

HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Foreign Languages Department



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Research Paper

**COMPILING A WORKBOOK ON
LEXICOLOGY FOR ENGLISH MAJORS
AT HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In the process of language study, students are constantly aware of learning rules of language and put them into practice in order to improve their knowledge of the language and language skills as well. In learning Lexicology, a theoretical subject, English majors are required to study various rules of English vocabulary. Many of them are very abstract. Students therefore need to do much practice to confirm their understanding and reinforce theoretical knowledge. Their practice is both essential and useful as through practice they can enhance their vocabulary that they can apply in their realistic language use. However, there have not been, so far, any workbooks providing students opportunities for practice. They just do practice in some handouts given by the teacher. That is not enough since students appear to be thirsty for practice. As they do exercises in the subject they are learning, they can clarify the theories and find exceptional cases. This can greatly enrich their knowledge of the language and sharpen their language skills.

All of the above has inspired to compile a workbook that provide practical exercises so that students always have the material on hand for practice and review. This helps them become more active and motivated in their learning. Therefore, the study “Compiling a workbook in Lexicology for English majors at Haiphong Private University” has been inspired to come out with the hope of providing English majors of the university with a useful book to better serve their subject as well as their language learning.

2. Aim of the study

This study aims at several points:

- Providing practical exercises to help students learn Lexicology better.
- Enrich students' vocabulary with various practical vocabulary exercises.
- Providing opportunities for students to self-study with this material.
- Motivate students to learn the subject as well as the language.

3. Objects of the study

As it can be clearly stated in the title, the objects of study are English majors at Haiphong University who learn Lexicology as required subject in their course. As majors of English, they are capable of acquiring the deep-level rules of the language and apply them into practice.

4. Methods of the study

This study can be fulfilled with both quantitative and qualitative methods as specifically shown as follows:

- Collecting students' feedback information about the subject and their needs for practice.
- Compiling exercises basing on materials relating to the subjects.
- Designing some new exercises basing on the contents of the syllabus.
- Systemizing the exercises for practice according to the orderly parts of the syllabus.

5. Scope of the study

As mentioned above, this workbook is intended to provide practical exercises based on the contents of the syllabus including three main parts Word structure and formation; semantics (word meaning) and phraseology. This workbook is not restricted to exercise types. Thus, exercise types are varied. This can stimulate students in the process of practice.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I: AN OVERVIEW ON THE SYLLABUS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

This subject is intended for the third-year majors of English. It is studied in one term with 45 periods. That is not much time. However, students are required to acquire a big syllabus as shown below.

Introduction

- I. Lexicology: definition, subject matter and task.
- II. Lexicology in its relation to phonology, grammar and stylistic.
- III. Some characteristic features of English vocabulary. 2

Chapter I: Word structure and formation

- A. Word structure
 - I. Morpheme
 1. What is a morpheme?
 2. Types of morphemes
 - 2.1. Root morphemes
 - 2.2. Affixational morphemes
 - II. Types of words
 1. Simple words
 3. Derived words
 4. Compound words
 - III. Semi-affixes
 1. Concept
 2. Characteristic features
 3. Types of semi-affixes 2
- B. Word formation
 - Definition
 - Basic processes of word formation

I. Affixation

- Definition

- Subtypes of affixation

1. Prefixation

1.1. Characteristic features

1.2. Classification of prefixes

1.2.1. Based on the origin

1.2.2. Based on the productive degree

1.2.3. Based on the meaning

2. Suffixation

2.1. Characteristic features

2.2. Classification of suffixes

2.2.1. Based on the origin

2.2.2. Based on the productive degree

2.2.3. Based on the part of speech formed

2.2.4. Living and dead suffixes

II. Compounding

1. Definition

2. Characteristic features

3. Criteria of compound words

4. Classification of compound words

4.1. Classification according to the meaning

4.2. Classification according to the componental relationship

4.3. Classification according to the part of speech

4.4. Classification according to the compositional type

4.5. Miscellanea of compounds

III. Shortening

1. Definition

2. Characteristic features

3. Classification of shortening

3.1. Abbreviation

3.1.1. Acronyms

3.1.2. Clipping

- 3.2. Blending
- IV. Conversion
 - 1. Definition
 - 2. Characteristic features
 - 3. Groups of nouns used to form verbs by conversion
 - 4. Classification of conversion
 - 4.1. Traditional and occasional conversion
 - 4.2. Partial conversion
 - 4.3. Substantivation
- V. Sound imitation
 - 1. Definition
 - 2. Characteristic features
- VI. Back derivation
- VII. Sound and stress interchange
- VIII. Words from names

Chapter II: Semantics (word meaning)

Unit 1: Introduction

- I. Word meaning
- II. Semantic properties
- III. Types of meaning
- IV. Components of word meaning
 - 1. Denotation
 - 2. Connotation
 - 3. Structural meaning
 - 4. Categorical meaning
- V. Semantic changes
 - 1. Causes of semantic changes
 - 2. Nature of semantic changes 2

Unit 2: Lexical relations

- I. Homonymy and Polysemy
 - A. Homonymy
 - 1. Definition
 - 2. Classification of homonyms

3. Sources of homonyms
- B. Polysemy
 1. Definition
 2. Types of polysemy
- C. Homonymy versus Polysemy
 1. Semantic criterion
 2. Synonymy-based criterion
 3. Derivational criterion
 4. Combinability criterion 4
- II. Synonymy and Antonymy
 - A. Synonymy
 1. Definition
 2. Classification of synonyms
 3. Sources of synonyms 2
 - B. Antonymy
 1. Definition
 2. Classification of antonyms
 - 2.1. Based on the meaning
 - 3.2. Based on the derivation
 - 3.3. Based on the part of speech

Unit 3: Transference of meaning

- I. Metaphor
 1. Definition
 2. Types of similarity
 3. Sources of metaphor
 4. Classification of metaphor
 5. Metaphor versus simile
- II. Metonymy
 1. Definition
 2. Cases of metonymy

Chapter III: Phraseology

- I. Definition
- II. Characteristic features

- III. Classification of set expressions
 - 1. Based on motivation
 - 2. Based on the function
- IV. Proverbs, Idioms, Quotations and Cliches'

As can be shown in the syllabus, the contents are organized in three chapters. In each chapter, there are certain requirements for contents that students are required to master. In Chapter 1, in the first part, Word structure, students are required to distinguish different types of morphemes and words and analyze word structures basing on the morphemes. In the second part, Word information, students are supposed to recognize different processes of word formation in practice. Furthermore, they are supposed to distinguish different subtypes of each process, for example, different kinds of compounds and different types of shortenings.

In Chapter 2, Semantics, students are required to distinguish different types of word meaning, semantic changes, different sense relations and different types of figures of speech. Moreover distinguishing different subtypes like homonyms, synonyms, antonyms are necessary for students.

In Chapter 3, Phraseology, students are required to make distinction among idioms, proverbs, quotations, cliches'. It is essential they remember some certain popular idioms and proverbs in English that are useful in communication.

Basing on the content analysis above, the exercises compiled and designed in the workbook will focus on things mentioned. The exercises will help students know how much they understand the theories and how they can apply them in practice. Without this, students find the theories abstract and vague. The following chapter will discuss in detail what students realistically need for practice and how the exercises are compiled to satisfy their needs.

CHAPTER 2: COMPILING

EXERCISES IN LEXICOLOGY

2.1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES AND DATA ANALYSIS

The survey questionnaire shown in the Appendix is designed for third-year majors of English to elicit their feedback information about the subject and their practice in the subject. It includes three parts including 15 questions. The first part includes three first questions asking about students' attitude towards the subject. The second part includes questions from question 4 to question 13 asking about students' practice in the subject and their needs for further practice. The last part including question 14 and question 15 ask about their expectation of having a workbook for practice.

The questionnaire was given to students of the tenth and eleventh school year (Na 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004 and Na 1101) including 226 respondents. This table below shows the survey results.

Questions	A	B	C	D
1	58%	42%		
2	48%	12%	20%	10%
3	62%	38%		
4	92%	8%		
5	52%	27%	21%	0%
6	97%	0%	3%	0%
7	18%	82%		
8	12%	43%	31%	14%
9	8%	20%	42%	30%
10	98%	2%		
11	9%	5%	37%	49%
12	6%	94%		
13	34%	9%	8%	48%
14	4%	96%		
15	2%	4%	3%	91%

It is obvious from the table that many (not most) students find the subject useful to their language study. Especially not many students make the best use of the subject to serve their language study. More students find it useful to learn the vocabulary rules while the fewer number find it beneficial to widen their vocabulary. This is not a satisfactory number expected. Something should be done to help students recognize full advantages of the subject as it has.

The table also shows that not many students self study or practice the subject at home or they do not usually (just sometimes) do exercise to practice the subject as they lack materials. Mostly, they depend on the handouts given by the teachers which many of them find doable and relevant their subject. When they are asked about the aspects of the subject they are interested in, luckily, more students like Word formation, and Semantics than other parts. These parts are also the focuses of the subject as they are thought to be more realistically beneficial to students than other parts. However, the parts that cause difficulties are Semantics and Phraseology than other parts. Thus, the exercises compiled are supposed to help them overcome these difficulties.

From the facts about students in learning the subject, most of them are aware of the importance to have more chances for practice to make the subject more practically beneficial to them in real-life communication. Moreover, they like to have a workbook which is varied in types and provide meaningful relevant exercises that can help them more active in their learning and reviewing.

From the analysis of the data above, it is essential that there should be a systematic workbook to satisfy students' needs as well as to motivate students to learn this useful subject.

2.2. COMPILING EXERCISES IN LEXICOLOGY

The workbook is intended to provide practical exercises to give students more chances for practice and enhance vocabulary knowledge. They are supposed to be varied in types and cover the main contents of the syllabus especially two more important parts Word formation and Semantics. The exercises are organized in order and instructed clearly.

The first chapter includes two main parts that are Word structure and Formation. The first part, Word structure, includes exercises from Exercise 1 to Exercise 6. They ask students to distinguish different morphemes and word types and analyze word structures.

The second part is Word formation including exercises from Exercise 7 to Exercise 40. The exercises in this part focus on different processes of word formation or word building such as affixation, compounding, shortening, conversion, sound imitation, sound and stress interchange, back derivation and words from names. They also ask students to understand further the characteristics or subtypes of each, for example, types of compounds, types of shortening, etc... The exercises are very practical and of varied types.

The next chapter is Semantics (Word meaning) including 30 exercises. These exercises help students understand deeply about the word meaning, for example, types of words, components of word meaning, stylistic layers of words and many sense relations such as homonymy and polysemy; and some figures of speech or transferences of meaning like metaphor or metonymy.

The final chapter is Phraseology consisting of 12 exercises which is less important in the syllabus. These exercises ask students to distinguish different phraseological units especially idioms and proverbs. Furthermore, students are required to master some popular idioms and proverbs so that they can match different parts of proverbs or explain the meaning of idioms or proverbs or just complete them with missing words etc.

In general, the exercises are relevant to the syllabus and presented clearly and systematically. Especially they are suitable to the students' abilities in general and can satisfy students of different interests and abilities. By practicing these exercises, students are thought to have an insight into English vocabulary in a practical way and enrich their vocabulary to use in real life communication.

PART III: CONCLUSION

The study has so far provided a variety of exercises in lexicology for students. The exercises have satisfied the initial requirements which are relevance, varied types, clear instructions and also feasibility. The language used in the exercises is various, meaningful and not difficult to understand. It is hopeful that this workbook will bring a lot of benefits for students in their language learning and language use.

It is hoped that this workbook with its author's full attention will be a helpful material for students in their subjects as well as their language study. It is also hoped to become an asset of the university in the library resources.

Last but not least, the author of the study would like to express sincere thanks to all the colleagues and students. Without their help and support, this study has hardly come into existence.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey questionnaire is intended for students to elicit their feedback on lexicology and the exercises they are required to do in class. The findings of the survey will be used to compile a workbook in lexicology to better serve students' learning the subject.

1. What do you think about Lexicology you are learning?
 - a. difficult and too abstract
 - b. easy and not abstract
2. How do you think the subject help you in your language study?
 - a. improving knowledge of vocabulary rules
 - b. widening vocabulary
 - c. both a and b
 - d. Not helpful
3. Do you often self-study the subject at home?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
4. Do you have many materials to study the subject?
 - a. few
 - b. many
5. How often do you do exercises in the subject?
 - a. rarely
 - b. sometimes
 - c. usually
 - d. never
6. What materials do you use to practice the subject?
 - a.. The handouts given by the teacher
 - b. a certain workbook
 - c. Internet
 - d. Others

7. What do you think about the exercises in the handouts given by the teacher?
- too difficult and not relevant
 - doable and relevant
8. What aspect of the subject are you the most interested in?
- Word structure
 - Word formation
 - Semantics
 - Phraseology
9. What aspect causes difficulties in learning the subject?
- Word structure
 - Word formation
 - Semantics
 - Phraseology
10. Do you need more practice in the subject?
- Yes
 - No
11. Why do you think you should do more practice?
- reinforcing theoretical knowledge
 - widening vocabulary
 - preparing for examination
 - all of them
12. What types of practice do you prefer?
- theoretical questions
 - practical exercises
13. What types of exercises do you like to do?
- multiple choice questions
 - true/false questions
 - gap-filling
 - Varied types
14. Do you think there should be a workbook providing systematic exercises to serve your subject study?
- yes
 - no

15. What do expect the workbook to come out?

- a. varied in types
- b. meaningful and relevant exercises
- c. clear instructions
- d. all of the above.