An Introduction to English Lexicology –

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Master One Linguistics

Aims and Objectives:

1. English lexicology offers students an insight into the origin and development of the English vocabulary.

2. It discusses the problems of word-structure and word-formation in English.

3. It deals with meanings of modern English words and their changes in the course of historical development

4. It also studies the use of English words, phrases and idioms

5. It tries try to answer What language family does English belong to?

Lesson One: 1. KEY ISSUES & FOUNDATIONS

Aims and Objectives:

1. **Definition of Lexicology**
2. **Definition of Lexicography**
3. **Difference between Lexicography and Lexicology**
4. **What is a word**
5. **Homographs**
6. **Homophones**
7. **Homonyms**
8. **Polysemy**
9. **Inflections**
10. **Ortographic words**
11. **Phonological words**
12. **Lexemes**

- **Lexicology and Lexicography**
- Both lexicology and lexicography are derived from the Greek work lexiko (adjective from lexis meaning 'speech', or 'way of speaking' or 'word'). The common concern of both of them is 'word' or the lexical unit of a language. **Lexicology** is derived from lexico 'word' plus logos 'learning or science' i.e. **the science of words. Lexicography** is lexico 'word' plus graph 'writing' i.e. **the writing of words.** The etymological meaning of these words speaks for itself. Lexicology is the science of the study of the word whereas lexicography is the writing of the word in some concrete form i.e. in the form of dictionary.

Lexicography

Lexicon has two different meanings:

1. All the vocabulary of a language
2. The dictionary

The English suffix -*graphy* means either "writing" or a "field of study"

- Lexicography is used in two different senses:

* Practical lexicography is the art or craft of writing dictionaries.

* Theoretical lexicography is the theory or scholarly discipline of analyzing and describing dictionaries.

- The term *lexicology* is variously used. Some use it as a synonym for *theoretical lexicography*, others use it for a branch of linguistics pertaining to the treasure of words in a particular language i.e. the study of forms, meanings and behaviors of words. **Lexicography is the science and art of compiling dictionary**. The word 'dictionary' was first used as *Dictionarius* in this sense in the 13th century by an English man **John Garland**.

The word Dictionarium was used in the 14th century. The first Dictionary was Latin-English by Sir Thomas Elyot (1538). For a medieval scholar a dictionary was a collection of diction or phrases put together for the use of pupils studying Latin. One of the purposes of dictionary in medieval times was studying texts and employing synonyms for them. Dictionaries are prepared to serve different practical needs of the people.

(1) as a reference book for different types of information on words e.g. pronunciation, etymology, usage etc. this may be called the store house function of the dictionary.

(2) as a reference point for distinguishing the good or proper usage from the bad or wrong usage. This is the legislative or the court house function of the dictionary2.

Dictionary

- A dictionary is a list of words with their definitions,

- a list of characters with its *glyph "the specific shape, design, or representation of a character"*. or a list of words with corresponding words in other languages.

- Many dictionaries also provide pronunciation information, word derivations, histories, or etymologies, illustrations, usage guidance, and examples in sentences.

- Fundamental questions for lexicographers

1. Users – who will use the dictionary?

2. Uses – what will the dictionary be used for?

Answers to these questions will inform design and publication decisions for dictionary maker, e.g. monolingual vs. bilingual, encyclopedic vs. compact, general purpose vs. specialist etc.

Structure of a dictionary

- 1. macrostructure – overall structural organization of volume, typically:

•*front matter*, introduction, user guidelines;

before the (A)

* *body* – entries and definitions (plus often other stuff), typically organized alphabetically; (from A-z)

* *end matter* – appendices and additional information, e.g. personal names, place names, loan items etc. After the z

Structure of dictionary

- 2. microstructure – internal structure of dictionary entry blocks, typically:

* headword

* spelling

* pronunciation

* part of speech category or word class

* semantic specification – senses and reference

* cross-references to related items, related by sense

* collocations, co-occurrence strings

* usage with examples

* etymological or historical notes

Entry order

- Dictionaries of alphabetic languages list words in alphabetical order. With non-alphabetic languages, it may be different. The order in a dictionary with ideographic entries i.e. The definition of ideographic is something that uses a symbol to describe it without a word or sound. *An example of something ideographic is the Roman numeral II.*

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What is Lexicology?

(1). What are the three elements of language?

- Speech sound,
- Grammar
- Vocabulary

The term **lexicology** contains two Greek morphemes lexicon and logy. The former means "**words**", the latter means "**learning or "the study of** ".

Lexicology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of the vocabulary of a given language.

What is vocabulary?

All the words in a language make up what is generally known as its vocabulary

What do we need to teach about vocabulary?

- Richards (1976) and Nation (2001) list the different things learners need to know about a word before we can say that they have learned it. These include:

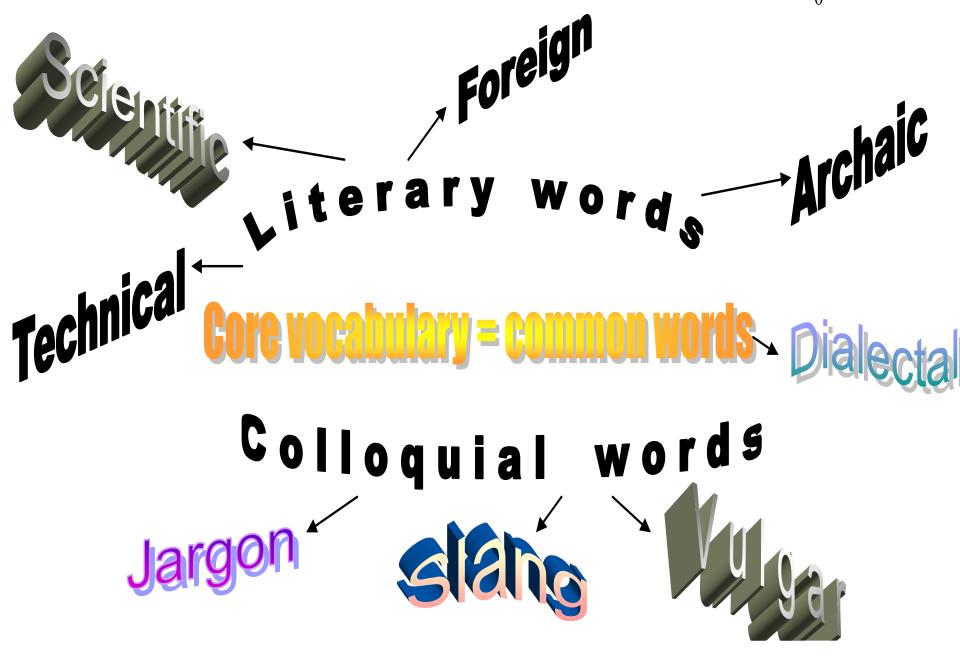 **The meaning(s)** of the word : Its **spoken and written forms**

- What "**word parts**" it has (e.g., any prefix, suffix, and "root" form)

- Its **grammatical behaviour** (e.g., its word class, typical grammatical patterns it occurs in)

- Its **collocations** ;Its **register** ; Its **frequency:** What **connotations** it has : What **associations** it has (e.g., words that are similar or opposite in meaning)

- To these we could add whether a word has **a strategic use** and if it has :any special uses that are different in registers such as conversation or academic writing.

What is a word?

A **word** is a minimal free form of a language that has a given **sound, meaning and syntactic function**. To sum up the definition of a word will cover the following points:

- A minimal free form of a language;

- A sound unity;

- A unit of meaning;

Compound words form a unit made up of two or more single words

e.g. time + keeper=timekeeper

Scientific

Foreign

Archaic

L i t e r a r y   w o r d s

Technical

Core vocabulary = common words

Dialectal

C o l l o q u i a l   w o r d s

Jargon

slang

Vulgar

Dr Mariëtta Alberts, Pretoria

Nature of Headwords

- What is a word ? are the following words? want, wanting, wanted, war crime, courthouse, half-baked

- Distinguish:

- 1. *Orthographic words* – different from each other by their spelling(of or relating to spelling) written word surrounded by spaces; but what about compounds, hyphenated forms etc. Distinguish

- 2. *Phonological words* – different from each other by their pronunciation – A sequence of sounds that forms phonological unit (determined by rules of syllable structure, stress, etc)

3. **Lexeme** – item of vocabulary that may occur as dictionary headword. **Lexemes** can be more than one orthographic word i.e. a word or several words that have a meaning that is not expressed by any of its separate parts

- **Lexeme** is an abstract concept – it is the set of word forms that comprise a paradigm of related words forms, eg. sing – sings – singing - sang – sung (cf. talk – talks – talking – talked – talked) – regular and irregular paradigms;

- **a lexeme** can have many different forms.

 * Word-form is inflectional variant of lexeme i.e. word forms have the same lexeme e.g. runs, ran, running are forms of the same lexeme (run). However, the derivative (runner) has a different lexeme.

- * A headword is typically a citation form of a lexeme i.e. represents a lexeme.

- **4. Inflections** are these different words or the same word

- E.g. sew – sewn – sewing – sewed – sewn (change of form)

- Grammatically, they are different words. They occur in different context.

- We may have words which are identical orthographically, but which are pronounced differently. We regard them as different words

- e.g. refuse – /rifjuz/ declining, resisting (v.)

- /refjus/ - rubbish (n.) (see Homographs)

- We also have different spellings for the same pronunciation e.g. practice -_ practise – different words

- **5.Homographs** – words which are spelt the same but have different pronunciation and meaning (e.g. refuse).

- Another issue to consider is which vocabulary we want students to be able to use when they speak and write (their **active** or **productive** vocabulary) and which we want them to be able to recognize and understand but not necessarily produce (their **passive** or **receptive** vocabulary). [See Melka (1997).]

- **6.Homophones** – words which are pronounced the same but have different spellings and meanings (e.g. practise – practice)

7. **Homonyms** – words which are spelt and pronounced the same, but have clearly different meanings.

e.g. bank

1. financial institution

2. side of river or stream

3. a row of keys on a keyboard

8. **Polysemy** – refers to one word having a number of senses or variants of a single meaning

e.g. Grow

1. grow a beard

2. grow apples

3. children's feet grow quickly

Exercises

1. Examine the following definitions of '**lexicology**'. What do they agree on as the scope of lexicology? And where do they disagree?

2. An area of language study concerned with the nature, meaning, history and use of words and word elements and often also with the critical description of lexicography. (McArthur, ed. 1992)

3.The study of the overall structure and history of the vocabulary of a language.(Collins English Dictionary 1998)

4. A branch of linguistics concerned with the meaning and use of words. (Longman Dictionary of the English Language 1991)

5. The study of the form, meaning, and behaviour of words. (New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998)

Exercises

1. Using a desk or concise size general-purpose dictionary, read carefully the entries for the following words: face, narrow-minded, soap . Note for each item:

(a) how many entries (headwords) your dictionary has; (b) how your dictionary treats compound words.

2. Examine the following **entry for discriminate**, taken from CED (1998):

Discriminate vb (di'skrimi,neit). 1 (intr, usu. foll. by in favour of or against) to single out a particular person, group, etc., for special favour or, esp., disfavour, often because of a characteristic such as race, colour, sex, intelligence, etc. **2** (when intr, foll. by between or among) to recognize or understand the difference (between); distinguish: to discriminate right and wrong; to discriminate between right and wrong. **3** (intr) to constitute or mark a difference. **4** (intr) to be discerning in matters of taste. Adj (dI 'skrImInIt).

5 showing or marked by discrimination. [from Latin **discriminare** to divide, from **discrimen** a separation, from **discernere** to DISCERN] dis'criminately adv dis'crimi,nator n _**What information does it give about: pronunciation, morphology, syntax?**

(a) **Would you expect the following words to be entered more than once in a dictionary** (as **homographs),** or to be treated in a single entry (as a case of **polysemy)?** First make a guess, then consult a dictionary.

- Coach (bus, give training); cobble (stone for paving, mend shoes); fence (round a field, sport using a sword); mount (ascend, mountain); rook (bird, chess piece); stable (firmly fixed, place for horses); table (piece of furniture, of figures); whim (fancy, machine used in mining).

- **(b)Find the following idioms in your dictionary**. Which word are they under? Are they cross-referenced from the entries for any of the other words in the idiom?

- fly off the handle; turn over a new leaf;

Exercises

1. **Analyse the following words into their constituent morphemes.**

2. coagulative, deactivators, forbearingly, half-deafened, left-handedness, noncombatant, readability, temporarily, weed killer.

2. **Give all the possible inflections for the following words:**

   Bring, cow, forget, guest, high, stop, tall, tooth, weary.

3. **Identify the derivational affixes used in the following words. Give a meaning/function for each one, e.g. –ment: has the function of deriving a noun from a verb.**

   enactable, ungracious, preconnection, depressive, incriminatory, declassify, troublesome.

4. **Divide the following words into morphemes. For each morpheme identify the type (free or bound, prefix or suffix, inflectional or derivational):** Restate, strongest, actively, precede.

- **3. What does the word 'bull' mean in each of the following sentences?**
- 1. Beware of the bull!
- 2. I think the elephant is a bull.
- 3. Stop acting like a bull in a china shop!
- 4. There was a bull market on the stock exchange today.
- 5. Well done! You've hit the bull's eye.
- 6. Don't give me all that bull.
- 7. I'm afraid that you'll just have to take the bull by the horns.

en, -ify, -ize combine with nouns and adjectives to form verbs. Look at the following lists of adjectives and nouns. **Put the corresponding verb in the space provided.**

ADJECTIVE > VERB   NOUN > VERB

Hard	horror
Modern	memory
Deep	beauty
Intense	sympathy
False	apology
Fat	glory
Sterile	length

Match these abbreviations with their meanings.

1. BSc   compact disc

2. FBI   for example

3. Fr   Federal Bureau of Investigation

4. ext.   Personal identification number (usually on a bank card)

5. CD   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

6. asap   Bachelor of Science

7. PIN   extension

8. e.g.   Father (title for a priest)

9. Unesco   as soon as possible

TOPIC: Talking about work 1

Choose the best (most logical) response to complete each of the following sentences:

1. This job is too ……………. *(stressed-out/stressful)*.

2. There's a lot of work, but I can   ………….. *(deal/handle)* it.

3. I was   ………………….. *(hired/heard)* last month.

4. They ……………. *(fired/failed)* two of my co-workers, and I'm afraid I might be next.

5. I work ………….   *(at/in)* sales.

6. My …………. *(commute/communion)* (= the time it takes me to get to work) isn't so bad.

.7. The company has a reputation for treating their   ……….. *(employees/employed)* well.

8. I usually don't eat in the ……… *(lunchroom/lunch-zone)*. I go out to eat.

TOPIC: Talking about work 2

Choose the best (most logical) response to complete each of the following sentences:

1. I get along well with most of my ………*(colleagues/employees)*(= co-workers).
2. I got a ………………*(premonition/promotion)* last year.
3. He's not very……… *(producing/productive)*. He just chats to his friends on Facebook all day.
4. I'm pretty………… *(content/contained)* (= happy) with the way things are going.
5. Everyone seems to have gotten a ……….. *(raise/boost)* (= an increase in salary) except me.
6. We don't have ………….. *(assess/access)* to that information.
7. The …………… *(upper/up)* management people are not very well liked by the rest of us.
8. I'm taking a week…………….. *(off/of)* to go on vacation.
9. The work load isn't too ……………….*(dense/heavy)*.
10. They provide us with a good benefits ………… *(pack/package)*.

TOPIC: Describing people (physical traits) 1
Choose the best response to complete each of the following sentences:

1. Jim is …………….. (higher/taller) than I am.

2. My sister is ………………… (lower/shorter) than I am.

3. My brother isn't fat, he's ……………… (stocky/sticky).

4. The word "skinny" is slightly more negative than the word ……. (thinning/thin).

5. He's completely ……. (bold/bald). He lost all of his hair years ago.

6. My sister works out every day, so she's in very good…… (shaped/shape).

7. He's not fat, but he has a bit of a ……………… (belly/fat).

8. He's six feet ………………. (high/tall).

9. He walks with a …………………. (limp/lump).

10. My grandfather has…… (trouble/problem) walking fast. (= he can't walk fast easily)

TOPIC: Describing people (physical traits) 2 -Choose the best response to complete each of the following sentences:

1. My brother is …….. (blind/blonde) in one eye. (= he can't see in one eye)
2. My sister used to …….(die/dye) her hair blonde.
3. My……… (complex/complexion) is much darker than my brother's.
4. Linda is always ………… (tanned/tan) during the summer.
5. He's not bald, but he does have a ……reducing/receding) hairline.
6. Paula is very good- …………(looking/viewing). (= attractive)
7. I'm out of shape. I ran for 5 minutes, and I'm already out of ….. (breath/breathing).
8. She has shoulder- ………..(length/long) hair.
9. Peter has a ………….(razored/shaved) head.
10. He is a very …….(stylish/styling) man. (= he wears very fashionable clothes)