

高等学校英语专业系列教材  
Textbook Series for Tertiary English Majors



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# A Course in Modern English Lexicology

## 现代英语词汇学教程

(第二版)

主 编 丁建新



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## 内 容 提 要

本书是《求知高等学校英语专业系列教材》之一,它面向英语专业本科学生,对词汇学的一些传统内容进行了合理的整合,同时又吸收了近年来词汇研究的诸多新成果,涵盖了词汇与语法的关系、英语词汇的词源学研究、构词法、词的意义及意义关系、词的语用研究、多词表达(含搭配、词组和习语等)及利用语料库考察词汇型式等主要论题,还附有对中国英语学习者学习词汇十分有用的一些工具性内容,如常用词根表、词缀表等。各章练习力图式样灵活,使学生无需死记硬背就可以巩固所学知识。全书既有共时的研究,又有历时的视角,试图使学生在掌握词汇学的基本概念和内容的同时,将他们引导到词汇这一英语语言中最具人文色彩的部分。

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## 总 序

进入 21 世纪,我国高等教育呈现快速扩展的趋势。为适应社会、经济的快速发展,人才的培养问题已经比我国任何一个历史时期都显得更为重要。当今,人才的能力和素质的衡量越来越多地采用国际标准,人才的外语水平自然地也越来越受到培养单位和用人单位的重视,由此引发了对大学外语教学模式、教材和检测机制的新一轮讨论,掀起了新一轮的大学英语教学改革。作为外语师资队伍和外语专业人才培养的高等学校英语专业,相比之下,在教学改革思路、新教材开发和新教学模式探讨等诸方面均显得滞后。尽管高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会英语组针对当前高校发展的新形式和外语专业人才培养的新规格、新模式和新要求,修订出了新的《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》,并结合 21 世纪外语人才培养和需求的新形势,制定了由教育部高等教育司转发的《关于外语专业面向 21 世纪本科教育改革的若干意见》,就英语专业的建设提出了指导性的意见,但在实际工作中这两个文件的精神尚未落实。

为此,重庆大学出版社和外语教学界的专家们就国内高等学校英语专业建设所面临的新形势做了专题讨论。专家们认为,把“大纲”的设计和“若干意见”的思想和理念变为现实的一个最直接的体现方式,就是编写一套全新理念的英语专业系列教材;随着我国教育体制的改革,特别是基础教育课程标准的实施,适合高等学校英语专业教学需要的教材也应做相应的调整,以应对中小学英语教学改革的新要求;高等学校学生入学时英语水平的逐年提高和就业市场对外语人才需求呈多元化趋势的实际,对高等学校英语专业的人才培养、教学模式、课程设置、教材建设等方面也提出了严峻挑战,应对这些挑战,同样可以通过一套新的教材体系来实现。

迄今为止,国内尚无一套完整的、系统的英语专业系列教材;目前已有的教材出自不同的出版社,编写的思路和体例不尽相同;现有的教材因出版时间较早,内容、知识结构、教学方法和手段已经不能适应新的发展要求;传统的教材设计多数基于学科的内在逻辑和系统性,较少考虑学习者的全面发展和社会对人才需求的多元化。

自 2001 年开始,在重庆大学出版社的大力支持下,我们成立了由华中、华南、西南和西北地区的知名专家、学者和教学一线教师组成的《求知高等学校英语专业系列教材》编写组,确定了系列教材编写的指导思想和总体目标,即以《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》为依据,将社会的需求与培养外语人才的全面发展紧密结合,注重英语作为一个专业的学科系统性和科学性,注重英语教学和习得的方法与规律,突出特色和系列教材的内在逻辑关系,反映当前教学改革的新理念并具有前瞻性;锤炼



精品,建立与英语专业课程配套的新教材体系,推动英语专业的教学改革,培养高素质人才和创新人才。

系列教材力求在以下方面有所突破和创新:

第一,教材的整体性。系列教材在课程类型上分为专业技能必修课程、专业知识必修课程、专业技能选修课程、专业知识选修课程和相关专业知识课程等多个板块。在考虑每一种教材针对相应课程的特性和特色的同时,又考虑到系列教材间相互的支撑性。

第二,学生基本技能和实际应用能力的培养。在课程的设计上充分考虑英语作为一个专业来培养学生的基础和基本技能,也充分考虑到英语专业学生应该具备的专业语言、文学和文化素养。同时,教材的设计兼顾到社会需求中对英语专业学生所强调的实际应用能力的培养,除考虑课程和英语专业的培养目的,课程或课程体系应该呈现的学科基本知识和规范外,充分考虑到教材另一方面的功用,即学生通过教材接触真实的语言环境,了解社会,了解文化背景,丰富学生的实践经验。在教材编写中突出强调“enable”,让学习者在实践中学习语言、文学、文化和其他相关知识,更多地强调学习的过程,强调学生的参与,以此提高学生的实际应用技能。

第三,学生的全面发展。对高等学校英语专业学生而言,英语不仅是一门工具,更重要的是一个培养学生人文素质和跨文化意识的学科专业。系列教材强调合作性学习、探索性学习,培养学生的自主性,加强学习策略的指导。通过基础阶段课程的学习,使学生在语言知识、语言技能、文化意识、情感态度和学习策略等方面得到整体发展;在高年级阶段则更多地注重学生的人文精神、专业理论素养、中外文学及文化修养的培养。

第四,教材的开放性。一套好的教材不应该对课堂教学、老师的施教和学生的学习拓展有所制约,应给使用教材的教师和学生留有一定的空间,要让学生感到外语学习是一件愉快的事,通过学习让人思考,给人以自信,引导人走向成功。系列教材的总体设计既考虑严密的学科系统性,也考虑独具特色的开放性。不同地区、不同类型的学校,可以根据自己的生源和培养目标灵活地取舍、选用、组合教材,尤其是结合国内高等学校中正在探讨的学分制,给教与学一个多维度的课程体系。

我们希望通过这套系列教材,来推动高等学校英语专业教学改革,探讨新的教学理念、模式,为英语专业人才的培养探索新的路子,为英语专业的学生拓展求知的空间。

《求知高等学校英语专业系列教材》编委会

2004年8月

## 前言

20 世纪的语言研究中,词汇研究一直难登大雅之堂。句法几乎成为所有重要语言学派热衷研究的对象。一般认为,导致这种失衡现象的原因是,词汇不具有生成性,只有句法才具有生成性和创造性,是语言的本质之所在。其实,这种认识是有失公允的,这种研究上一边倒的做法对于语言本质的揭示有害而无益。事实上,词汇和语法只不过是语言的两种不同形式而已,它们都是体现意义的方式,是同一问题的两个方面、两种视角。词汇之于语法,有如砖之于混凝土,它们共同构筑意义的大厦。语言研究,就像从山的两端同时挖一条隧道,一端是词汇研究,另外一端是语法研究。挖的是同一座山,这座山,就是语言研究的终极目标——意义。语言研究重句法、轻词汇的状况在上个世纪下半叶有所转机。这是由于计算机技术的发展使得在短时间内处理大量语料成为可能。语料库语言学家们开始利用计算机来考察词汇形式,使通过词汇来研究语言最终成为现实,并取得句法研究从未有过的新成果。这种以词汇为出发点的语言研究方法尽管仍未成为主流,但它却孕育着一种全新的语言研究方法,具有可观的研究前景。有人甚至预言,传统句法研究的领地,正逐渐被词汇研究这支游牧部落所占领。

我们是在这样的学术背景下在过去的几年中从事英语词汇研究,并接受重庆大学出版社关于编写《现代英语词汇学教程》的稿约的。教材的编写需要以理论研究为前提,但与理论文章的撰写又不尽相同,二者有着不同的话语方式。因此,对于一个从事理论研究、论文撰写为主的团队来说,编写这一教材不能不算是一种挑战。在编写的过程中,我们力图深入浅出,使之适合课堂教学的使用。但是,正如我们的读者将要看到的一样,理想与现实实际上总是有一定的距离。词汇学是我国大学英语系的一门传统课程,国内现有的几本教材对于这一课程传统的建立可谓功不可没。对于这些教材,以及国外这一方面的最新教材,我们都多有参考,并在参考书目中一一列出。

词是物的表征,是思想的载体,是意义的源泉,是历史的见证,是文化的积淀。《现代英语词汇学教程》面向英语专业本科学生,对词汇学的一些传统内容进行了合理的整合,同时又吸收了近年来词汇研究的诸多新成果,涵盖了词汇与语法的关系、英语词汇的词源学研究、构词法、词的意义及意义关系、词的语用研究、多词表达(含搭配、词组和习语等)及利用语料库考察词汇型式等主要论题,还附有对中国英语学习者学习词汇十分有用的一些工具性内容,如常用词根表、词缀表等。各章练习力图式样灵活,使学生无需死记硬背就可以巩固所学知识。全书既有共时的研究,又有历时的视角,试图使学生在掌握词汇学的基本概念和内容的同时,将他们引导到词汇这一英语语言中最具人文色彩的部分。



应该感谢中山大学黄国文教授向出版社推荐本人主持编写这一教材。提携后学,他总是不遗余力,用心良苦。广东外语外贸大学陈建平教授作为《求知高等学校英语专业系列教材》的副总主编之一,提出过许多建设性的意见,使我们获益良多。中山大学王宾教授、厦门大学杨信彰教授长期以来对我们的学术研究也有许多的关注和鼓励。中山大学外语学院硕士研究生朱丽娜、许伊、谢芳在本书的编写过程中也给予了不少帮助。在此,我们一并表示感谢。

由于编写时间仓促,书中疏漏之处在所难免,希望广大读者不吝赐教。

编 者

2004 年 8 月

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## Introduction:

# Word, Vocabulary and Lexicology

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

(W. Shakespeare. *Hamlet*)

Lexicology can be defined as the study of lexis, understood as the stock of words in a given language. This definition shows that the notion of “word” is central in the study of lexicology. So in this chapter we will first deal with this notion in general, and then we will explore the internal organization of the total stock of words in the English language. Lexicology is one of the levels of language analysis, others being phonology, grammar and semantics. An attempt will be made in this chapter to see how lexicology interacts with all these levels.

## 1.1 The notion of “word”

### 1.1.1 Do words exist?

Before we try to define the category of “word”, let us examine whether or not words really exist in language. How many words does the following sentence contain :

Do words exist?

Obviously, three. This task seems very easy; in fact, almost simple-minded. This is because it is so natural for us to pick out words from a speech signal that we do not even realize what is required to accomplish such a task. To understand this process, let us first look at the speech signal itself :

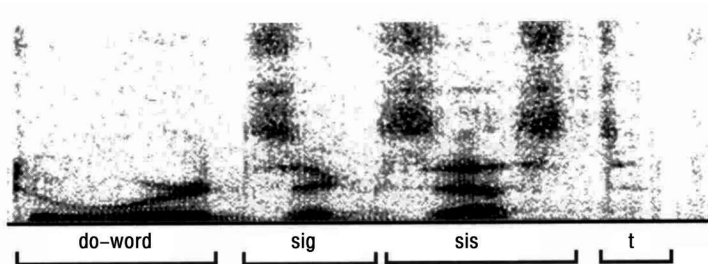


Fig. 1.1 Spectrogram of *Do Words exist?*

Notice that there is nothing in the speech signal to indicate where one word ends or another begins. Thus, the sentence that we hear as :

There are no spaces between spoken words.

could be represented on the level of the acoustic signal as something like this :

There are no spaces between spoken words.

Beginning students of a language often assume that words are conveniently demarcated by the writing system, and wonder what more evidence for their identification of word is needed. But we have already seen that the spelling system is misleading as far as the phonetic properties of lexical items are concerned, so there is no reason to take the boundaries imposed by the writing system too seriously. Moreover, the separation of words by spaces does not always correspond to functional realities. For example, in *a new waste paper basket*, the first two spaces do not have the same value as the last two because the group *waste paper basket*, although represented by three words, constitutes a semantic unit, while such a unit does not exist for the group *a new waste*. This point can be further illustrated by compound expressions such as *attorney general*. Although written as two "words", many speakers pluralize the form as *attorney generals* (as in *Kenney and Reno were two attorney generals*). For these speakers the expression functions as a single word. Consequently, a definition based on writing traditions cannot be entirely satisfactory, either.

### 1.1.2 Bloomfield's definition of word

Of course, words "really" exist. Although there are some difficulties in defining "word" from phonetic and orthographical perspectives, most fluent speakers of English seem to know what a word is. They know, for example, that words are listed in



dictionaries, that they are separated in writing by spaces, and they may be separated in speech by pauses. For linguists, word is an intermediate structure smaller than a whole phrase and yet generally larger than a single sound segment. Leonard Bloomfield, an influential linguist writing in the 1930s, defines the word as follows:

A free form that does not consist entirely of lesser free forms is a word. Thus, “boy”, which admits of no further analysis into meaningful parts, is a word; “boyish”, although capable of such analysis, is a word, because one of its constituents, the “-ish”, is a bound form; other words, such as “receive”, “perceive”, “remit”, “permit”, consist entirely of bound forms.

(Bloomfield 1933)



Leonard Bloomfield (1887—1949)

Giving up the phonetic and writing traditions of defining the word, Bloomfield relies on purely formal criteria. He is the first to suggest a formal definition of the word. He contrasts the word with other significant units: the morpheme or minimal meaningful unit and the syntagm or structure, consisting potentially of more than one word. For him, a minimal is a **morpheme**. A form which may occur alone is free. A form which may not



occur alone is bound. For example, *dog* and *plant* are free; *-er* and *-ing* as in *worker* and *singing* are bound forms. A **word** is a minimal free form. Hence, a word is viewed as a form which can occur in isolation and have meaning but which cannot be analyzed into elements which can all occur alone and also have meaning.

### 1.1.3 Characteristics of words

Although it is difficult for us to develop a perfect definition for “word”, we can work out some essential characteristics for it. Jackson & Amvela (2000: 50-52) consider that four characteristics are essential in the definition of the word in English.

First, the word is an uninterruptible unit. When elements are added to a word to modify its meaning, they are never included within that word. They respect the internal stability of the word and are added either at the beginning as prefixes of the word or at the end as suffixes. For example, the prefix *un-* and the suffix *-able* may be added to the words *lock* and *read* and give *unlock* and *readable* respectively. The word to which affixes are added and which carries the basic meaning of the resulting complex word is known as the “stem”, which may consist of one or more morphemes. The label “root” is used to refer to a stem consisting of a single morpheme.

Second, the word may consist of one or more morphemes. When it consists of one morpheme only, then it cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful units, e. g. *dog*, *hand*, *man*, *out*, *work*. These are called “simple” words, which are typically “minimum free forms”, in the sense that they may stand by themselves and yet act as minimally complete utterances, e. g. in answer to a question. When words consist of more than one morpheme, they may be either complex or compound. Complex words may be broken down into one free form and one or more bound forms, e. g. *dogs*, *happily*, *quicker*, whereas compound words consist of more than one free form, e. g. *birth + day*, *black + bird*, *candle + stick*. Some cases incorporate the characteristics of both complex and compound words, e. g. *gentle + man + ly*.

Third, the word occurs typically in the structure of phrases. Morphemes are used to build words, words to build phrases, phrases to build clauses, and clauses to build sentences. This is the typical mapping of lower level into higher level units. However, in a typical mapping, a higher level unit may be used in a lower level unit. For example, a clause such as *who came late* may be used like an adjective (word) to modify the head noun



*man* in a sentence such as *The man who came late was my brother*. This phenomenon is called “**rank shift**” by Halliday (1994).

Finally, it is also an important characteristic of each word that it should belong to a specific word class or part of speech. Where the same form appears in more than one class, as frequently happens in English, we regard the various occurrences as separate words (e. g. the verb *smoke* as distinct from the noun *smoke*). It may even be suggested that a word is defined by two factors: its semantic “nucleus” and the class to which it belongs.

## 1.2 The organization of English vocabulary

**Vocabulary** can be defined as the total word stock of a language. It is more or less synonymous with “lexis” and “lexicon”, with the first more colloquial, the third more learned and technical, and the second situated half-way between the other two. It is generally agreed that the vocabulary of a given language is not simply a listing of independent items (as the headwords in a dictionary would suggest), but is organized internally in one way or another. In this section, we will explore the ways in which English vocabulary is organized.

### 1.2.1 The syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations

The **syntagmatic/paradigmatic** distinction is one of the Saussurean distinctions that have been of great importance in the development of structuralism. This dichotomy deals with the relationships that hold between units in the language -system. The former is called relations “in praesentia” while the latter relations “in absentia”. The syntagmatic relations which a unit contracts are those which it contracts by virtue of its combination with other units of the same level. For example, the word “old” is syntagmatically related with the definite article *the* and the noun *man* in the expression *the old man*. The paradigmatic relations contracted by units are those which hold between a particular unit in a given syntagm and other units which are substitutable for it in the syntagm. For example, *old* is paradigmatically related with *young*, *tall*, etc. in expressions like *the old man*, *the young man*, *the tall man*, etc. as *man* is paradigmatically related with *woman*, *dog*, etc. in expressions like *the old man*, *the old woman*, *the old dog*, etc.

The notion of “paradigmatic relation” is of special relevance here. According to de

Saussure, every word is involved in a network of associations which connect it with other terms in the language. Some of these associations are based on similarity of meaning, others are purely formal, still others involve both form and meaning. In de Saussure's graphic formula, a given term is like the center of a constellation, the point where an infinite number of co-ordinated terms converge. De Saussure tried to represent these associations in the form of diagram using the French word *enseignement* ("teaching") (de Saussure 1959: 126). Jackson & Amvela (2000: 13) modifies the form of the diagram by giving one word a more central position and used English words to illustrate the problem. Their diagram is reproduced below.

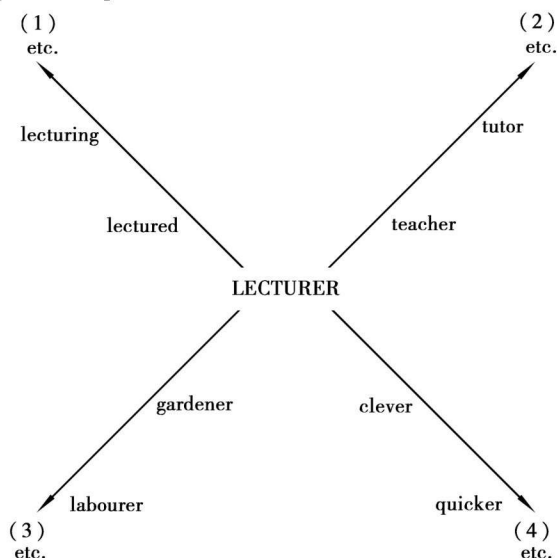


Fig. 1.2 The word and its associative field (Jackson & Amvela 2000:13)

In the above diagram, four lines of association radiate from the noun *lecturer*. (1) connects it with the verb forms *lectured* and *lecturing* by formal and semantic similarity based on the common stem *lecture*; (2) connects it with *teacher* and *tutor* by semantic similarity; (3) associates it with *gardener* and *laborer* because they all have the suffix *-er* forming agent nouns from verbs; (4) associates it with the adjective *clever* and the inflected adverb *quicker* by accidental similarity in their endings. In this way, any word chosen from a given context will suggest other words to us, because they either resemble or differ from each other in form, meaning or both. De Saussure's original