



“十三五”江苏省高等学校重点教材

高等院校研究性学习英语系列教材

英语语言学 实用教程

(第二版)

*English Linguistics:
A Practical Coursebook*

陈新仁 • 编著



苏州大学出版社
Soochow University Press



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语语言学实用教程 / 陈新仁编著. —2 版. —苏州: 苏州大学出版社, 2017. 6

“十三五”江苏省高等学校重点教材 高等院校研究性学习英语系列教材

ISBN 978-7-5672-1733-1

I. ①英… II. ①陈… III. ①英语—语言学—高等学校—教材 IV. ①H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2016)第 105817 号

书 名: 英语语言学实用教程(第二版)

编 著: 陈新仁

责任编辑: 杨 华

出版发行: 苏州大学出版社(Soochow University Press)

社 址: 苏州市十梓街 1 号 邮编: 215006

印 刷: 常州市武进第三印刷有限公司

网 址: www.sudapress.com

邮购热线: 0512-67480030

销售热线: 0512-65225020

开 本: 787 mm×1 092 mm 1/16 印张: 19 字数: 428 千

版 次: 2017 年 6 月第 1 版

印 次: 2017 年 6 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5672-1733-1

定 价: 48.00 元

凡购本社图书发现印装错误, 请与本社联系调换。服务热线: 0512-65225020

前 言

本教材是笔者在 2007 年出版的《英语语言学实用教程》基础上修订、增补而来的新版本,期待赢得更多读者的更多关注和喜爱,更希望能对普及英语语言学知识、提升英语研究能力尽绵薄之力。

我们知道,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。

我们同样知道,“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、认知属性等,从而深化学生对语言的认识,提高英语学习效率。

众所周知,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,笔者多年前广泛、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,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都进行了大胆的革新,为英语专业学生和教师提供了一个全新的选择——《英语语言学实用教程》。

此次第二版增加了 3 个单元,将第一版最后有关语言学研究方法的 2 个单元改为供学习者自学用的附录。调整后的 15 个单元布局如下:第 1 单元为绪论,介绍自然语言的属性、功能、谱系、习得等;第 2 单元至第 14 单元从语音、结构、语义、语用、修辞、认知、语体等角度系统解析英语;第 15 单元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。此外,笔者对第一版部分单元的 Pre-Class Reading 内容进行了一定程度的充实,同时调整了 In-Class Activities 中的部分讨论题,删减了一些开放性过强或实用性不足的讨论题,一些讨论题中换用了应用性更强的例子,撤换或调整了一些单元中的 Presentation Topics,删去了课后 Exercises 中一些开放性过强的题目及难度较大的 Comment Work 部分,充实了部分单元的 Term Definition,更新了全书的 Glossary 和 References。

第二版保持了原教材的特色,主要包括以下几点。

- 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。在多数单元中,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、深化相关单元的学习效果。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,在一些单元中还提供了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、构式语法、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。

修订成书之际,本人衷心感谢曾经在南京大学外国语学院英语系工作过的美籍专家唐斯诺博士(Dr. Don Snow)帮助审校第一版的全部书稿,感谢苏州大学外国语学院徐健博士为本书付出的辛劳,对来自多所高校第一线并给本书修订工作提出宝贵意见的老师表示衷心的感谢,感谢苏州大学出版社对本书修订与出版给予的支持。

由于编者水平有限,书中难免存在瑕疵和谬误,敬请读者和同行赐教。

编者

2017年5月于南京大学

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Unit 1

Some Preliminaries about Language

- * 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
- * 1.6 Linguistics: The science of language

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

—John Lyons



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 the world. In 2003, the total

number of languages in the world was estimated to be 6,809, of which 2,261 languages 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 4 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 10 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 spreading 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 as 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.

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

The Niger-Congo Family : This family features the many languages of Africa south of the Sahara. They 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, and 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, and 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 promo-

ting ... 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: as found in greetings, e.g. “Hello!”

directive: as found when we get somebody to do something, e.g. “Get out of my way!”

informative: as found when we provide some information to others, e.g. “The earth revolves around the sun.”

interrogative: as found when we want to get some information from others, e.g. “Do you know his hobby?”

evocative: as found when we want to know how others feel about somebody or something, e.g. “How do you like Jack?”

expressive / emotive: as found when we express some emotion, e.g. “I hate her.”

performative: (by narrow definition) as found when we use language to bring about a certain event, especially in a ceremony, e.g. “I hereby declare the meeting open.”

recreational: as found in the use of language to create humor, fun, etc.

metalinguistic: as found when we use language to talk about language, e.g. “in other words”.

Brown and Yule distinguish between transactional function and interactional (or interpersonal) function. The **transactional function** has to do with what one is seeking to do, whereas the **interactional function** has to do with the social and emotional distance one is conveying. Thus, a directive act like “Get out of my way!” can perform both transactional and interactional functions at the same time. Here, the emotional distance expressed is large, compared with that in “Honey, move a bit.”

M. A. K. Halliday puts 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 **identity construc-**

tion. The communicative function and identity function 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 a tool of inclusion and exclusion. When we meet someone from our hometown, we tend to switch to a common dialect. While treating him or her as an in-group member, we exclude others from our talk. Similarly, when you use “on behalf of the general manager”, you are assuming an identity that is not your own in the production of that utterance.

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:

A Arbitrariness

As a symbolic unit, a word has both **form** and **meaning**. As a rule, the relation between the form and the meaning, however, is arbitrary. In other words, there is no inherent connection between the form and the meaning. Look at Figure 1.1.

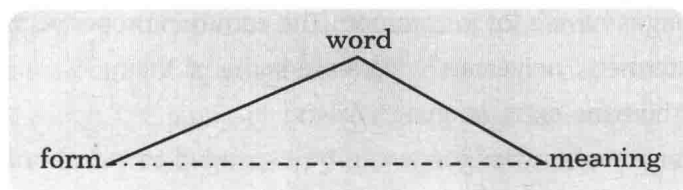


Figure 1.1 The arbitrary nature of language

It is impossible to predict the meaning from the form, or vice versa.

B Duality of structure / double articulation

Language operates at two levels: at the lower level, language consists of a bunch of meaningless elements; at the higher level, the meaningless elements combine to form meaningful units like words. For example,

l-a-n-g-u-a-g-e (meaningless elements: lower level, secondary) → language
(meaningful unit: higher level, primary)

C Creativity

“Creativity”, sometimes also called “productivity”, means the property which makes possible the construction and interpretation of new symbols, i.e. of signals that have not