**LEXICAL MEANING AND SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH WORDS**

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**Annotation.** Lexicology plays a prominent part in the general linguistic training of every philologist by summing up the knowledge acquired during all his years at the foreign language faculty.

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The treatment of words in lexicology cannot be divorced from the study of all the other elements in the language system to which words belong. It should be always borne in mind that in reality, in the actual process of communication, all these elements are interdependent and stand in definite relations to one another. We separate them for convenience of study, and yet to separate them for analysis is pointless, unless we are afterwards able to put them back together to achieve a synthesis and see their interdependence and development in the language system as a whole.

The word, as it has already been stated, is studied in several branches of linguistics and not in lexicology only, and the latter, in its turn, is closely connected with general linguistics, the history of the language, phonetics, stylistics, grammar and such new branches of our science as sociolinguistics, paralinguistic’s, pragmalinguistics and some others.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The importance of the connection between lexicology and phonetics stands explained if we remember that a word is an association of a given group of sounds with a given meaning, so that *top* is one word, and *tip* is another. Phonemes have no meaning of their own but they serve to distinguish between meanings. Their function is building up morphemes, and it is on the level of morphemes that the form-meaning unity is introduced into language. We may say therefore that phonemes participate in signification.

Word-unity is conditioned by a number of phonological features. Phonemes follow each other in a fixed sequence so that [pit] is different from [tip]. The importance of the phonemic make-up may be revealed by the substitution test which isolates the central phoneme of *hope* by setting it against *hop, hoop, heap* or *hip.*An accidental or jocular transposition of the initial sounds of two or more words, the so-called spoonerisms illustrate the same point. Cf. *our queer old dean* for *our dear old queen, sin twister* for *twin sister, May I sew you to a sheet?* for *May I show you to a seat?, a half-warmed fish* for *a half-formed wish,* etc. Discrimination between the words may be based upon stress: the word ‘*import* is recognised as a noun and distinguished from the verb *im'port* due to the position of stress. Stress also distinguishes compounds from otherwise homonymous word-groups: ‘*blackbird : :* ‘*black* ‘*bird.* Each language also possesses certain phonological features marking word-limits. Historical phonetics and historical phonology can be of great use in the diachronic study of synonyms, homonyms and polysemy. When sound changes loosen the ties between members of the same word-family, this is an important factor in facilitating semantic changes. The words *whole, heal, hail,* for instance, are etymologically related.2 The word *whole* originally meant ‘unharmed’, ;unwounded’. The early verb *whole* meant 4to make whole’, hence ‘heal’. Its sense of ‘healthy’ led to its use as a salutation, as in *hail!* Having in the course of historical development lost their phonetic similarity, these words cannot now exercise any restrictive influence upon one another’s semantic development. Thus, *hail* occurs now in the meaning of ‘call’, even with the purpose to stop and arrest (used by sentinels).

**THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE.**

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5. Cressot Marcel. Le style et ses techniques. Paris. 1947.

1. **Paralinguistics — the study of non-verbal means of communication (gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, etc.).**

   **Pragmalinguistics — the branch of linguistics concerned with the relation of speech and its users and the influence of speech upon listeners. See: *Leech G.* Principles of Pragmatics. London, 1985.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)