高等学校教材

张韵斐 主编

现代英语词汇学概论

北京师范大学出版社

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AN INTRODUCTION TO

MODERN ENGLISH LEXICOLOGY

张韵斐[illegible]主编

[illegible]编著

周锡卿

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PREFACE

This is a textbook on lexicology, a branch of linguistics concerned with the vocabulary of the English language in respect to words and word equivalents.① The scope of lexicology embraces the development, structure, formation, meaning, and usage of words and word equivalents. Accordingly this book is composed of the following parts:

1. A general survey of English vocabulary (Chapter I)
2. Morphological structure of English words and word-formation (Chapters II to IV)
3. Word meaning and sense relations (Chapters V to IX)
4. English idioms, American English, choice and use of English dictionaries (Chapters X to XII)

Exercises have also been provided at the end of each chapter.

The book is intended for third- or fourth-year college students who have learned quite a number of English words together with other features of English. It aims to help the students summarize what they have learned and acquire a systematic knowledge of English vocabulary so that they can improve their ability to enlarge their personal vocabu-

① The term word equivalent denotes an idiom or a set phrase representing a semantic unit and funtioning as a single word in a sentence.

laries and choose the right words to use in a given context.

The value of such knowledge is vividly intimated by the following remark:

"… there is a sense in which learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language. Not being able to find the words you need to express yourself is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language."①

Moreover, the book may also help develop the students' skills and habits of analyzing and generalizing about linguistic phenomena observed in his study of English, so that his interest in the study of the English language as a whole will be increased, and his comprehension and appreciation of English literature will be enhanced.

Further, since the word plays such a crucial part in learning a foreign language, the book may also be of value to English teachers as well as the learners working on their own.

In recent years increasing numbers of colleges and universities have offered English lexicology courses. In 1983 *Modern English Lexicology*, written by Prof. Lu Guo-qiang was published under the auspices of the Committee for Compiling and Reviewing Teaching Materials for Institutions of Higher Learning. The teachers who took part in discussing Lu's draft warmly approved of it. At the same time they suggested that a textbook on lexicology written in

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① Wallace, Michael J. (1982), *Teaching Vocabulary*, p. 9.

English be compiled. It is owing to their encouragement that the present compilers, who have been teaching the course of English lexicology for many years, started to work on this book. In the course of writing, they have always borne in mind the experience gained through teaching, while referring to a fairly large number of publications on the subject of lexicology available in this country. It is hoped that the book not only reflects the contemporary trend of lexicological study but will also be of practical use to Chinese students in learning the English vocabulary.

Zhang Yun-fei is responsible for chapters one to ten, and Zhou Xi-qing for chapters eleven and twelve.

Our thanks are due to Prof. Liu Shi-mu, Prof. Suo Tian-zhang, and teachers (from Xiamen University, Wuhan University, Nanjing University, Hébei Normal University, Shandong Industrial University, Shanghai Normal Institute, Changchun Normal Institute, Beijing Normal University, Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute, and the institutions mentioned below) who scrutinized the draft and made invaluable comments and suggestions. We are particularly indebted to Prof. Feng Cui-hua of Loyang Foreign Language Institute and Prof. Lu Guo-qiang of Fudan University who were in charge of the reviewing work of this book; they have gone over the complete draft with great interest and meticulous attention. Also we wish to thank Prof. Wang Jue-luan of Heilongjiang University and Prof. Wu Xian-guang of Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute for their helpful cooperation in planning the contents of the book and

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solving a number of problems in the draft. We are grateful to Prof. Xu Guo-zhang for his encouragement and guidance. We are also thankful to the editors and staff of Beijing Normal University Press who did the painstaking editing and publishing work.

Special acknowledgment must be made to Dr. Charles Read, professor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Wallace and Dr. Estelle Thaler, who conscientiously read and corrected part of the book.

The compilers take final responsibility for any errors and inadequacies in this book. Comments and criticisms will be heartily welcome.

Zhang Yun-fei
Zhou Xi-qing

March, 1985

Short forms and signs used in the book

a, adj.	adjective	Gk	Greek
adv.	adverb	ibid.	in the book just cited before
Am.	America(n)		
AmE.	American English	infml.	informal
		int.	interjection
apprec.	appreciative	interrog.	interrogative
arch.	archaic	joc.	jocular
AS	Anglo Saxon	L	Latin
aux.	auxiliary	lit.	literal(ly); literary
b.	born		
Brit.	British	math.	mathematics
Br.(it). E.	British English	med.	medicine
		Mod.E	Modern English
C. or c.	century	neg.	negative
cf.	compare	obs.	obsolete
chem.	chemistry	OE	Old English
colloq.	colloquial	OF	Old French
derog.	derogatory	ON	Old Norse
e.g.	for example	phy.	physics
electr.	electricity	pl.	plural
esp.	especially	prep.	preposition
et al	and others	pron.	pronoun
etc.	et cetera, and so on	sb.	somebody

f. or fr.	from	specif	specifically
fig.	figurative	<	derived from
fml.	formal	=	is equivalent to
sth.	something		marks an unac-
Swed.	Swedish		ceptable phrase,
U. S.	United States		sentence, etc.
usu.	usually	〈 〉	angle brackets
vs.	versus		contains a verbal
sl.	slang		illustration.

Code for the dictionaries used in the book

CDOEL ……*Collins Dictionary of the English Language,* William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., New York, 1979.

COD ……*The Concise Oxford Dictionary,* London:Oxford University Press, 1982.

DAI……*A Dictionary of American Idioms,* Revised Edition, Edited by Adam Makkai, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., New York, 1975.

LDOCE ……*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English,* Longman Group Ltd., Harlow and London, 1978.

LDOEI ……*Longman Dictionary of English Idioms,* Longman Group Ltd., Great Britian, 1979.

NECD……*A New English-Chinese Dictionary,* 《英华大词典》修订第二版，商务印书馆，1984年

OALD·····*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,* Oxford University Press, Eleventh impression (revised and reset), 1980.

ODOCIE·····*Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English,* Volume I, edited by A. P. Cowie & R. Mackin, Oxford University Press. 1975.

ODOCIE·····*Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English,* Volume 2, edited by A. P. Cowie, R. Mackin & I. R. McCaig, Oxford University Press, 1983.

OED ·····*The Oxford English Dictionary,* Oxford University Press, 1933.

SBDONE ···*The Second Barnhart Dictionary of New English,* Clarence L. Barnhart, Inc., New York, 1980.

SCD ·····*Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary,* Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., U. S. A., 1977.

The Third Webster·····*Webster's Third New International Dictionary,* Springfield, Mass.:Merriam, 1961.

WNWD ·····*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language,* Second College Edition, The World Publishing Company, U. S. A., 1972.

WNCD ·····*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,* Merriam-Webster Inc., U. S. A. 1983.

6,000 Words·····*A Supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictonary,* Merriam-Webster Inc., U. S, A., 1976.

9,000 Words·····*A Supplement to Webster's Third New*

International Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Inc., U. S. A., 1983.

10,000 ·····*A Dictionary of New English,* Editor: C. H. Lo, The Commercial Press Ltd., Hongkong, 1980. (《英文新字字典》)

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Chapter I

A GENERAL SURVEY OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

In a book on lexicology, the term "word"should first be defined; yet it is quite difficult to state the criteria by which a "word" can be defined. The definition of what a word is has occupied the attention of linguists for centuries; so far no completely satisfactory definition has been given. Below are two often quoted definitions for "word", one of which is given by Bloomfield:"…some linguistic forms, which we call *bound forms* are never used as sentences. English examples are the *-ess*/is/in *countess, lioness, duchess,* etc., or the *-ish*/iʃ/in *boyish, childish, greenish,* etc., or the *-s*/s/in *hats, books, cups,* etc. These are genuine linguistic forms and convey a meaning, but they occur only in construction, as part of a larger form. Forms which occur as sentences are *free forms*…

"A free form which consists entirely of two or more lesser free forms, as for instance, *poor John* or *John ran away* or *yes, sir,* is a *phrase.* A free form which is not a phrase, is a *word.* A word, then, is a free form which does not consist entirely of (two or more) lesser free forms; in

brief, a word is a *minimum free form.*"(Bloomfield 1933: 177—178)

Bloomfield's statement is a classical linguistic definition. Words are obviously free forms, for they can stand on their own and act as complete utterances, as in exclamation like "Fire!", "Help!" and in replies such as "Old" in answer to the question, "Is he old or young?" or "Mother" to the question "Who has come?" It is obvious that the definition holds good and can be easily applied to most cases. Of course there are exceptions; not all words can occur in isolation, *the, a, my* are examples. Besides, Bloomfield's definition emphasizes syntax and does not touch upon meaning, which is a crucial aspect of any "word."

Another famous definition for "word" is given by an outstanding French linguist, Antoine Meillet:

"A word is defined by the association of a given sense with a given group of sounds capable of a given grammatical use."

This definition shows a combination of meaning and sound with special emphasis on grammatical use. It is a useful definition but does not include the concept of word as the minimal free form. However both definitions, taken together, give the main criteria of a word, that is sound, meaning and syntactic function.

In brief, a word may be defined as a fundamental unit of

speech and a minimum free form; with a unity of sound and meaning (both lexical and grammatical meaning①), capable of performing a given syntactic function.

We have a similar definition for "word" in Chinese "词，今指语言组织中的基础单位，能独立运用，具有声音、意义和语法功能。"（《辞海》1984（上）375页，上海辞书出版社）

Take the following sentence for example:

"The young man left quietly."Every word in this sentence has a certain sound or sound sequence to denote different meanings: e. g, the sound of the word *young* is/jʌŋ/, meaning "not far advanced in life, growth, development, etc." Besides sound and lexical meaning, every word belongs to a different word-class (or part of speech): *the* is an article; *young* is an adjective; *man* is a noun; *left* is a verb, and *quietly* is an adverb; and each (or grouped together) has a different syntactic function in the sentence, *man* in this case being the subject and *left* being the predicate.

Words are also either spoken or written.

A written word may be defined as an orthographic or printed symbol, customarily shown with a space on either side of it but none within it, with the exception of those compounds written open like *generation gap, credit card,* etc.

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① See Chapter Ⅴ for lexical and grammatical meaning

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