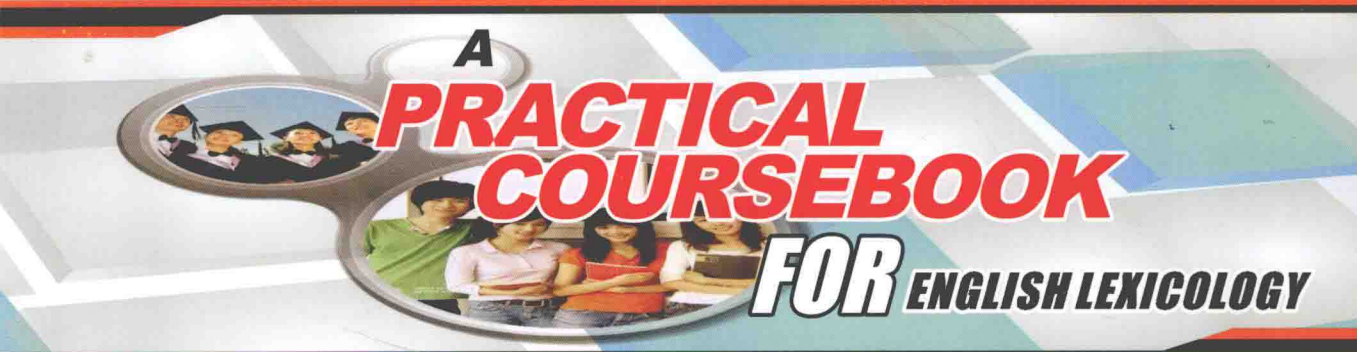


高等学校规划教材 · 语言学
PROGRAMMING TEXTBOOKS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



实用英语词汇学

王文化 李 红 主编

西北工业大学出版社

高等学校规划教材·语言学

实用英语词汇学

A Practical Coursebook for English Lexicology

主 编 王文化 李 红
编 者 王文化 李 红
陈 柯 李芳蕾



西北工业大学出版社

【内容简介】《实用英语词汇学》突破了传统的词汇学教材格局,吸收了语言学相关分支学科的最新研究成果,注重英语词汇的交际价值,强调培养学生的词汇能力,是一本理论与实践并重的新教材。教材内容涵盖了英语词汇的构成、意义、搭配、使用、学习策略及词典等方面,角度多元,内容丰富,展现了全新的当代英语词汇学视野。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。

本书主要供高等院校英语专业本科高年级学生和研究生,及其他英语语言学研究使用。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

实用英语词汇学/王文化,李红主编. —西安:西北工业大学出版社,2013.8
ISBN 978-7-5612-3763-2

I. ①实… II. ①王…②李… III. ①英语—词汇学—教材 IV. H313

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2013) 第 196849 号

出版发行:西北工业大学出版社

通信地址:西安市友谊西路 127 号 邮编:710072

电话:(029)88493844 88491757

网址:<http://www.nwpu.com>

印刷者:西安华新彩印有限责任公司

开本:787 mm×1 092 mm 1/16

印张:14.5

字数:349 千字

版次:2013 年 8 月第 1 版 2013 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

定价:32.00 元

前 言

英语词汇学是语言学的一个重要分支,研究对象主要是词汇。词汇是语言的一种基本材料,脱离词汇,言语活动就无法顺利进行。特别是随着科学技术以及经济全球化的迅速发展,英语学习者有了更多的与以英语为母语的人们的交流机会,在交流的过程中英语词汇的使用是不可避免的。然而一些英语学习者由于对英语词汇知识缺乏系统、全面、深刻的了解,在交流过程中不可避免地会错误地理解或者使用一些英语词汇,从而阻碍了跨文化交流的顺利进行。

为了使英语学习者对英语词汇有一个系统、全面的了解,本书系统地介绍了英语词汇学的相关理论,主要包括:①英语词汇的结构及构成方式;②英语词汇的意义、转变以及与语境的关系;③英语词汇的搭配特点及英语惯用语、谚语和语块;④英语词汇的比喻用法;⑤英语词汇的性别特点,敬语及委婉语特点;⑥英语词汇的文化内涵;⑦不同的英语国家的英语词汇特点差异;⑧英语新词及英语词汇学习策略;⑨不同类型的英语词典及其用法等。

在本书编写过程中,力求语言浅显,例子典型,使学生在了解英语词汇学的相关知识的同时,提高英语专业书籍的阅读能力。书中每一章都附有相关练习题,帮助学生巩固所学知识,并将所学的理论应用于具体的语言现象的分析中,以提升学生发现问题、分析问题和解决问题的能力。

本书编写工作的具体分工如下:王文化负责设计全书的编写理念、写作思路、单元样本,并编写了第3,4,5,7,10,13章及附录1,附录2和练习题答案;李红负责全书的统稿、修订工作,并编写了第1,2,8,9,11章及附录3,附录4,附录5;陈柯编写了第12章;李芳蕾编写了第6章。

在本书的编写中参考了不少国内外著作、文献及丰富的网络资源,借鉴、引用了其中的思想和内容(详见参考文献部分),在此谨向原作者深表谢忱!

本书的编写受到西安石油大学第五批教材建设项目的支持,在编写过程中得到了学校和许多人的关心支持,在此对所有关心和支持本书编写和出版的人表示深深的谢意!

编 者

2013年4月

Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction of English Words and Lexicology	1
1.1 Words	1
1.2 Vocabulary	2
1.3 Lexicology	5
1.4 The Classification of English Words	5
Exercises	10
Chapter 2 Formation of English Words	11
2.1 The Structure of English Words	11
2.2 Derivation	12
2.3 Conversion	14
2.4 Compounding (Compound/ Composition)	15
2.5 Acronym	17
2.6 Clipping	18
2.7 Blending	20
2.8 Back-formation	21
2.9 Words from Proper Names	22
2.10 Reduplication	22
Exercises	23
Chapter 3 Word Meaning	24
3.1 Definition of Meaning	24
3.2 Word Meaning	24
3.3 Sense and Componential Analysis	28
3.4 Semantic Relations among English Words	29
Exercises	36
Chapter 4 Changes in Word Meaning	39
4.1 Types of Change	39
4.2 Causes of Change	42
Exercises	45

Chapter 5	Chunks, Collocations, Idioms and Proverbs in English	47
5.1	Chunks in English	47
5.2	Collocations in English	49
5.3	Idioms in English	52
5.4	Proverbs in English	55
	Exercises	56
Chapter 6	English Words in Context	58
6.1	Definition of Context	58
6.2	Lexical Meaning and the Context	59
6.3	The Role of the Context	59
6.4	Using Context Clues to Learn Word Meaning	61
	Exercises	62
Chapter 7	Figurative Uses of English Words	65
7.1	An Introduction to Figures of Speech	65
7.2	English Words in Metaphor	67
7.3	Other Figurative Uses of English Words	74
	Exercises	77
Chapter 8	Social Aspect of English Words	79
8.1	Gender and English Words	79
8.2	Honorifics in English	82
8.3	Euphemisms in English	83
	Exercises	87
Chapter 9	English Words and Culture	88
9.1	Color Terms and Culture	88
9.2	Numerals and Culture	98
9.3	Euphemisms and Culture	100
9.4	Idioms and Culture	102
	Exercises	106
Chapter 10	The Lexical Features of Major English-speaking Countries	108
10.1	English as a World Language	108

10.2	British and American English	109
10.3	Canadian English	126
10.4	Australian English	127
10.5	New Zealand English	129
10.6	South African English	131
	Exercises	134
Chapter 11	The New Development of English Vocabulary	138
11.1	What Are Neologisms?	138
11.2	Research on New Words and the Reason for Why Study New Words	138
11.3	The Development of English Neologisms	139
11.4	The Main Reasons for the Appearance of English Neologisms	140
11.5	How New Words Come to Be	143
11.6	The Qualities of Helping a New Word Survive	146
	Exercises	147
Chapter 12	English Vocabulary Learning	149
12.1	Introduction of English Vocabulary Learning	149
12.2	How to Learn English Vocabulary	150
12.3	How to Avoid Forgetting the Vocabulary That I Have Learned	151
12.4	Other Tips for English Vocabulary Learning	152
	Exercises	154
Chapter 13	English Dictionaries and How to Use Them	155
13.1	Introductory Remarks	155
13.2	History of English Dictionaries	155
13.3	Types of Dictionaries	157
13.4	How to Use a Dictionary	168
	Exercises	173
Appendix 1	Lexicology Terms (English-Chinese)	177
Appendix 2	Some Common Prefixes	185
Appendix 3	Some common Suffixes	190
Appendix 4	Types of Figures of Speech	193
Appendix 5	A List of Euphemisms	199
Key to Exercises	204
References	220

Chapter 1 Introduction of English Words and Lexicology

1.1 Words

We use words everyday, yet it is difficult for us to state clearly what a word is. In language, a word is the smallest element that may be uttered in isolation with semantic or pragmatic content (with literal or practical meaning). This contrasts with a morpheme, which is the smallest unit of meaning but will not necessarily stand on its own. A word may consist of a single morpheme (for example: boy, girl, man, cat, run), or several morphemes (enrich, lovely, meaningfulness, unexpected), whereas a morpheme may not be able to stand on its own as a word, such as -s, -ness, -ly, -ing, un-, -ed. A complex word will typically include a root and one or more affixes (rock-s, red-ness, quick-ly, run-ning, un-expect-ed), or more than one root in a compound (black-board, rat-race). Words can be put together to build larger elements of language, such as phrases (a red rock), clauses (I threw a rock), and sentences (He threw a rock too but he missed).

Leonard Bloomfield introduced the concept of "Minimal Free Forms" in 1926, and in the 1930s, he defines the word as follows:

A free form that does not consist entirely of lesser 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)

So, according to Bloomfield, words are thought of as the smallest meaningful unit of speech that can stand by themselves. Its physical form cannot be divided into smaller units that can be used independently to convey the same meaning. For instance, *book* is a word. We cannot divide it up into smaller units that can convey meanings when they stand alone. For the word *bookish*, which can be analyzed into *book-* and *-ish*. While *book* the former part of *bookish* is meaningful when used independently, but the latter part *-ish* cannot be used on its own.

In synthetic languages, a single word stem (for example, *look* may have a number of different forms (such as, looks, looking, and looked). However for some purposes these are not usually considered to be different words, but rather different forms of the same word. In these languages, words may be considered to be constructed from a number of morphemes.

Here we take the word *revitalized* as the example, we can see that *revitalized* can be analyzed into several units of meaning: re-vital-ize-d. These smaller elements can be recognized as parts of other words in which they have the same meaning. For instance, the element *re* occurs in *rebuild* and *reanalysis* with the meaning of again. *Vital* occurs by itself as a word and in *vitality* with the meaning of life or liveliness. The element *ize* occurs in *nationalize* and *industrialize* with the function of changing the adjective into a verb. Finally, the element (*e*)*d* occurs in *tied* and *turned* with the meaning of past tense or past participle. These smaller units of meaning are called morphemes and may be defined as the minimal units of meaning in a language. All these morphemes constitute the physical structure of the word *revitalized*. It should be borne in mind that the knowledge of the word's physical structure helps us decode words and acquire their morphologically related forms.

Through meanings, words can serve the purposeful communication of human beings. A word has the ability of denoting concrete objects, real qualities, actual actions and abstract notions. And their meanings are defined by contexts and by their relations with each other. Most words have several denotations. Only by knowing the context in which the particular word occurs can we understand what the word means or which specific denotation is intended. Another type of meaning of a word is its connotative or affective meaning called connotation. In a certain context, the choice of a word may depend on the attitude of the speaker, i. e. on how the speaker feels towards the person(s), thing(s), or action(s) that he/she is talking about. Only by seeing words in clear, meaningful contexts can we understand different denotations and connotations.

So far, from the relatively authoritative definition of word, we understand the fundamental nature of the word: 1) a minimal free form of a language; 2) a sound unit; 3) a unit of meaning; 4) a form that can function alone in a sentence. Thus a word is a minimal free form of a language that has a given sound and meaning and syntactic function.

There are generally two approaches to the study of words, namely synchronic and diachronic. From a synchronic point of view, words can be studied at a point in time, disregarding whatever changes have taken place. If we take a diachronic perspective, we will consider the word historically, looking into its origin and changes in form and meaning.

1.2 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is commonly defined as "all the words known and used by a particular person". A word gradually enters a person's vocabulary over a period of time. Roughly, these stages could be described as: 1) Never encountered the word; 2) Heard the word, but cannot define it; 3) Recognize the word due to context or tone of voice; 4) Able to use the word and understand the general and/or intended meaning, but cannot clearly explain it; 5) Fluent with the word — its use and definition. Vocabulary can be divided into five types: reading vocabulary, listening vocabulary, speaking vocabulary, writing vocabulary and focal

vocabulary. A literate person's reading vocabulary is all the words he or she can recognize when reading. A person's listening vocabulary is all the words he or she can recognize when listening to speech. This vocabulary is aided in size by context and tone of voice. A person's speaking vocabulary is all the words he or she can use in speech. Due to the spontaneous nature of the speaking vocabulary, words are often misused. This misuse — though slight and unintentional — may be compensated by facial expressions, tone of voice, or hand gestures. Focal vocabulary is a specialized set of terms and distinctions that is particularly important to a certain group, those with a particular focus of experience or activity.

The importance of a vocabulary can be summarized as follows:

- An extensive vocabulary aids expressions and communication.
- Vocabulary size has been directly linked to reading comprehension.
- Linguistic vocabulary is synonymous with thinking vocabulary.
- A person may be judged by others based on his or her vocabulary.

Vocabulary size has a great effect on language comprehension. The knowledge of the words deriving from the 2,000 most frequent English words provides a comprehension of 95% of word use. The figures look even better than this if we want to cover the words we come across in an informally spoken context. Then the 2,000 most common words would cover 100% of the vocabulary. More recent work contests this, concluding that knowledge of 5,000 word families is necessary for 95% word coverage.

Exposure to conversations and engaging in conversation with others help school-age children develop vocabulary. Fast mapping is the process of learning a new concept upon a single exposure and is used in word learning not only by infants and toddlers, but by preschool children and adults as well. This principle is very useful for word learning in conversational settings, as words tend not to be explained explicitly in conversation, but may be referred to frequently throughout the span of a conversation.

Reading is considered to be a key element of vocabulary development in school-age children. Before children are able to read on their own, children can learn from others reading to them. Learning vocabulary from these experiences includes using context, as well as explicit explanations of words and/or events in the story. This may be done using illustrations in the book to guide explanation and provide a visual reference or comparisons, usually to prior knowledge and past experiences. Interactions between the adult and the child often include the child's repetition of the new word back to the adult. When a child begins to learn to read, their print vocabulary and oral vocabulary tend to be the same, as children use their vocabulary knowledge to match verbal forms of words with written forms. These two forms of vocabulary are usually equal up until grade 3. Because written language is much more diverse than spoken language, print vocabulary begins to expand beyond oral vocabulary. By age 10, children's vocabulary development through reading moves away from learning concrete words to learning abstract words.

Generally, both conversation and reading involve at least one of the four principles of

context that are used in word learning and vocabulary development: physical context, prior knowledge, social context and semantic support.

Physical context involves the presence of an object or action that is also the topic of conversation. With the use of physical context, the child is exposed to both the words and a visual reference of the word. This is frequently used with infants and toddlers, but can be very beneficial for school-age children, especially when learning rare or infrequently used words. Physical context may include props such as in toy play. When engaging in play with an adult, a child's vocabulary is developed through discussion of the toys, such as naming the object (e. g. dinosaur) or labeling it with the use of a rare word (e. g. stegosaurus). These sorts of interactions expose the child to words they may not otherwise encounter in day-to-day conversation.

Past experiences or general knowledge is often called upon in conversation, so it is a useful context for children to learn words. Recalling past experiences allows the child to call upon their own visual, tactical, oral, and/or auditory references. For example, if a child once went to a zoo and saw an elephant, but did not know the word elephant, an adult could later help the child recall this event, describing the size and color of the animal, how big its ears were, its trunk, and the sound it made, then using the word elephant to refer to the animal. Calling upon prior knowledge is used not only in conversation, but often in book reading as well to help explain what is happening in a story by relating it back to the child's own experiences.

Social context involves pointing out social norms and violations of these norms. This form of context is most commonly found in conversation, as opposed to reading or other word learning environments. A child's understanding of social norms can help them to infer the meaning of words that occur in conversation. In an English-speaking tradition, *please* and *thank you* are taught to children at a very early age, so they are very familiar to the child by school-age. For example, if a group of people is eating a meal with the child present and one person says, "give me the bread" and another responds with, "that was rude. What do you say?", and the person responds with "please", the child may not know the meaning of *rude*, but can infer its meaning through social context and understanding the necessity of saying *please*.

Semantic support is the most obvious method of vocabulary development in school-age children. It involves giving direct verbal information of the meaning of a word. By the time children are in school, they are active participants in conversation, so they are very capable and willing to ask questions when they do not understand a word or concept. For example, a child might see a zebra for the first time and ask, what is that? And the parent might respond, that is a zebra. It is like a horse with stripes and it is wild so you cannot ride it.

1.3 Lexicology

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998) defines lexicology as: the study of form, meaning, and behaviour of words. There are still some people saying about lexicology on the internet, e. g. Lexicology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of the vocabulary of a given language. It deals with words, their origin, development, history, structure, meaning and application. In short, it is the study of the signification and application of words. Lexicology is the study of word meanings and origins; the branch of linguistics dealing with the use and meanings of words and the relationships between items of vocabulary. English lexicology is the scientific study of English vocabulary. That is to say, English lexicology is not equal to learning the English vocabulary word by word. However, it is a branch of linguistics concerned with the vocabulary of the English language in respect to words and word equivalents.

With the expansion of the area for word studies, lexicology is increasingly associated with not only the structure and meaning of words but also their development including their origin, history, change, their use and learning, and lexicography. Combinations of words in English such as *do the garden*, *see a doctor*, *strong tea* and *a beam / ray of light* can be called collocations, which constitute an indispensable part in English lexicology.

In short, English lexicology is a theoretically-oriented course. It is chiefly concerned with the basic theories of words in general and of English words in particular. Meanwhile, it is a practical course, for it has something to do with words. English lexicology aims at investigating and studying the morphological structures of English words, and words equivalents, their semantic structures, relations, historical development, formation and usages.

The benefits of learning English lexicology can be summarized as follows: firstly, it will help students develop their personal vocabulary, and consciously increase their word power; secondly, it will give them a deeper understanding of the word meaning, and enable them to organize, classify and store words more effectively; thirdly, it will gradually raise their awareness of the meanings and usages of words, and enable them to use words more accurately and appropriately; fourthly, it will improve their skills of using reference books and raise their problem-solving ability and efficiency of individual study; lastly, it will improve their receptive and productive skills in language processing as well as language production.

1.4 The Classification of English Words

English words can be classified by different criteria and for different purposes. The two major families of word classes are lexical (or open) classes and function (or closed) classes.

The closed category is so called because it does not easily accept new words. Its members are fixed and do not usually change. The open category contains nouns, verbs, adverbs, and descriptive adjectives — exactly those parts of speech that remain open to new additions. Words in the open category are usually further divided into simple and complex words. Simple words contain just one morpheme (house, for example, or walk, slow, or green), whereas complex words contain more than one (houses, walking, slowly, or greenest). Closed-class words are those belonging to the grammatical, or function classes. Function words in English include conjunctions (and, or), articles (the, a), demonstratives (this, that), and prepositions (to, from, at, with). To take one specific case, consider the word *and*. The essential feature of the word *and* is that it functions grammatically to conjoin words and phrases, as seen in the combination of noun phrases *the woman and the man*.

English words can also be divided into the native words and borrowed words according to their origin. The native words refer to Anglo-Saxon words still retained in Modern English, while the borrowed words are words taken from other foreign languages. The native words are estimated to account for 25%–30% of the English vocabulary. Though small in number, the native words are most frequently used in everyday speech and writing. The characteristics of the native words can be summarized into the following 7 aspects.

- 1) National character, which means the native words are known to every person in that society, no matter which social classes he or she belongs to.
- 2) Great stability. In other words, the native words are likely to remain unchanged, but the stability is relative.
- 3) Word-forming ability, which means most native words are active in forming new words.
- 4) Wide collocability. It is very common to see many native words readily with other words to form phrases and idioms.
- 5) Plurality of meanings, which means most native words are highly polysemantic.
- 6) Stylistically neutral.
- 7) High frequency value. The native words are frequently used in any style of speech. They make up no less than 80% of the 500 most frequently used words.

As to the borrowed words, we can find out the words from Latin, Greek, French, Scandinavian, Italian, German, Arabic and Chinese, etc.

Words from **Latin**: Long before their invasion of England, the Angles and Saxons had been in contact with Roman civilization through which they borrowed a lot of Latin words, such as *kettle*, *cup*, *dish*, *pillow*, *pea*, *pear*, *plum*, *pepper*, *street*, *wall*, *colony*, *oil*, *vinegar*, *mule*, *pound*, *ounce*, *ass*, *cook*, *mile*, etc. The introduction of Roman Christianity into Britain in the sixth and seventh centuries resulted in the borrowing of Latin words chiefly referring to things connected with religion or the services of the church, such as *priest*, *pope*, *angel*, *bishop*, *altar*, *hymn*, *organ*, *candle*. Words denoting articles of foreign production, the use or knowledge of these things were also brought by the Roman missionaries into England: *butter*, *cheese*, *copper*, *palm*, *pine*, *pearl*, *spade*, etc. In the Renaissance period, the study of classics was stressed which resulted in the borrowing of Latin words such as *genius*, *formula*, *index*, *area*, *exit*, *circus*, *series*, *miser*, *history*,

picture, individual, senior, junior, superior, inferior, infinite, minor, necessary, popular, nervous, polite, civil, jurist, vacuum, tractor, motor, etc.

Words from Greek: The renewed study of Greek in the Renaissance opened up a new source from which the English vocabulary was enriched. Words borrowed from Greek were mostly literary, technical or scientific terms, such as the literary terms: *drama, comedy, tragedy, rhythm*; terms in philosophy and mathematics: *basis, category, theory, thesis*; terms in botany and physics: *organism, dynamo, thermometer*; terms in medicine: *diagnosis, rheumatism*; modern inventions: *bicycle, phonograph, photograph* and some terms in lexicology: *lexicology, antonym, synonym, dialect*. Some learned affixes are also borrowed from Greek, such as *bio-, -logy, neo-, hydro-, geo-* and some others.

Words from French: The influence of French, though it began only toward the end of Anglo-Saxon times, increased rapidly after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Since the French-speaking Normans were the ruling class, French was used for all state affairs and for most social and cultural matters, but the masses continued to use English. To the Normans English owes most of the terms: words concerning the government (*govern, administer, crown, state, empire*); the church (*Bible, religion, theology, sermon, ceremony, devotion*); the law (*accuse, fine, sentence, court, prison, jury, justice, judge, punishment*); the war (*arms, captain, lieutenant, soldier, spy*); trade and everyday affairs (*barber, butcher, doctor, carpenter, dress, fashion, gown, robe, cloak, beef*); colors (*blue, brown, scarlet*); hunting (*rabbit, chase*). These Norman-French words were made to conform to the rules of English pronunciation. The French words consist of more than a fourth of all the words comprising the vocabulary of the English language. In fact, the English vocabulary is permeated by French words everywhere.

Words from Scandinavian: In the year 787 the Norsemen invaded England. During the next two and a half centuries Britain was continually troubled by frequent attacks by the Scandinavians. The effect of the Danish conquest led to the borrowing of many Scandinavian words into English language, most of which belong to the English basic stock of words, such as nouns (*cake, egg, fellow, gate, guest, husband, kid, knife, leg, sky, skin, skirt, skill*), adjectives (*awkward, flat, happy, low, odd, ugly, loose, same, sly, wrong*), verbs (*call, die, guess, get, raise, give, hit, lift*), and pronouns like (*they, their, them*).

Words from Italian: Because of the cultural and commercial connection between England and Italy in the Renaissance, especially in the 16th century, many Italian words were brought into the English language. The English traveled frequently in Italy, observed Italian architecture and brought not only Italian manners and styles of dress but Italian words, such as *balcony, design, violin, volcano, motto, macaroni*, etc. Italian music was introduced into England in the 18th century, and with this came many musical terms such as *opera, duet, trio, solo, tempo, piano, concert*, etc.

Words from German: Words from German do not exert great influence on the English vocabulary. Some words borrowed from German are about metals and minerals like

bismuth, cobalt, quartz, nickel, zinc, etc. Other words or phrases borrowed directly or indirectly from German are *waltz, fatherland, Fahrenheit, plunder, blitzkrieg, kindergarten, hurrah, lobby, homesickness, one-sided, world market, world outlook, class struggle*, etc. Numerous scientific terms created by German scientists came into English vocabulary, such as *homoeopathy, tuberculin, allopathy, teleology*, etc.

Words from Arabic: English has borrowed words from Arabian language like *alcohol, alchemy, algebra, sugar, syrup, zero*, etc. From the Arabs the English took the simple method of counting in the Arabic figures—0, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. instead of the Roman numerals. From the literature and everyday life of the Arabs have come *admiral, coffee, cotton, crimson, magazine, sofa*, etc.

Words from Chinese: Words from Chinese also have some influence on the English vocabulary. Trade between people of the two nations has resulted in the introduction of some Chinese words. When an article of commerce is brought to the country where people are not acquainted with they generally call it based on its production place. So some English words borrowed from Chinese are named after their place of production like *china, shantung* (*a kind of silk fabrics*), *nankeen* (*a kind of cotton cloth from Nanking*), etc. Names for various sorts of tea are from Chinese such as *bohea, congou, oolong*, etc. Some other Chinese borrowings are *Taoism, Confucianism, lama, li, litchi, chow-mein, silk, ginseng, chopstick, Renminbi, tai chi chuan, kungfu, wu-shu, qigong, ping-pang, mao-tai, Peking, hutong, typhoon, Four Modernizations*, etc. Most of them are translation-loans.

Besides the foreign words mentioned above, English language has also borrowed words from Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Persian, Indian, Hebrew, Japanese, Malay, Celtic, Turkish, North American Indian languages, African languages, etc.

In addition, English words can also be divided into the basic word stock and the nonbasic word by frequency. The basic word stock is the foundation of the vocabulary accumulated over centuries and forms the common core of the language. Though words of the basic word stock constitute a small percentage of the English vocabulary, yet it is the most important part of it. These words have the following characteristics: 1) All national character, which contains natural phenomena, human body and relations, names of plants and animals, numerals, prepositions, conjunctions. 2) Stability. Basic words have been in use for centuries. As they denote the most common things necessary to life, they are likely to remain unchanged both in form and meaning. 3) Productivity. Basic words are mostly root words or monosyllabic words. Each can be used alone, and at the same time can form a great number of derivatives and compounds with other roots and affixes. 4) Polysemy. Basic words often possess more than one meaning because most of them have undergone semantic changes in the course of use. 5) Collocability. Many basic words have entered quite a number of set expressions, idiomatic usages, proverbial sayings and the like. Not all the

words of the basic word stock have these characteristics. Among these features, “all national character” is the most important one that may differentiate words of common use from all others.

While, the words not possessing the characteristics of the basic word stock do not belong to the basic word stock, such as terminology, jargon, slang, argot, dialectal words, archaisms and neologisms.

In addition, English words can also fall into informal words (popular words) and formal words (learned words). The informal words are used in ordinary conversation, and are concerned with common things of life. The formal words are seldom used in ordinary conversation, but are used in books, newspapers, and documents. The examples are as follows (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Comparison between informal words and formal words

Informal words	Formal words
company	corporation
sales	turnover
parts	components
details	information
post	position
a great guy	a kind person
pal	friend
kids	children
cop	police officer
blow your top	get very angry
boss	manager, supervisor
expect	anticipate
think, believe	deem
try	endeavor
use	utilize
end	terminate

Finally, English words can be divided into polysemic word and monosemic word. Polysemic words have a range of different meanings. For example:

The word *man* has three different meanings.

- (1) The human species (man vs. animal);
- (2) Males of the human species (man vs. woman);
- (3) Adult males of the human species (man vs. boy).

And the word *wood* has two meanings.

- (1) a piece of a tree;
- (2) a geographical area with many trees.

Monosemic words only consist of a single meaning, such as the following words:

- (1) name of common things: cars, aircraft, rice, tomatoes;
- (2) proper names: Marx, London, the Mississippi River;
- (3) terminology: atoms, elements, planetary, cloning, etc.

Exercises

1. Explain briefly what is word? What is vocabulary? What is lexicology?
2. How do you account for the role of native words in English in relation to loan-words?
3. Please find out the origin of the following borrowed words:
(1) tai-chi (2) fatherland (3) motto (4) chopstick (5) piano
(6) Bible (7) prison (8) odd (9) die (10) photograph
4. What are the benefits of learning English lexicology?