

FUNDAMENTALS OF LEXICOLOGY

Abstract: This article deals with the lexicology object and its links with other linguistic affiliates, two approaches to language learning, linguistic analysis, and perspectives of contemporary English linguistics.

Key words: lexicology, vocabulary, vocabulary, lexicon, mental lexicon, idioms, grammar, phonetics, word life, morphology, etymology, phraseology.

Lexicology derives from two Greek words *lexis* "word" and *logos* "learning". It is a branch of Linguistics dealing with the vocabulary system of the language. It studies the total sum of all the words that the language possesses. Thus, this science studies the properties of the words as the basic units of the language.

The word can be defined as a structural and semantic entity of the language system. The word is simultaneously a semantic, grammatical and phonological unit. Lexicology studies various lexical units: words, variable word-groups, phraseological units, and morphemes which make up words. The word as well as any linguistic sign is a two-faced unit possessing both form and content or in other words sound-form and meaning.

The term vocabulary means the total sum of words that there are in the language. The size of the vocabulary of any language is huge. No person can learn or know all the words of the language. Individual people possess their own total vocabulary consisting of all the words they know. Another word used to denote vocabulary is the term lexicon. In modern Linguistics three main meanings of the term lexicon are distinguished:

- the vocabulary which a speaker of a language has in his or her head, that is, mental lexicon;
- the set of lexemes of a language and the processes which are related to them;
- the set of lexical items of a language;

Distinction is made between General Lexicology and Special Lexicology. General lexicology is a part of General linguistics. It is concerned with the study of vocabulary and its basic units, irrespective of the specific features of any particular language. It works out basic notions and methods of vocabulary study. Within the frames of General Lexicology many notions, such as the notion of the word, the notion of the meaning, the notion of the context, and the notion of system relations are investigated. Special lexicology is the lexicology of a particular language (English, Russian, German, French, etc.). It describes words and vocabulary of one particular language. Every Special Lexicology is based on the principles of General

Lexicology. Special Lexicology is further subdivided into Diachronic / Historical and Synchronic / Descriptive. Historical Lexicology deals with the evolution of any vocabulary, the origin of words, their change and development.

The subject matter of Descriptive Lexicology is the vocabulary of a particular language at a given stage of its development. It studies mainly the structure and specific functions of words. [1]

There are different aspects or branches of Lexicology. Any language is the unity of different aspects: grammar, vocabulary, and sound system. As Lexicology is the science that deals with vocabulary systems, it is definitely connected with all the rest of the aspects. Lexicology is linked with phonetics since the latter is concerned with the study of the sound-form of the word. There is a close rapport between Lexicology and Grammar. Grammar is concerned with various means of expressing grammatical relations between words as well as with patterns according to which words are combined into word-groups and sentences. Lexicology is bound up with Stylistics since there are problems of significance, vocabulary stratification, style treated in the frames of both the branches. The structure of words is studied by morphology.

Ways of coining new words is the object of word-building, meaning of words, their relations in vocabulary became the object of semasiology. Set- expressions and idioms are studied by phraseology, the origin of words, their development in the language are dealt with etymology and the behaviour of words in speech is considered by contextology. [2]

Two Approaches to Language Study There are two principle approaches in linguistic science to the study of language material: synchronic and diachronic. With regard to Special lexicology the synchronic approach is concerned with the vocabulary of a language as it exists at a given time. It's Special Descriptive lexicology that deals with the terms and vocabulary units of a particular language at a certain time.

The diachronic approach in terms of Special lexicology deals with the changes and the development of vocabulary in the course of time. It is Special Historical lexicology that deals with the evaluation of the vocabulary units of a language as the time goes by. The two approaches shouldn't be set one against the other. In fact, they are interconnected and interrelated because every linguistic structure and system exists in a state of constant development, so that the synchronic state of a language system is a result of a long process of linguistic evaluation, of its historical development. Closely connected with the Historical lexicology is Contrastive and Comparative lexicology whose aims are to study the correlation between the vocabularies of two or more languages and find out the correspondences between the vocabulary units of the languages under comparison.

Methods of Linguistic Analysis Every science has certain methods of investigation at its disposal. The process of scientific investigation may be subdivided into several phases:

❖ Observation is the basic phase of all modern scientific studies including linguistics. In other words, we deal with the inductive method of query. The key

role of the opening phase of linguistic analysis is that the statements of fact must be based on study, not on not proved authority, logical conclusions or personal preferences.

❖ Classification is the second phase that comes after study. Every lexicological research is based on collecting linguistic examples. At this stage of linguistic analysis the stored facts, the collected data, and empirical material undergo some grouping.

❖ Generalization is the third stage of the linguistic analysis at which the set of data and their sorting must finally lead to the formulation of a hypotheses, rule, or law.

❖ Verification is the phase of linguistic analysis that leads to the results of the scientific investigation. While doing research, any linguist encounters all the phases of investigation. To finish his goal the linguist uses different methods and procedures. They are contrastive analyses, statistical analyses, method of immediate constituents, distributional analyses, transformational analyses, componential analyses, and method of semantic differentiation. [3]

Contrastive analysis is aimed at finding out similarities and differences in both related and non-related languages. For instance, contrastive analysis is applied in language teaching when we deal with such a event as linguistic interference. It was empirically shown that the mistakes which are made by foreign language students can be often the result of differences in structural patterns between the target language and the language of the learner. This naturally implies the necessity of a detailed comparison of the structure of a mother tongue and a foreign language. Contrastive analysis can be carried out at three linguistic levels: phonology, grammar and lexis. Statistical analysis is generally referred to as one of the principal branches of linguistics. Insights derived from statistical accounts of the vocabulary can be useful to the solution and explanation of exact problems linked with the qualitative and quantitative language use. Statistical inquiries have considerable value because of their relevance to certain problems of the selection of vocabulary items for the purposes of language usage and language teaching. During the day we usually pronounce about 48 000 words. We can survive in the alien environment using only 500 different words of the foreign language. It means that if we do not wish to waste time on committing to memorize vocabulary items, which are never likely to be useful to the learner, we have to select only lexical units that are usually used by a native speaker. In Modern Linguistics the issue of Basic / Nuclear English was investigated. Basic English was a project designed to provide a basic minimum vocabulary for the learning of general English. The project involved a word list of 850 words, the description of their functions and the connections between them. Statistical regularities can be observed only if the phenomena under analysis are sufficiently numerous. Thus, the first requirement of any statistic investigation is the size of the sample material.

The Perspectives of Modern English Lexicology Lexicology has its own main aims and tasks. Modern English lexicology investigates the problem of word structure and word formation, the classification of vocabulary units, description of

the relations between different lexical layers of English vocabulary. As a science it has both theoretical and practical use. The theoretical value of Lexicology stems from the theory of meaning which was first developed within the philosophical science. The relationship between the name and the thing constitutes one of the key questions of Gnostic theories. The research carried out in the frames of Lexicology meets the needs of many different sciences, such as lexicography, literary criticism, and foreign languages teaching. Modern English Lexicology aims at giving a systematic description of the Modern English word-stock. [4]

Modern English Lexicology forms part of the Theoretical Course of Modern English. It is inseparable from its other component parts, i.e., Grammar, Phonetics, Stylistics, the Course of History of the English Language.

Moreover, the Course of Modern English Lexicology is of great practical importance because it is aimed both at summarizing the practical material already familiar to the students from foreign language classes and at helping the students to develop the skills and habits of generalizing the linguistic phenomena.

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