WHAT IS LEXICOLOGY

Abdumalikova Sevinch Jasurbek qizi

Abduraxmanova Zilola Yoqubjon qizi

ABSTRACT: Lexicology is the branch of linguistics that studies the nature, meaning, and structure of words. It encompasses various aspects of vocabulary, including word formation, semantic relationships, and the evolution of words over time. This field examines how words function within a language, their usage in different contexts, and their connections to cultural and social factors. Lexicology also explores the organization of words in dictionaries and the principles underlying lexical databases. By analyzing the intricacies of vocabulary, lexicology contributes to our understanding of language development, communication, and cognitive processes related to language use.

Key Words:Lexicology, Vocabulary, Word formation, Semantics, Morphology, Lexical semantics, Dictionary structure, Language evolution, Semantic relationships, Cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, Lexical databases, Language development, Communication

The term is composed of two Greek morphemes: logos – learning, Lexus – word, phrase. Thus the literal meaning of the term is the science of the word. LG is a branch of linguistics and has its own aims and methods of scientific research. Its basic task is to study and descript systematically the vocabulary in respect to its origin, development and current use. LG is concerned with words, variable workgroups, phrasiological units

Vocabulary refers to the set of words that a person knows and uses in a language. It encompasses both the words that one can understand (receptive vocabulary) and those one can actively use (productive vocabulary). Vocabulary is essential for effective communication, reading comprehension, and writing skills. A rich vocabulary allows individuals to express their thoughts more clearly and

accurately, while a limited vocabulary can hinder understanding and expression.There are different types of vocabulary

1. Active Vocabulary: Words that a person uses regularly in speaking and writing.

2. Passive Vocabulary: Words that a person understands but does not commonly use in speech or writing.

3. Academic Vocabulary: Words used in academic texts that are not commonly used in everyday conversation.

4. Domain-Specific Vocabulary: Terms specific to certain fields or subjects, such as medical terminology or legal jargon.

and with morphemes. Modern English LG investigates the problems of word structure

and word formation in modern English.

Word formation refers to the process of creating new words or modifying existing words to convey different meanings or grammatical forms. Here are some common methods of word formation in English:

1. Affixation: Adding prefixes or suffixes to a base word.

 Prefix: Un- (happy → unhappy)

 Suffix: -ness (happy → happiness)

2. Compounding: Combining two or more whole words to create a new

 Examples: toothpaste (tooth + paste), basketball (basket + ball)

3. Conversion: Changing the grammatical category of a word without altering its form.

 Example: "run" can be a noun (a run) or a verb (to run).

4. Derivation: Forming a new word by adding affixes that change its meaning or part of speech.

 Example: "act" becomes "action" when the suffix "-ion" is added.

Semantics is the study of meaning in language, encompassing how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning. It involves various aspects, including:

1. Lexical Semantics: This deals with the meanings of words and their

relationships to one another, such as synonyms (words with similar meanings), antonyms (words with opposite meanings), and hyponyms (words that are more specific instances of a broader category).

2. Compositional Semantics: This examines how the meanings of individual words combine to form the meanings of larger expressions, such as phrases and sentences. It explores rules for combining meanings based on syntax.

3. Pragmatics: While closely related to semantics, pragmatics focuses on context and how it influences meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words. It considers factors like speaker intention, cultural background, and situational context.

4. Truth Conditions: This aspect looks at what makes a statement true or false based on its logical structure and its relation to the world.

5. Semantic Change: This involves how word meanings evolve over time due to cultural changes, shifts in usage, or other linguistic phenomena.

In linguistics, morphology deals with the structure of words and how they are formed from morphemes—the smallest units of meaning. It examines how words are built through prefixes, suffixes, roots, and other components. Morphemes can be classified into two main types:

1. Free morphemes: These can stand alone as words (e.g., "book," "run," "happy"). They can function independently in a sentence.

2. Bound morphemes: These cannot stand alone and must be attached to other morphemes to convey meaning (e.g., prefixes like "un-" in "unhappy," or suffixes like "-ed" in "walked").

Language evolution refers to the processes through which languages change over time. This can include changes in phonetics (sounds), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure), semantics (meaning), and vocabulary. Language evolution is influenced by various factors, including social, cultural, technological, and environmental changes. Here are some key aspects of language evolution:1. Historical Linguistics Historical linguistics studies how languages develop and diverge from common ancestors. It helps trace the relationships

between languages through comparative methods. 2. Language Change Languages are not static; they undergo continuous change: Phonetic Changes: Pronunciation shifts over time (e.g., the Great Vowel Shift in English). Morphological Changes: Alterations in word forms and structures. Syntactic Changes: Shifts in sentence structure or grammar rules. Semantic Changes: Evolution of word meanings (e.g., "nice" originally meant "foolish").3. Language Families Languages often belong to families that share a common root, such as: Indo-European: Includes languages like English, Spanish, Hindi, and Russian. Sino-Tibetan: Includes Mandarin and Cantonese. 4. Dialectal Variation Different regions may develop distinct dialects that can eventually lead to the emergence of new languages. 5. Language Contact Languages can influence each other through contact due to trade, migration, colonization, or globalization, leading to: Borrowing: Adoption of words from one language into another. Pidgins and Creoles: Simplified languages that evolve from contact scenarios.6. Sociolinguistic Factors

Societal influences such as class, gender, ethnicity, and technology play significant roles in how language evolves and spreads. 7. Language Death and RevitalizationSome languages become extinct due to various factors like globalization or cultural assimilation. Efforts at revitalization seek to preserve endangered languages.8. Theoretical Perspectives Various theories explain language evolution: Natural Selection: Proposes that language evolves similarly to biological traits. Cultural Evolution: Emphasizes the role of human culture in shaping language.

Another focus of lexicology is phraseology, which studies multi-word expressions, or idioms, like 'raining cats and dogs.' The meaning of the phrase as a whole has a different meaning than each word does on its own and is often unpredictable when considering its components individually. Phraseology examines how and why such meanings exist, and analyzes the laws that govern these word combinations.

Idioms and other phraseological units can be classified according to content and

or meaning. They are difficult to translate word-for-word from one language to another

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