


# **Lexicology**

## **Lecture 1**



# PLAN

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## □ I. Lexicology as a branch of linguistics

a) *Its object and aims*

b) *Branches of lexicology, 2 approaches to language study.*

## □ II. The word as the basic unit of language

## □ III. The semantic structure of word meaning



# □ III. The semantic structure of word meaning

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□ 1) Approaches to meaning

□ 2) Types of meaning

*a) lexical and grammatical meaning*

*b) denotative and connotative meaning*

□ 3. Motivation (The connection between meaning and form).

□ 4. The structure of meaning

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# Definition

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## ▣ **Lexicology** –

‘lexi(ko)s’ - *a word*;

‘logos’ - *a science/learning*;

literally: *the science of the word*.

## ▣ **Lexicology** is ?



# Definition

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- ▣ **Lexicology** is the part of linguistics dealing with the vocabulary of the language and the properties of words as the main units of language.



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82 words and phrases  
instead of  
**GOOD, GREAT and  
INTERESTING**



by [edutainment1.wordpress.com](http://edutainment1.wordpress.com)





Word of the Day

November 10, 2015

# logophile

**noun** [law-guh-fahyl, log-uh-]

a lover of words.



Dictionary.com



Word of the Day

February 18, 2016

# autodidact

**noun** [aw-toh-dahy-dakt, -dahy-dakt]

a person who has learned a subject without the benefit of a teacher or formal education.



Dictionary.com

# The main problems investigated in lexicology

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- 1) systematic description of the word-stock in respect to its **origin, development and current use**;

E.g., A girl, cowboy, nice





The main problems investigated in lexicology

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2. the problems of **word structure** and **word formation**;

- E.g., writer, boater
- Dis-appointment or disappoint-ment?
- In-correctly or. incorrect-ly?



The main problems investigated in lexicology

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3. *semantics* of English words;

semantic structure of the meaning;

semantic structure of the vocabulary;



The main problems investigated in lexicology

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4 )relationships of lexical units in speech;

E.g. a blind man, a blind date

5) regional variants & dialects of English

E.g. Chemist's - ? Queue- ?Trousers - ?

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# Branches of lexicology

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1. General & Special Lexicology;  
Contrastive Lexicology

2. *Historical / diachronic/ & Synchronic  
lexicology*

Historical lexicology:

- *Etymology*



# Branches of lexicology

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## Synchronic lexicology:

- Word building or Word formation
- *Semantics or Semasiology*
- Phraseology
- Applied Lexicology (*Lexicography*,  
Linguodidactics, Pragmatics of speech)



# A Word

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**A word** is the basic/ smallest significant unit of a given language capable of functioning alone and characterised by the following:

- positional mobility within a sentence
  - morphological uniterruptability
  - semantic integrity
- 



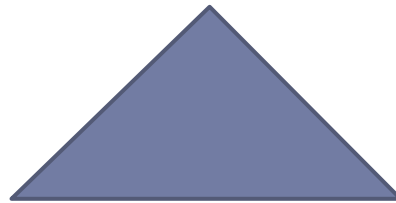
# Approaches to meaning

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A word is a linguistic sign (F.de Saussure)

## Interpretations of the structure of the sign

- Referential approach
- Functional or contextual approach
- Operational or information-oriented approach

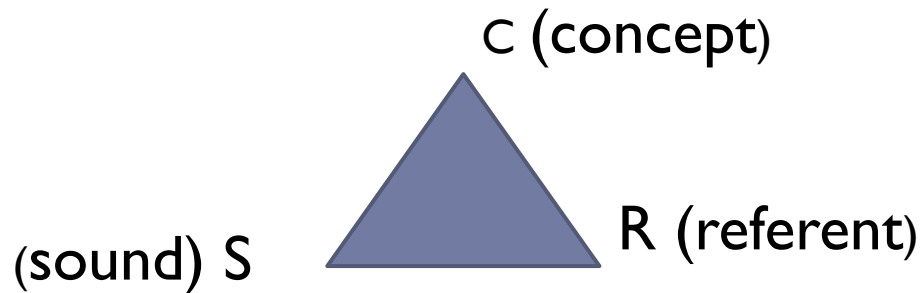


Semantic  
triangle

# Referential approach

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The 3 components are closely connected with meaning:



- the sound-form of the linguistic sign (S)
- the concept underlying the sound-form (C)
- the referent (R)

The referential model of meaning is the so-called ‘basic triangle’.

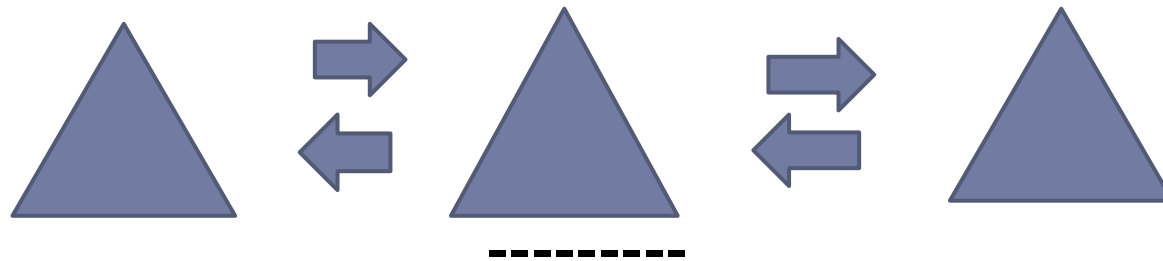




# Functional approach

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The meaning of a linguistic unit can be studied only through its relation to other linguistic units, i.e. in a context.



**Context** is the minimum stretch of speech necessary and sufficient to determine which of the possible meanings of a polysemantic word is used.

# The operational or information-oriented approach

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- **The operational or information-oriented** definitions of meaning are centered on defining meaning through its role in the process of communication.

Meaning is information conveyed from the speaker to the listener in the process of communication.

Speaker                      meaning      Listener



# Meaning

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- Meaning is a linguistic component reflecting concept or naming emotions by means of a definite language system
- Meaning is a concept bound by sign
- Meaning is a message that a sign conveys



# Types of meaning

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□ **Grammatical**

□ **Lexical**

□

□ **Lexico-grammatical meaning**



# Types of meaning

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- **Grammatical meaning** is an expression of relationships between words
- Milk shake – shake milk
- Move a chair – chair a meeting



# Types of meaning

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- ▣ **Lexical meaning** is a realisation of a concept or emotion by means of language



# Types of meaning

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- ▣ **Lexico-grammatical meaning =**
- ▣ **Part-of-speech meaning**



# Aspects of lexical meaning

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- De'notative (denotational)
- 'Connotative (connotational)
- Pragmatic





## Aspects of lexical meaning

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- **The denotative meaning** reflects the concept or the object referred to by the word
  - **significative**
  - **demonstrative**



## Aspects of lexical meaning

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- ▣ **The connotative meaning** is supplementary meaning which is added to the word's main meaning & which serves to express emotional, expressive, etc. overtones



# Types of connotations

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- Stylistic
- Emotional
- Evaluative
- Imagery
- Intensifying (expressive, emphatic)
- Pragmatic



# Motivation

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Motivation is a direct connection between the phonemic, morphemic composition, the structural pattern of the word and its meaning.



# Types of motivation

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- *Phonetic*
- *Morphological*
- *Semantic*
- *Faded*
- *Folk etymology*
- *Non-motivated words*



# Types of motivation

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□ **Phonetic motivation** is the connection between the phonetic composition of the word and its meaning

□ buzz

□ roar

□ hiss

□ moo



## Types of motivation

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□ **Morphological motivation** is the connection between the morphemes and the meaning of the word

□ germanize

□ perhapser



# Types of motivation

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- **Semantic motivation** is based on the co-existence of direct and indirect meaning of the same word on the synchronical level
- foot of the mountain
- A bottleneck





# The structure of meaning

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A **meaning** is a combination of minimal sense units – *semes* or *semantic components*

The seme which determines the part of speech of the word is called **class seme** (κласσεμα).

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# The structure of meaning

The seme reflecting the common characteristics of a lexical group is called archiseme (архисема).

The seme which is common for several words in a group is called *marker* (интегральный признак).

A distinguisher (дифференциальный признак) is a component which differentiates a word from all other words

