bar	/bɑ:r/
æ	sat	/sæt/	ɔ:	saw	/sɔ:/
ʌ	mud	/mʌd/	u:	zoo	/zu:/
ɒ	dog	/dɒg/	ɜ:	fur	/fɜ:/
ʊ	good	/gʊd/			
ə	send <u>er</u>	/sendə/			
	<u>a</u> bove	/əbʌv/			
eɪ	eight	/eɪt/	əʊ	low	/ləʊ/
aɪ	pie	/paɪ/	aʊ	town	/taʊn/
ɔɪ	toil	/tɔɪl/			
ɪə/	beer	/bɪə/			
eə	bare	/beə/			
ɔə	bore	/bɔə/			
ʊə	boor	/buə/			

Consonants

p	pan	/pæn/	f	fan	/fæn/
b	ban	/bæn/	v	van	/væn/
t	tan	/tæn/	θ	thin	/θɪn/
d	did	/dɪd/	ð	then	/ðen/
k	kit	/kɪt/	s	seal	/si:l/
g	get	/get/	z	zeal	/zi:l/
tʃ	chest	/tʃest/	ʃ	ship	/ʃɪp/
dʒ	jest	/dʒest/	ʒ	measure	/meʒə/
m	mail	/meɪl/	h	hop	/hɒp/
n	nail	/neɪl/			
ŋ	long	/lɒŋ/			
l	leap	/li:p/			
r	rip	/rɪp/			
j	yes	/jes/			
w	win	/wɪn/			

2. NON-PHONEMIC SYMBOLS

- ʔ Glottal stop as in *water* /wɔ:ʔə/ as said in accents where between vowels the *t* 'can be swallowed'.
- ɫ Dark l.
- ɿ Clear l.
- ɹ (Under a consonant) syllabic consonant as in *kettle* [ketɹ].

3. OTHER SYMBOLS

- ā The symbol $\bar{\quad}$ over a vowel indicates that it is a long vowel.
- ˙ A raised dot indicates that the preceding vowel is stressed (in examples from *OED*).
- < Is derived from.
- > Becomes, develops into.
- ˘ Marks main stress on the following syllable.
- ˙ Secondary stress.
- * An asterisk shows that a given form is disallowed.
- // Slashes indicate a *broad* or phonemic transcription which only shows phonemes.
- [] Square brackets indicate a *narrow* (i.e. detailed) transcription that shows allophones.

- ~ This indicates that forms alternate.
- Rewrite as; or becomes (depending on context).
- () Optional items are put in parenthesis.

4. SMALL CAPITALS

Small capitals are used for technical terms when first introduced and occasionally thereafter to highlight their technical sense.

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