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**A practical course in
English Lexicology**

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PREFACE

This book is compiled to meet the needs of students taking a course in Modern English Lexicology which forms a part of the curricula of Foreign Language Institutes, Teachers' Training Colleges and Philological and Translation Departments of Universities. It is also intended for post graduates and all those who are interested in the English language and its vocabulary. The implication is that it is possible to show that the vocabulary of every particular language is a system constituted by interdependent elements related in certain specific ways. The present book makes no pretention to deal with the whole vast field of English Lexicology.

In this book we have attempted as far as possible to present some theoretical materials which are our to opinion very urgent and important. We have used standard definitions and accepted terminology, though it was not always easy because there are various conventions and assumptions adopted in the existing literature. The book is based on course of lecture in English Lexicology delivered by the author for a number of years at Uzbek State World Languages University.

This edition follows the theoretical concepts of the previous book «Practical course in English Lexicology». In this edition much attention has been paid to the theoretical basis of lexicological problems and the latest achievements in Lexicology made in our country and abroad. The subject matter corresponds to the programme on English Lexicology issued by the Ministry of Higher education of Uzbekistan.

Lexicology is a science in the making its intense growth and makes the task of a text-book extremely difficult as many problems are still unsettled and many achievements are the things of the future. The author will be grateful for all criticism.

The author is especially grateful to the colleges of the Translation Institute in Brussels (Haute Ecole de Bruxelles) and European commission Education Tempus program who made many helpful suggestion in the preparation of this book.

CHAPTER 1

LEXICOLOGY AND ITS OBJECT.

§1. Subject matter of Lexicology

The term «Lexicology» is of Greek origin from «lexis» - «word» and «logos» - «science». Lexicology is the part of linguistics which deals with the vocabulary and characteristic features of words and word-groups. The term «vocabulary» is used to denote the system of words and word-groups that the language possesses.

The term «word» denotes the main lexical unit of a language resulting from the association of a group of sounds with a meaning. This unit is used in grammatical functions. It is the smallest unit of a language which can stand alone as a complete utterance. The term «word-group» denotes a group of words which exists in the language as a ready-made unit, has the unity of meaning, the unity of syntactical function, **For example.** the word-group «as loose as a goose» means «clumsy» and is used in a sentence as a predicative. He is as loose as a goose. Lexicology can study the development of the vocabulary, the origin of words and word-groups, their semantic relations and the development of their semantic structure, change of meaning.

Thus, the literal meaning of the term "Lexicology" is "the science of the word". Lexicology as a branch of linguistics has its own aims and methods of scientific research. Its basic task - is a study and systematic description of vocabulary in respect to its origin, development and its current use. Lexicology is concerned with words, variable word-groups, phraseological units and morphemes which make up words.

Uriel Weinreich¹ gave an idea on the subject of Lexicology and wrote that «To an American observer, the strangest thing about Lexicology is that it exists. No corresponding discipline is officially distinguished in Western European or American linguistics: in such American textbooks as H. A. Gleason's «Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics or C. F. Hockett's «Course in Modern Linguistics New York. 1958 there is no mention of «Lexicology» and what these books have to say about the study of vocabulary bears the marks of half-hearted improvisation. By contrast, textbooks assign to Lexicology a prominence comparable to that enjoyed by phonology and grammar. A sizable literature of articles, dissertations, book-length monographs, specialized collections and a lively stream of conferences on various lexicological subjects, reflect the relative importance of Lexicology

1. Uriel Weinreich. Lexicology. Current Trends in Linguistics. ed. by Thomas. A. Sebeok, The Hague, 1963.

§2. Types of Lexicology and its links with other branches of linguistics

There are 5 types of Lexicology: 1) general; 2) special; 3) descriptive; 4) historical; 5) comparative.

General Lexicology is a part of General linguistics which studies the general properties of words, the specific features of words of any particular language. It studies the peculiarities of words common to all the languages. General Lexicology attempts to find out the universals of vocabulary development and patterns. Linguistic phenomena and properties common to all languages are generally called language universals.

Special Lexicology deals with the words of a definite language. *Ex.*: English Lexicology¹, Russian Lexicology², Uzbek Lexicology³ and so on.

Descriptive Lexicology studies the words at a synchronic aspect. It is concerned with the vocabulary of a language as they exist at the present time.

Historical or diachronic Lexicology deals with the development of the vocabulary and the changes it has undergone. **For example.** In descriptive Lexicology the words «to take», «to adopt» are considered as being English not differing from such native words as «child», «foot», «stone» etc. But in historical Lexicology they are treated as borrowed words.

Comparative Lexicology⁴ deals with the properties of the vocabulary of two or more languages. In comparative Lexicology the main characteristic features of the words of two or more languages are compared. **For example.** Russian—English Lexicology, English—French Lexicology and etc.

Lexicology is closely connected with other aspects of the language: Grammar, Phonetics, the history of the language and Stylistics.

Lexicology is connected with grammar because the word seldom occurs in isolation. Words alone do not form communication. It is only when words are connected and joined by the grammar rules of a language communication becomes possible. On the other hand grammatical form and function of the word affect its lexical meaning. **For example.** When the verb «go» in the continuous tenses is followed by «to» and an infinitive, it expresses a future action. **For example.** He is not going to read this book. Participle II of the verb «go» following the link verb «be» denotes the negative meaning. **For example.** The house is gone.

So the lexical meanings of the words are grammatically conditioned.

1. R.Z Ginzburg, S.S. Khidekel, G.Y. Knyazeva, A.A Sankin. A Course in Modern English Lexicology – Moscow, 1973

2. Н.М Шанский. Лексикология современного русского языка // изд. «Просвещение» - Москва, 1964

3. Ўзбек тили лексикологияси // Фан нашриёти, Тошкент, 1981

4. В.Г Гак Сопоставительная лексикология – М., 1977

Lexicology is linked with phonetics because the order and the • arrangement of phonemes are related to its meaning. **For example.** The words «tip» and «pit» consist of the same phonemes and it is the arrangement of phonemes alone which determines the meaning of the words. The arrangement of phonemes in the words «increase» and «increase» is the same. Only stress determines the difference in meaning.

Lexicology is also closely linked with the History of the language. In examining the word information in terms of its historical development we establish its French origin and study the changes in its semantic and morphological structures. If we don't know the history of the language it will be very difficult to establish different changes in the meaning and form of the words which have undergone in the course of the historical development of the language.

There is also a close relationship between Lexicology and Stylistics. The words «to begin» and «to commence» mean one and the same meaning but they can never be used interchangeably because they have different stylistic references.

§3. Relationships, approaches and subbranches in Lexicology

The relationship existing between words may be either syntagmatic or paradigmatic.

The syntagmatic relationship is found in the context. The context is the minimum stretch of speech which is necessary to bring out the meaning of a word. **For example.** take tea (чай и чмок — пить чай), take tram (трамвайда юрмок — ехать на трамвае).

The paradigmatic relationship is the relations between words within the vocabulary: polysemy, synonymy, antonymy of words etc.

There are two approaches to the study of the vocabulary of a language — diachronic and synchronic.

Synchronic approach deals with the vocabulary as it exists at a given time, at the present time. The diachronic approach studies the changes and the development of vocabulary in the course of time, **For example.** Synchronically the words «help», «accept», «work», «produce» are all of them English words. But diachronically they came from different languages. Such words as «childhood», «kingdom», «friendship», «freedom» were at one time compound words because the suffixes *-dom*, *-hood*, *-ship* were independent words but synchronically they are derived words because «*dom*» and «*hood*» and «*ship*» became suffixes.

In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century Lexicology was mainly based on historical principles. At the present time the cognitive and conceptual analysis of the vocabulary are developing the following method of linguistic research are widely used by lexicologists: distributional, transformational, analysis into immediate constituents, statistical, componential, comparative etc. The choice of the method in each case depends on what method will yield the most reliable results in each particular case.

Lexicology has some subdivisions such as: