

# English lexicology

## Lecture # 1

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# FUNDAMENTALS OF LEXICOLOGY

- Object of Lexicology
- Links of Lexicology with Other Aspects of Linguistics
- Types of Lexicology
- Two Principle Approaches in Linguistics



# Lexicology

- “lexis” - word, phrase (Greek)
- “logos” - science (Greek)

“The science of the word”

# Lexicology

- is a part of linguistics which deals with the vocabulary and characteristic features of words and word-groups



## ■ VOCABULARY

*is the system of words and word-groups that the language possesses*

## ■ WORD

*is the main lexical unit of a language resulting from the association of a group of sounds with a meaning*

## ■ WORD-GROUP

*is a group of words that exists in the language as a ready-made unit with its unities of meaning and syntactical function*



# Modern Lexicology

## aims

- at giving a systematic description of the word-stock of Modern English



# Modern English Lexicology

## studies

- the relations between various lexical layers of the English vocabulary
- the specific laws and regulations that govern development of the vocabulary
- the source and growth of the vocabulary and changes it has undergone



# Modern English Lexicology

## investigates

- the problems of word-structure and word-formation in Modern English
- the semantic structure of English words
- principles of the classification of vocabulary units into various groupings
- the laws governing the replenishment of the vocabulary with new vocabulary units



# Connection of Lexicology and Other Linguistic Sciences

- **Phonetics** (*is also concerned with the study of the world*)
- **Grammar** (*has the same objects of the study*)
- **Stylistics** (studies many problems treated in lexicology)

# Connection of Lexicology and Other Linguistic Sciences

- **History of the language** (*investigates the changes and the development of the vocabulary of the language*)
- **Sociolinguistics** (*investigates the causes of the changes in the vocabulary*)



# Types of Lexicology

## General Lexicology

- general study of words and vocabulary, irrespective of the specific features of any particular language
- part of general linguistics

# Types of Lexicology

## Special Lexicology

- description of the characteristics peculiarities in the vocabulary of a particular language
- can be *historical* or *descriptive*



# Types of Special Lexicology

**Historical Lexicology** deals with

- the origin of the words and their evolution
- their change and development,
- linguistic and extra-linguistic factors influencing the structure of words, their meaning and usage



# Types of Special Lexicology

**Descriptive Lexicology** deals with

- vocabulary of a given language at a definite stage of its development
- functions of words, morphological and semantic structures of words



# Types of Lexicology

## Comparative and Contrastive Lexicology

gives

- correlation between the languages ,
- correspondences between the vocabulary units of different languages

# Two approaches to language study

- Synchronic linguistics (descriptive)
- Diachronic linguistics (historical)

*Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)*

*Synchronic is concerned with systems*

*Diachronic is concerned with single units*



# Synchronic (Descriptive) Approach

**syn** – “together, with”

**chronos** - “time”

- *concerned with the vocabulary of the language as it exists at a given period of time*

# Diachronic (Historical) Approach

**dia** – “through”

**chronos** – “time”

- *deals with the development and changes of the language, evolution of vocabulary units as times goes by*

# Synchronic and Diachronic approaches

*are interconnected and interdependent*

Every linguistic structure and system exists in a state of constant development so that the synchronic (descriptive) state of a language system is a result of a long process of linguistic evolution, the result of the historical (diachronic) development of the language

# To beg - beggar

- Synchronically

*A simple word- to beg*

*A derived word- a beggar*

**\*a derived word-** *a word formed or originated from another or from a root in the same or another language* *to beg + ar =beggar*

# To beg- beggar

- Diachronically

“Beggar” was borrowed from Old French,

“To beg” appeared in English as a result of *back derivation*, was derived from the word “beggar”

*\*back derivation- the formation of the word from the stem of another word by means of cutting off suffixes (prefixes) from the source word*



# A WORD

- *denotes the main lexical unit of a language resulting from association of a group of sounds with a meaning*
- *Is the smallest unit of a language which can stand alone as a complete utterance*

# A word group

- denotes a group words which exists in the language as a ready-made unit
- has the unity of meaning
- Has the unity of syntactical function

Ex: *as loose as a goose=clumsy*

# What is a word?

- the unit of speech which serves the purposes of human communication=the unit of communication
- can be perceived as the total of the sounds which comprise it
- Possesses several characteristics, when it is viewed structurally



# External structure of the word

- Is a morphological structure

Post-impressionists

*Post-, im-*      prefixes

*Press*            the root

*Ist-*                noun-forming suffix



# **Internal structure** of the word

- Is its meaning

The meaning of the words is studied by the area of lexicology - semantics



# The unity of the word

- External unity
- Semantic unity

# External (formal) unity

- A blackbird (a single grammatical framing)

- A black bird

(each constituent is independent)

- *can acquire grammatical forms of its own.*

Ex: The blackest birds

- other words can be inserted between the components

Ex: A black night bird

# Semantic unity

- **A black bird** each word conveys a separate concept

Bird- a kind of a living creature


Black- a colour

- **A blackbird** conveys only one concept  
“a type of a bird”



# The word

is a speech unit used for the purposes of human communication, materially representing a group of sounds, possessing a meaning, susceptible to grammatical employment and characterized by formal and semantic unity.

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- What Greek morphemes compose the word “lexicology”?
  - What does lexicology study?
  - What is the object of study of General lexicology?
  - What does Special lexicology study?
  - What is the object of Historical lexicology?
  - What does descriptive lexicology deal with?
  - What branches of linguistics does lexicology have close ties with?
  - Why are synchronic and diachronic approaches interconnected and interdependent?
  - What are the structural aspects of the word?
  - Explain which one can be considered a unity: a bluebell or a blue bell?



# Literature

- Антрушина Г.Б Лексикология английского языка
- Зыкова И.В. Практический курс английской лексикологии