

Lecture 2

Basic Concepts of Words and Vocabulary



Goals

- How to define a word?
- Relation between sound and meaning
- Relation between sound and form
- Classification of words:
 - frequency: basic and non-basic
 - notion: content and functional
 - origin: native and borrowed
 - morphology: simple words, compounds, derivatives



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2.1 Definition of word

*What is a **word**?*

2.1.1 Dictionary: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/word>
word [wɜːd] *n*

1. A sound or a combination of sounds, or its representation in writing or printing, that symbolizes and communicates a meaning and may consist of a single morpheme or of a combination of morphemes.

2. Something said; an utterance, remark, or comment: *May I say a word about that?*

3. Computer Science A set of bits constituting the smallest unit of addressable memory.

4. words Discourse or talk; speech: *Actions speak louder than words.*



What is a word?

1. (Linguistics) one of the units of speech or writing that native speakers of a language usually regard **as the smallest isolable meaningful element of the language**, although linguists would analyse these further into morphemes.
2. an instance of vocal intercourse; chat, talk, or discussion *to have a word with someone*
3. an utterance or expression, esp a brief one *a word of greeting*
4. news or information *he sent word that he would be late*
5. a verbal signal for action; command *when I give the word, fire!*
6. an undertaking or promise *I give you my word, he kept his word*
7. an autocratic decree or utterance; order *his word must be obeyed*



<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

word (a unit of language that **native speakers can identify**)

"words are the blocks from which sentences are made";

"he hardly said ten words all morning"

S: (n) **word** (a brief statement) *"he didn't say a word about it"*



2.1.2 Linguists

Aristotle defined a word as the smallest significant unit of speech - a definition which held sway (rule/control) until recently.

Modern methods of analysis have discovered **semantic units below the word level**. A new term is therefore needed to denote the smallest significant element of speech; in contemporary linguistic theory it is known as a morpheme.



2.1.2 Linguists

Bloomfield (1933) distinguishes between two types of linguistic forms: free forms and bound forms.

Free forms can stand by themselves and sometimes act as a complete utterance whereas bound forms cannot.

nicely—nice + -ly

nice: can occur as an independent unit and even as a sentence (What about the other film? - Nice).

the suffix -ly cannot stand by itself

According to Bloomfield, **a word is a minimal free form.**



Summary:

In writing, visual term:

A word is viewed **as a meaningful group of letters** printed or written horizontally across a piece of paper.

In spoken language:

A word is viewed **as a sound or combination of sounds** which are made **voluntarily** (有意地) **with human vocal equipment**.

According to semantist:

A word is **a unit of meaning**.

Grammarians claim:

A word is **a free form** that can function in a sentence.



Summary:

The definition of a word comprises the following points:

- (1) a minimal free form of a language;
- (2) a sound unity;
- (3) a unit of meaning;
- (4) a form that can function alone in a sentence.

A word is a minimal free form of a language that has a given sound and meaning and syntactic function.



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2.2 Sound and Meaning

There is **no logical or intrinsic connection** between a sound and what it refers to. The relation between sound and meaning is almost always **arbitrary and conventional**. The same language can use the same sound to mean different things and the different languages use different sounds to refer to the same thing.

Symbolic connection is almost **always arbitrary and conventional**.

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
Romeo and Juliet, II, ii*



Sound and Meaning

Arbitrary. A **dog** is called a dog not because the sound and the three letters that make up the word just automatically suggest the animal in question.

The relationship between them is **conventional** because people of the same speech community have agreed to refer to the animal with this cluster of sounds. In different languages the same concept can be represented by different sounds.

Woman: Frau [frau](夫人) in German

femme [fem] in French

妇女 [fùnǚ] in Chinese 女性 [josei] in Japanese

[**mi:t**]: meet, meat, mete(边界).

[**nait**]: Knight and night



Onomatopoeia

In all languages, there are a few words with similar sounds, for example,

Mum, mother, father, and ‘*ba*’, ‘*ma*’ in Chinese,

cuckoo and ‘*buguniao*’ (布谷鸟), ‘*tick*’ and ‘*dida*’ (滴答声)

hiss: horse, cobra

miaow: 喵

all imitate the sounds people and animals are uttering.

Verbs: *crack* 噼啪声/爆裂

titter 吃吃地笑, 偷笑

tweet 小鸟啼叫

be *hissed* off the stage

Bees *buzz / drone / hum / sing*. 蜜蜂嗡嗡。



Spring

– Thomas Nashe

- Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
- Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
- Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
- Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

- 春

春，甘美之春，一年之中的尧舜，
处处都有花树，都有女儿环舞，
微寒但觉清和，佳禽争着唱歌，
啁啁，啾啾，哥哥，割麦，插一禾！

- <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/spring-the-sweet-spring/>



- The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
- Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
- In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
- Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
- Spring, the sweet Spring!

郊原荡漾香风，雏菊吻人脚踵，
情侣作对成双，老妪 (yu) 坐晒太阳，
走向任何通衢，都有歌声悦耳，
啁啁，啾啾，哥哥，割麦，插一禾！
春，甘美之春！

郭沫若译



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2.3 Sound and Form

The written form of English is not an accurate representation of the spoken form. There are different causes of the differences between sounds and forms in the English language.

- 1) The **English alphabet** was adopted from the Romans, which does not employ the system of one single letter to stand for one sound. Compare: with Chinese and Japanese
- 2) The **early scribes** deliberately **changed spelling** of words to make a line even or for easier recognition.



2.3 Sound and Form

- 3) **Dictionaries** help to fix the spelling of words
- 4) English has **borrowed many words** from other languages, which may **not have been assimilated**.

ab initio, fiancée, resume, parvenu (法, 暴发户)

prima dona (歌剧中的女主角)

kayak (皮船; 爱斯基摩小艇)



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2.4 The English Vocabulary

2.4.1 The term “vocabulary”

All the words in a language make up what is generally known as its vocabulary. The term ‘vocabulary’ is used in different senses. It can be used to refer to

- 1) **the total number of the words in a language;**
- 2) **all the words used in a particular historical period, e.g. Old English vocabulary, Middle English vocabulary and Modern English vocabulary;**
- 3) **all the words of a given dialect, a given book, a given discipline and the words possessed by an individual person.**

English is one of the world’s highly developed languages. Naturally the vocabulary is one of the largest and richest. So...



How many words are there in English?

- Estimates have been given ranging from **a million over to 2 million**.
- It partly depends on **what you count as English words**,
- and partly on **where you go looking for them**.



2.4.2 Problems in the counting of words

(1) Single word or two words?

In writing, it is often not clear whether something should be written as a single word, as two words, or hyphenated.

Is it *washing machine* or *washing-machine*?

School children or *schoolchildren*?

Flower pot, *flower-pot* or *flowerpot*?

Would you count all the items beginning with *foster* as new words: *foster mother* (养母), *foster-mother* (保育器, 育雏器)

foster brother, *foster care*, *foster child*, *foster father*, *foster home* (抚养孤儿的家庭), etc.?

This is a big problem for the dictionary-makers, who often reach different conclusions about what should be done.



2.4.2 Problems in the counting of words

- (2) Phrases
- What would you do with *get at, get by, get in, get off, get over*, and the dozens of other cases where get is used with an additional word?
- Would you count *get* once, for all of these, or would you say that, because these items have different meanings (*get at*, for example, can mean ‘*nag*’ 指责, 唠叨), they should be counted separately?
- What about *get it?*, *get your own back(to take revenge on)*, *get your act together(to become more organized and behave in a more effective way)*, and all the other ‘idioms’ ?
- Would you count *kick the bucket* (meaning ‘*die*’) as three familiar words or as a single idiom?



2.4.2 Problems in the counting of words

- (3) **Meaning**
- The third type of problems. If you let the meaning influence you (as it should), then you will find your word count growing very rapidly indeed. But as soon as you do this, you will start to worry about other meanings, even in single words. Is there a single meaning for *high* in
- *high tea* (英,下午5至6时之间, 有肉食冷盘的正式茶点), *high priest* (大祭司)
- *high time* (应该立刻做某事的时间)
- *high street* (大街)
- *high style* (最新款式, 最新式样)
- *high tech* (高科技)
- *high sea(s)* (公海, 外海)



2.4.2 Problems in the counting of words

- Should **ring** (the shape) be kept separate from **ring** (the sound)?
- For example: in *The New English-Chinese Dictionary*:
 - **ring¹** e.g. a wedding ring,
 - an ear ring, a key ring,
 - a basket ring (篮球的蓝圈),
 - stand in a ring, a spy ring (谍报网)
 - **ring²** e.g. give the bell a ring (按一下铃),
 - give sb. a ring (给某人打电话),
 - please ring me back,
 - ring an alarm, (敲起警钟),
 - ring the bell (听起来熟悉),
 - (美俚, 获得成功)

Are such cases 'the same word with different meanings' or 'different words'? These are the daily decisions that any word-counter (or dictionary-compiler) must make.



2.4.2 Problems in the counting of words

(4) Borrowed words

Whose English are we counting?

Sooner or later, the question would arise about the kind of vocabulary to include in the count. There wouldn't be a difficulty if the words were part of standard English—used by educated people throughout the **English-speaking world**.

Obviously these have to be counted. but what about the vast numbers of words which are not found everywhere—words which are restricted to a particular country(such as **Canada, Britain, India, or Australia**), or to a particular part of a country(such as **Wales, Yorkshire or Liverpool**)?



They will include words like

- ◆ **stroller** (push-chair轻便婴儿车) and **station** (stock farm (澳新) 大牧场, 畜牧场) from **Australia**,
- ◆ **bach** (holiday cottage (新西兰) 周末度假小别墅) and **pakeha** (white person (新西兰) 白种人) from **New Zealand**,
- ◆ **dorp** (village (南非) 村庄, 小镇) and **indaba** (conference (南非土人间的会议) from **South Africa**,
- ◆ **cwm**(valley) and **esteddfod**(competitive arts festival) from **Wales**,
- ◆ **faucet** (tap (美) 水龙头, 旋塞) and **fall** (autumn) from **North America**,
- ◆ **fortnight** (two weeks) and **nappy** (baby wear (英口) 尿布) from **Britain**,
- ◆ **loch**(lake (苏格兰) 湖) and **wee** (small (苏格兰) 一点点; 一会儿 *a wee drop of wine / a wee bit tedious*) from **Scotland**,
- ◆ **dunny** (money (澳新口, (露天)厕所; adj. 聋的, 鲁顿的) and **duppy** (ghost) from **Jamaica**,
- ◆ **lakh** (a hundred thousand (印度英语) 十万 (尤用以指卢比); 巨额, 许多) and **crore** (ten million (印度英语) 一千万) from **India**,
- ◆ and many more.



Some sources of Modern English words

- **Afrikaans**: trek, apartheid
- **American Indian languages**: moccasin(鹿皮鞋), wigwam(棚屋:美洲土著人的通常用树枝、兽皮或草席覆盖的拱形或圆锥形框架的住所)
squaw(北美印第安女人; [俚语]老婆; [贬]女子气的男人)
squawman (娶印第安女人做妻子的白人)
- **Anglo-Saxon**: God, house, rain, sea, beer, sheep,
gospel (关于耶稣替世人赎罪、天国到来等的福音; 福音书),
rainbow, Sunday, crafty(狡猾的,诡计多端的,(英方)灵巧的,巧妙的)
wisdom, understand
- **Arabic**: sultan (苏丹, 某些伊斯兰国家最高统治者的称号),
sheikh (阿拉伯酋长, 村长, 家长), hashish (印度大麻麻醉剂),
harem (伊斯兰国家中的闺阁, 后宫, 妻妾, 女眷),
ghoul (东方神化中的食尸鬼, 盗尸者, 盗墓者), algebra (代数学)
- **Australian languages**: dingo (澳洲野犬), wombat (毛鼻袋熊),
boomerang(回飞镖), budgerigar (虎皮鹦鹉)



Some sources of English words

Chinese: ketchup (番茄沙司, 番茄酱), sampan (舢板),
chow (中国家犬, (口) 食物, 食品), kaolin (高岭土, 瓷土),
typhoon (台风), yen(瘾=desire), yin, yang, kang <汉> 炕

Czech (捷克语): robot

Dutch (荷兰语): frolic (嬉戏, 欢乐的聚会),
cruise(乘游船漫游, 巡航), slim

Danish(Old Norse古斯堪的那维亚语): both, egg, knife, low, sky, take, they, want,
cake, call, crave, crop, husband, ill, kind, law, skill,

Eskimo: kayak, igloo, anorak

Finnish: sauna(桑拿)

French: aunt, debt, fruit, table, challenge, venison (野味, 鹿肉),
medicine, justice, victory, sacrifice, prince, castle, dinner,
grotesque (奇形怪状的, 怪诞的, 荒唐的), garage, moustache,
unique, brochure (小册子), police, montage(混合画, 综合画),
voyeur (刺探隐私者)

Hindi: guru, pundit(梵文学家), sari(纱丽), thug(刺客)



Some sources of Modern English words

Italian: sonnet, traffic, bandit, opera, balcony, soprano(女高音,童声高音), lava, arcade (连拱廊), studio, scampi (挪威海螯虾), timpani (音, 定音鼓), ballot (选票, 投票总数)

Japanese: kimono (和服), tycoon(日,大君,将军;(口)企业界,政界的巨头), judo (日, 现代柔道)

Nahuatl(纳瓦特尔人: 墨西哥南部和中美洲包括阿兹特克人的印第安人): tomato

Norwegian: ski, fjord(狭湾, 在悬崖峭壁之间的狭长海湾, 如挪威的), cosy (=US cozy)

Persian: sofa, shah(伊朗王), caravan (大篷车), divan(伊斯兰国家的国务会议), bazaar, shawl(披肩)

Portuguese: flamingo(火烈鸟), buffalo, pagoda(宝塔), veranda, marmalade

Russian: rouble(卢布), czar, steppe, sputnik, intelligentsia(知识界)

Spanish: sherry, cannibal(食人者), banana, potato, cigar, cafeteria, supremo, rodeo(牛仔竞技表演), stampede, canyon, marijuana(大麻), junta(小集团)

Turkish: yoghurt, kiosk(亭子), fez(土耳其毡帽), caftan(土耳其式长袍), bosh, caviare(鱼子酱)



2.4.3 The total bulk of English vocabulary

- At two years old the average vocabulary is about three hundred words. By the age of five it is about five thousand. By twelve it is about 12,000. And there for most people it rests—at the same size as the repertoire employed by a popular daily newspaper... Graduates have a average vocabulary of about 23,000 words.
Jane Bouttell, Guardian, 12 August 1986.
- Shakespeare had one of the largest vocabularies of any English writer, some 30,000 words. (Estimates of an educated person's vocabulary today vary, but it is probably about half this, 15,000.)
Robert McCrum, et al., The Story of English, 1986, p 102.



The *Oxford English Dictionary*

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is the accepted authority on the evolution of the English language over the last millennium. It is an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, history, and pronunciation of over half a million words, both present and past. It traces the usage of words through 2.5 million quotations from a wide range of international English language sources, from classic literature and specialist periodicals to film scripts and cookery books.



OED 1 & OED 2

- Oxford University Press had its origins in the information technology revolution of the late fifteenth century, which began with the invention of printing from **movable type**. The first book was printed in Oxford in 1478, only two years after Caxton set up the first printing press in England.
- In 1884, the first edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary* begins publication. In 1928, the last volume of *OED* first edition was published. In the 12 volumes, there are a total of **252,259 entries**.
- In 1989, the second edition of OED was published, with a total of **291,500 entries**.
- <https://public.oed.com/history/oed-editions/>



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2.5 Classification of Words

The English vocabulary, multifarious in nature, consists of words of all kinds. They can be classified by **different criteria** and for different purposes. Words may fall into:

According to **use frequency**: the basic word stock and non-basic vocabulary

According to **notion**: content and function words

According to **origin**: native and loan/borrowed words (Aliens 外语词、纯外来词 Denizens 归化外来词 Translation-loans and Semantic borrowings)
Words of Anglo-Saxon or of Old English are Native words; while those borrowed from other languages are loan or borrowed words.

According to **morphology**: simple words, compounds and derivatives



Criteria	Categories	Sub-categories
Use frequency	Basic word stock Non-basic vocabulary	Five characteristics Terminology Jargon Slang Argot Dialectal words Archaisms Neologisms
Notion	Content words Function words	Open Closed
Origin	Native Borrowed	2 characteristics (neutral + high frequency) Denizens Aliens Translation loans Semantic loans
Morphology	Simple words Compounds Derivatives	Chapter 4

2.5.1 Use frequency:

Basic word stock and non-basic vocabulary

- **Basic word stock**
- 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.
- Having passed from generation to generation, these words manifest some obvious characteristics.



Criteria	Categories	Sub-categories
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High Frequency Word Lists

High-frequency words are the words that appear most often in printed materials. According to Robert Hillerich, "Just three words **I, and, the** account for ten percent of all words in printed English."

Here is a list of the high frequency words:

a all after always about and am again around better away are an because bring
big at any been carry blue ate as before clean can be ask best cut come black by
both done down brown could buy draw find but every call drink for came fly
cold eight funny did from does fall go do give don't far help eat going fast full
hers four had first got I get has five grow in good her found hold is has him gave
hot it he how goes hurt jump into just green if little like know its keep look must
let made kind make new live many laugh me no may off light my now of or
long not on old pull much one our once read myself play out open right never
red please over sing only run pretty put sit own said ran round sleep pick see
ride some tell seven



The fundamental features of the basic word stock

- (1) **All-national character**
- (2) **Great stability**
- (3) Word-forming ability—**productivity**,
- (4) **Wide collocability** (Ability to form collocations)
- (5) Plurality of meanings (**polysemy**--polysemic): we can easily trace it in the length of the lists of meanings recorded for many English native words in various large dictionaries.
- (6) **Stylistically neutral**: They are fit to be used in a lecture, a poem or when speaking to a child.
- (7) **Monosyllabic**单音节的 (tree, ox, corn, goat, wheel, day, year, go, do)
- (8) **High frequency** value: The native element makes up the bulk of the most frequent elements used in any style of speech. Every writer uses more native words than loan words. Shakespeare has about 90%, Milton 80%, King James Bible about 94%.



(1) All National Character

Words of the basic word stock denote the most common things and phenomena of the world around us, which are indispensable to all people who speak the language.

Natural phenomena: rain, snow, fire, water, sun, moon, spring, wind, hill;

Human body and relations: head, foot, hand, face, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter;

Names of plants and animals: oak, pine, grass, pear, apple, tree, horse, sheep, dog, chicken;



(1) All National Character

Action, size, domain, state: come, go, eat, hear, beat, carry, evil, old, young, cold, heavy, white, black;

Numerals, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions: one, ten, hundred, I, you, your, who, in, out, under, but, till.

These words and the like cannot be avoided by any speakers of English, irrespective of class origin, education, profession, geographical regions, culture, etc.



(2) Great stability

Words of the basic word stock have been in use for centuries, e.g. **man, fire, mountain, sun, water, sun, moon** and others. As they denote the commonest things necessary to life, they are likely to remain unchanged. However, stability is only relative.

Actually, the basic word stock has been undergoing some changes. A few words like **arrow, bow, chariot**(战车), **knight** which were once prevalent in bygone days, have now moved out of the word stock whereas words like **electricity, machine, car, plane, computer, radio, television**, which denote new things and modern ways of life, have entered the stock.

But this change is slow. There are more words joining in than dropping out.



Table 1 Semantic broadening		
Word	Old meaning	New meaning
bird	'small fowl'	'any winged creature'
barn	'place to store barley'	'farm building for storage and shelter'
aunt	'father's sister'	'father or mother's sister'

Table 2 Semantic narrowing		
Word	Old meaning	New meaning
hound	'any dog'	'a hunting breed'
meat	'any type of food'	'flesh of an animal'
fowl	'any bird'	'a domesticated bird'
disease	'any unfavorable state'	'an illness'

Table 3 Amelioration		
Word	Old meaning	New meaning
pretty	'tricky, sly, cunning'	'attractive'
knight	'boy'	'a special title or position'

Table 4 Pejoration		
Word	Old meaning	New meaning
silly	'happy, prosperous'	'foolish'
wench	'girl'	'wanton woman, prostitute'

(3) Productivity

Words of the basic word stock are mostly **root words or monosyllabic words**. They can each be used alone, and at the same time can form new words with other roots and affixes.

rain: raindrop, rainstorm, rainwear, rainworm 蚯蚓,
acid rain 酸(性)雨, convective rain 对流雨(出现在热带雨林),
cyclonic rain 气旋(性)雨, dust rain, artificial rain, heavy rain ,
intermittent rain 间断下雨, mo(u)ld rain 梅雨

Idioms:

After **rain** comes fair weather. 雨过天晴; 否极泰来。

It never **rains** but it pours.

不下则已, 一下倾盆; 不来则已, 一来便接踵而至(尤指坏事)。



(3) Productivity

foot: footage, football, footpath, footer, foot-fall, footed, footman, footbath, footprint, footloose (free to go or do as one wishes 自由自在), **footing**, etc.

*Everyone began on an equal **footing**.*

*His business begun on a good **footing**.*

dog: doglike, doghood (狗性), dogcart, **doggedness**
dog-cheap(特别廉价的), dog-ear(书页之摺角),
dog-fall((比赛)平局),
dog-fight(空战, 狗咬狗, 缠斗),
doghole(狗洞, [俚]不安全的小煤矿),
dog paddle狗爬式游泳, dogsleep (打盹, 假寐)

*At one time it looked as though he could not live more than a few hours, and I am convinced that it was only through the Dutchman's **doggedness** that he pulled through.*



(4) Collocability

Many words of the basic word stock enter quite a number of **set expressions, idiomatic usages, proverbial sayings** and the like.

heart: a change of heart(改变主意, 变心, 弃邪归正);
a heart of gold (道德高尚的人); at heart (在内心里);
break one's heart;
cross one's heart(在胸口划十字); cry one's heart out (痛哭欲绝);
eat one's heart out (忧伤过度);
have one's heart in one's mouth(吓得要命, 焦急万分);
heart and hand (热心地);
heart and soul (全心全意地);
take something to heart (认真对待..., 受...影响或困扰);
wear one's heart upon one's sleeve(通过某人的行为清楚和公开地表明其感情);
with all one's heart (全心全意, 十分愿意地)



(4) Collocability

Wind: n.

a cold/an icy/a chill/a biting wind

V.

wind down

The party wound down as guests began to leave.

wind sth around/round sth

wind sth down

wind sth forward/back

wind sth up wind things up wind up

wind up doing sth

wind up in/at/with 结束于, 到了

They took a long walk and winded/wound up at the edge of town.



(4) Collocability

before the wind 【航海】 In the same direction as the wind.

顺风，借风力：按与风向相同的方向

in the wind: Likely to occur; in the offing:

有可能发生；即将发生的：

Big changes are in the wind. 巨大的变化即将发生

near the wind: Nautical Close to the wind.

【航海】 顺风的

off the wind 【航海】 In a direction away from the wind.

逆风，与风向相反的



(5) Polysemy

Words belonging to the basic word stock often possess more than one meaning because most of them have undertone semantic changes in the course of use and become polysemous.

spring n. 春季, 春天; 青春, 初期; 跳跃, 跳起, 弹回; 弹性[力], 活力

弹簧, 发条; 泉; 源泉; [常用复]根源, 动机, 原动力[pl.]大潮期; 裂缝, 裂开; 【航海】倒缆, (甲板的)上翘, 转向锚索; 【建】起拱点[面]; 【杓球】棒的弯曲

*The hot **springs** in the mountain smell of sulfur.*

*A wind **sprang** from the east, an idea of rain, sudden, pervading the air.*

*Even though I'm constantly tending to my garden, the weeds just **spring up like mushrooms** nonetheless.*

*In some spots, towns of 10, 000 residents **sprang up** literally overnight.*



(6) Neutral in style

Since native words denote the commonest things in human society, they are used by all people, in all places, on all occasions, and at all times. Therefore, they are **not stylistically specific**.

begin (E) ---commence (F)

brotherly (E) ----fraternal (F)

kingly (E) ----royal (F) ---regal (F)

rise (E) ----mount (F) ----ascend (L)

E: native words; F: borrowed words.



Non-basic vocabulary

Words that do not have the stated characteristics belong to **non-basic vocabulary** of the language. They include the following:

(1) Terminology consists of technical terms used in particular disciplines and academic areas as

in medicine: photoscanning ([医]光扫描, 摄影扫描), hepatitis (肝炎), indigestion (消化不良),

in mathematics: algebra(代数学), trigonometry(三角法), calculus (微积分学),

in music: symphony, orchestra, sonata([音]奏鸣曲), concerto (协奏曲);

in education: audiovisual, microteaching (微型教学(指实习教师的短期小班教学)),



(2) Jargon

Jargon refers to the specialized vocabularies by which members of particular arts, sciences, trades and professions communicate among themselves.

in business::

bottom line for 'inescapable implication, unavoidable result, ultimate version',

ballpark (棒球场,[俚语] 相近) figures for 'estimate',

bargaining chips for 'an advantage held by any of the parties in a negotiation';

in horse-racing:

hold him back for 'prevent a horse from winning'

hold him in for 'force a horse to run behind at the beginning of a race so as to reserve speed for the finish';



(2) Jargon

in medicine:

paranoid (妄想症患者) for 'suspicious, worried'

hypo for 'hypodermic syringe (皮下注射)';

in warfare:

buster (小鬼, (巨型)炸弹) for 'bomb'

Little Boy (atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945) and **Fat Man**

Generally speaking, people outside the circle have difficulty in understanding such words.



(3) Slang

Slang belongs to the **sub-standard language**, a category that seems to stand between the standard general words including **informal ones available to everyone and in-group words** like **cant** (shoptalk(职业用语, 有关本行的谈话) of any sub-group), **jargon**, and **argot**((盗贼等的)暗语, 黑话), all of which are associated with, or most available to, **specific groups of the population**. Certain words are labeled 'slang' not because of their appearance or pronunciation but because of their usage.

Dough and bread, are standard when they are used as **food** terms but **slang in the sense of 'money'**

grass and pot have standard or formal use meaning, respectively, i.e. 'type of plant life' and 'cooking utensil,' but slang use meaning '**marijuana**.' [植]大麻



(3) Slang

Such words as

beaver (海狸, girl),

bear (police),

catch (talk to),

Roger (understand)

'head' can be referred to by **nut**, **dome**, **upper**, **bean**, **block** and so on;

the meaning of '**drunk**' can be expressed in as many terms as over three hundred such as **elevated**, **merry**, **jolly**, **comfortable**, **boiled**, **grassy**, **tight**, **knocked out**, **blue-eyed**, **fried**, **paralyzed**, **pickled**, **stiff**, **stunned**.



Internet Slang

- Internet users have developed many slang terms over the years. Most of these are not actually acronyms as they cannot be pronounced, but that is what they are called nonetheless. Many of these terms originated for saving keystrokes and are often written in lower case:
- AFAIC — "as far as I'm concerned", or "as far as I care", or "as far as I can..."
- AFAIK — "as far as I know"
- AFAIR — "as far as I recall", or "as far as I remember"
- AFK — "away from keyboard"
- ASAP — "as soon as possible"
- BBL — "be back later"
- BBS — "be back soon"



Internet Slang

- FAQ — "Frequently Asked Question"
- G2G — "got to go". Used in chatrooms.
- HAND — "have a nice day"
- HTH — "hope this helps"
- IC — "I see", also, "in character" in MUDs and role-playing games .
- IMO — "in my opinion"
- IMNSHO — "in my not-so-humble opinion"
- k — short for "OK"
- l8 — a shorthand spelling of "late".



Internet Slang

- OIC — "oh, I see"
- OMG — Exclamation, "Oh my God!!"
- OT — "off topic"
- P2P — Person to Person
- RU — Are You?
- R8 — right
- TBH — "to be honest"
- thx — shorthand spelling of "thanks"
- TIA — "thanks in advance"
- TTYL — "talk to you later"



Catchphrases of 2021

- 躺平 **Lying flat**
 - *To "lie flat" is a term to describe young people giving up the rat race and doing just the bare minimum to get by. This mentality is a way for young people to relieve stress and adjust their mindset.*
 - **Young people use "lying flat" to show their mentality of giving up on ambition and doing just the minimum to get by.**
- 双减 **Double reduction**
 - *Earlier this year, the Ministry of Education issued a series of "double reduction" policies in order to ease excessive homework and off-campus tutoring for primary and middle school students.*
- 元宇宙 **Metaverse**
 - *The future integration of the Internet, gaming, virtual reality, digital artwork, and others to establish "a universe."*
- 强国有我 **Young people are committed to building a stronger China**
 - *This was an oath taken by young students at the ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China at Tian'anmen Square. It means that the Party can be assured that young people are committing to building a stronger China.*



(4) Argot

- **Argot** generally refers to **the jargon of criminals**. Its use is confined to the sub-cultural groups and outsiders can hardly understand it, e.g.
 - can-opener (all-purpose key),
 - dip (pick-pocket),
 - persuader (dagger)
 - bite - a portion removed from the whole; "the government's weekly bite from my paycheck"
 - deck - street name for a packet of illegal drugs
 - street name - slang for something (especially for an illegal drug); "'smack' is a street name for heroin"



(5) Dialectal words

- **Dialectal words** are words used only by speakers of the dialect in question. For example,
 - beauty (AusE =excellent, great),
 - chook (AusE =chicken),
 - cocky (AusE =small farmer),
 - station (AusE =ranch);
 - auld (ScotE =old),
 - bluid (ScotE =blood),
 - coo (ScotE =cow),
 - hame (ScotE =home),
 - lough ([lɒk] IrE =lake),
 - Loch Ness (**Scottish Gaelic** : 苏格兰、爱尔兰或马恩岛的说盖尔语的凯尔特人)
 - bog (IrE =swamp).



(6) Archaisms

Archaisms are words or forms that were once in common use but are now restricted only to specialized or limited use. They are found mainly in older poems, legal documents and religious writing or speech. Here are some examples:

thou (you), ye (plural you), thee (objective you), brethren (brother),
aught (anything),
wilt (will), troth (pledge), quoth (said),
hereof (of this, concerning this), hereby
therefrom (from that or there),
wherein (in what)

*the country **wherein** those people live*
*I **hereby** pronounce you husband and wife.*



Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day

--Shakespeare

- Shall I compare **thee** to a summer's day?
 - **Thou** art more lovely and more temperate.
 - Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 - And summer lease has all too short a date:
 - Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 - And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
-
- 能否把你比作夏日璀璨？你却比炎夏更可爱温存；
 - 狂风摧残五月花蕊娇妍，夏天匆匆离去毫不停顿。
 - 苍天明眸有时过于灼热，金色脸容往往蒙上阴翳(yi)；



- And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
- By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed:
- But **thy** eternal (永恒的)summer shall not fade,
- Nor lose possession of that fair thou ownst(=own);
- Nor shall Death brag **thou** wanderest in his shade
- When in eternal lines to time **thou** growest.
- **So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,**
- **So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.**



- 一切优美形象不免褪色，
- 偶然摧折或自然地老去。
- 而你如仲夏繁茂不凋谢，
- 秀雅风姿将永远翩翩；
- 死神无法逼你气息奄奄，
- 你将永生于不朽诗篇。
- 只要人能呼吸眼不盲，
- 这诗和你将千古流芳。

• 孙梁译



(7) Neologisms

◆ **Neologisms** are newly-created words or expressions, or words that have taken on new meanings.

◆ **microelectronics**: the branch of electronics dealing with integrated circuits

◆ **futurology**: a study that deals with future possibilities based on current trends

◆ **COVID-19**: a coronavirus that is genetically related to SARS-CoV,
which causes SARS

social distancing

Zoombombing: Disrupting a public Zoom videoconference by using the screen sharing feature and displaying objectionable material. Zoombombing generally forces the conference host to shut down the session. 指个人因为平台安全漏洞，无意间侵入其他视频电话会议

freak out: withdraw from reality and society esp. by taking drugs. 因服用毒品而产生幻觉



(7) Neologisms

MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses)

Microlecture (微课)

Classin (在线课堂)

Coursera (是世界上最大的在线学习平台之一,于 2012 年由斯坦福大学的两位计算机科学教授 Daphne Koller 和 Andrew Ng (机器学习大牛吴恩达) 创办。)

MIT OpenCourseWare (is a web-based publication of virtually all MIT course content. OCW is open and available to the world and is a permanent MIT activity.)



2.5.2 Content Words and Function Words

- ◆ By notion, words can be categorized into content words and functional words.
- ◆ **Content words** denote clear notions and thus are known as **notional words**. They are noun, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and numerals, which denote notions of objects, phenomena, action, quality, state, degree, quantity, etc. e.g. *earth, cloud, run, walk, bright, dark, never, frequently, five, December*.
- ◆ **Functional words** do not have notions of their own. Therefore, they are also called empty words. As their chief function is to express the relation between notions, the relation between words as well as between sentences, they are known as **form words**. Prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries and articles belong to this category. Examples are *on, of, upon, and, but, do (does, did), be (am, were, is), a, the* and others.
- ◆ However, functional words do far more work of expression in English on average than content words.



Criteria	Categories	Sub-categories
Use frequency	Basic word stock Non-basic vocabulary	Five characteristics Terminology Jargon Slang Argot Dialectal words Archaisms Neologisms
Notion	Content words Function words	Open Closed
Origin	Native Borrowed	2 characteristics (neutral + high frequency) Denizens Aliens Translation loans Semantic loans
Morphology	Simple words Compounds Derivatives	Chapter 4

2.5.3 Content Words and Function Words

- **Content words**, which constitute the main body of the English vocabulary, are **numerous**, and the number is **ever growing** whereas **functional words**, which make up a very small number of the vocabulary, remain **stable**.
- However, functional words **do far more work of expression** on average than content words.
- Stuart Rpbertson (1957): *and, be, have, it, of, the, to, will, you* assume **one fourth of the task of expression** in English.



BNC, COCA, Longman: top ten

Word	Frequency	Type
the	9243	(definite article)
of	5220	(preposition)
and	5196	(conjunction)
to	4951	(preposition)
a	4506	(indefinite article, noun, preposition)
in	2822	(preposition, adverb)
is	2699	(verb)
you	2041	(pronoun, noun)
are	1843	(verb)
for	1752	(preposition, conjunction)



New function words?

- New words? New usages?
- ***Sie***: gender-neutral pronoun?
- ***They***:
“they” was voted as the ***Word of the Year in 2015***



2.5.3 Origin: Native and loan/borrowed words

Native Words and Borrowed Words

As far as the origins of the words are concerned, English words can be grouped into native words and borrowed words.

Native words are not native in fact but words **brought to Britain in the fifth century by the German tribes**: the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, thus known as Anglo-Saxon words.

Words of Anglo-Saxon origin are small in number, amounting to roughly **50,000 to 60,000**, but they form the mainstream of the basic word stock and stand at the core of the Therefore, what is true of the basic word stock is also true of the basic word stock, native words have few other features:



Criteria	Categories	Sub-categories
Use frequency	Basic word stock Non-basic vocabulary	Five characteristics Terminology Jargon Slang Argot Dialectal words Archaisms Neologisms
Notion	Content words Function words	Open Closed
Origin	Native Borrowed	2 characteristics (neutral + high frequency) Denizens Aliens Translation loans Semantic loans
Morphology	Simple words Compounds Derivatives	Chapter 4

Characteristics of native words

What is true of the basic word stock is also true of native words. Apart from the characteristics mentioned of the basic word stock, in contrast to borrowed words, native words have two other features:

(1) Neutral in style. Since native words denote the commonest things in human society, they are used by all people, in all places, on all occasions, and at all times. Therefore, they are not stylistically specific.

begin (E) -commence (F)

brotherly (E) -fraternal (F)

kingly (E) -royal (F) -regal (L)

rise (E) -mount (F) -ascend (L)

Words marked **E are native words** and the rest are all borrowed. Stylistically, natives words are neither formal nor informal whereas the words borrowed from French or Latin are literary and learned, thus appropriate in formal style.



(2) Frequent in use

Native words are **most frequently used** in everyday speech and writing. The proportion of its use in relation to borrowings is perhaps just the opposite of its number.

The percentage of native words in use runs usually as high as **70 to 90 percent**.



S. Robertson (rev) 1957:174

Author or Book	Native	Foreign
Spenser	86%	14%
Shakespeare	90%	10%
Milton (John, Paradise Lost, 1667)	81%	19%
Addison	82%	18%
Swift (Jonathan, Gulliver's Travels, 1726)	75%	25%
Pope	82%	18%
Johnson	72%	28%
Hume	73%	27%
Gibbon	70%	30%
Macaulay	75%	25%
Tennyson	88%	12%



Borrowed words

- ◆ Words taken over from foreign languages are known as **borrowed words or loan words or borrowings** in simple terms.
- ◆ English is a heavy borrower and has adopted words from all other major languages of the world. It is estimated that English borrowings constitute **80 percent of the modern English vocabulary**.
- ◆ As is stated in *Encyclopedia Americana*, "The English language has vast debts. In any dictionary **some 80% of the entries are borrowed**". The English language is noted for the remarkable complexity and heterogeneity(异质性) of its vocabulary because of its extensive borrowings.
- ◆ Baugh talks of the English vocabulary as "**cosmopolitan vocabulary**", which reveals the true nature of the English vocabulary.



Four types of loan words:

According to the degree of assimilation and manner of borrowing, we can bring the loan-words under four classes.

(1) Denizens. Denizens are words **borrowed early in the past and now are well assimilated** into the English language. In other words they have come to conform to the English way of pronunciation and spelling. Some of the words are so successfully assimilated that only trained professionals may be aware of their origin.

Words of this group are early borrowings from **Latin, Greek, French and Scandinavians**, e.g. port from portus (L), cup from cuppa (L), shift from skipta (ON), shirt from skyrtá (ON), change from changier (F), pork from porc (F).



(2) Aliens.

Aliens are borrowed words which have retained their original pronunciation and spelling. These words are immediately recognisable as foreign in origin.

décor (F),

blitzkrieg (blitz[军]闪电战G),

kowtow (CH), **typhoon** (台风), **chop-chop** (quickly, 快快, 1834)

bazaar (Per),

rajar (<印> 王侯, 首长Hin),

status quo (L),

intermezzo (【音】间奏曲, 插乐曲IT [Italian]),

emir (埃米尔(穆斯林国家的酋长.贵族或王公) Arab



(3) Translation-loans.

Translation-loans are words and expressions formed from the existing material in the English language but **modeled on the patterns taken from another language (donor language)**. Such words can also be subdivided.

Words translated according to the **meaning**:

- mother tongue** from lingua maternal (L)
- a slip of the tongue** from lapsus linguae (L)
- surplus value** from Mehrwert (G)
- masterpiece** from Meisterstück (G)
- black humour** from humour noir (F)

Words translated according to the **sound**:

- kulak** from kyrak (Russ)
- ketchup** from fanqie jiang (CH dial)
- lama** from lama (Tib)
- tea** from t'e (CH dial)



(4) Semantic loans

- **Borrowing meaning from a foreign language**
- Words of this category **are not borrowed with reference to the form but to the meaning**. In other words, English has borrowed a new meaning for an existing word in the language.
- Old English **dream** meant "joy, mirth, noisy merriment," also "music."
- Its modern meaning of "sleeping vision" was borrowed later from the Norse.
- **Pioneer** once signified 'explorer' only or 'person doing pioneering work', and it now has taken on the new meaning of 'a member of the Young Pioneer' from Russian.
- The meaning 'stupid' of the word **dumb** comes from the German word **dumm**. Likewise, **fresh** has adopted the meaning of 'impertinent, sassy (无礼的), cheeky(厚颜无耻的)' under the influence of the German word **frech**.



2.5.4 Morphology

- **Chapter 3-4**
- **Simple words**
- **Compounds**
- **Derivatives**
-



Summary

Criteria	Categories	Sub-categories
Use frequency	Basic word stock	Five characteristics
	Non-basic vocabulary	Terminology Jargon Slang Argot Dialectal words Archaisms Neologisms
Notion	Content words	Open
	Function words	Closed
Origin	Native	2 characteristics (neutral + high frequency)
	Borrowed	Denizens Aliens Translation loans Semantic loans
Morphology	Simple words Compounds	Chapter 4

Exercises

- **1. Fill in the blanks with the right information.**
- **(1) According to the origins of the words, English words can be classified into ____.**
- A. content words and functional words
- B. native words and borrowed words
- C. basic words and dialectal words
- D. loan words and dialectal words
- **(2) By _____, words fall into functional words and content words.**
- A. use frequency
- B. notion
- C. origin
- D. word formation



2. Give a term for each of the following definitions.

- (1) sub-standard words often used on informal occasion _____
- (2) specialized vocabulary common in certain professions

- (3) words used by sub-cultural groups particularly by underground society _____
- (4) words that have clear notions _____
- (5) words of Anglo-Saxon origin _____



2. Give a term for each of the following definitions.

- (6) words borrowed by way of translation _____
- (7) old words with new meanings _____
- (8) _____ are borrowings that have become naturalized or assimilated in English.
- (9) native forms with meanings borrowed from other languages _____
- (10) words essential to native speakers' daily communication _____



2. Give a term for each of the following definitions.

- (11) Borrowed words which still sound foreign and look foreign are _____.
- (12) _____ are words once in common use but are now restricted only to specialized or limited use.
- (13) A word whose meaning was borrowed from another language is called _____.



3. Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

- ___1. The principles by which to classify words are usage, notion and origin.
- ___2. Native words are more popular than foreign words
- ___3. Native words enjoy the same features as the basic word stock and more.
- ___4. Under no circumstances can sound and meaning be intrinsically related.
- ___5. Content words are changing all the time whereas functional words are stable and enjoy a high frequency in use than content words.



4. Give the modern equivalents for the following archaic words.

1. haply
2. albeit
3. methinks
4. eke
5. sooth
6. morn
7. troth
8. ere
9. quoth
10. hallowed



5. Group the following borrowed words into *denizens*, *aliens*, *translation loans* and *semantic loans*.

confrere	wall
kettle	skirt
chopstick	dream
typhoon	gift
pro patria	husband
die	parvenu
Wunderkind	bloom
mikado	black humour
silk	long time no see



6. Answer the following questions.

- 1. How do you define the term ‘vocabulary’?
- 2. What are the problems in counting the total number of English words?
- 3. Explain neologisms with examples.
- 4. How do you account for the role of native words in English in relation to loan-words?

