

Glossary

- acronym:** a word formed from the initial letters of a compound or phrase and pronounced as a word, e.g. *AIDS* /eɪdz/ (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
- affix:** a bound morpheme added to the beginning (prefix) or end (suffix) of a stem, e.g. *un-* *decided*, *nervous -ness*
- allomorph:** a variant form of a morpheme, either in pronunciation or in spelling, e.g. *plant/s/*, *animal/z/* for the plural inflection; *hoof*, *hoov-es* for the morpheme 'hoof'
- Anglo-Saxon:** the dialects of English spoken during the Old English period, originating from the Germanic languages spoken by the fifth-century Angle, Saxon and Jute invaders
- antonymy:** the meaning relation of oppositeness, holding between pairs of words such as *tall* – *short*, *parent* – *child*, *buy* – *sell*
- backformation:** a word formed by the removal of a supposed suffix, e.g. *edit* from *editor* by the removal of the supposed agentive suffix *-or* (as in *actor*)
- blend:** a word formed by combining usually the beginning of one word with the end of another, e.g. *motel* from *motor* and *hotel*
- borrowing:** the term for the process by which a word from one language is taken over into another language, usually to fill a lexical gap, e.g. *faux pas*, or to name a new concept or phenomenon, e.g. *karaoke*
- bound morpheme:** a morpheme, usually an affix, that may not exist as an independent word but only in combination with another, usually a root, morpheme; a few roots are bound, e.g. *-flute* as in *deflate*, *inflate*
- Celtic:** the languages spoken in Britain prior to the Anglo-Saxon invasions, represented today by Welsh and Scottish Gaelic
- citation:** an extract, usually a sentence, from a text used as (part of) the raw data for compiling a dictionary; the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary was based on a collection of 5 million citations
- class-changing:** of an affix, effecting a change of word class when added to a stem, e.g. the suffix *-ness* changes an adjective to a noun (*cleverness*)
- class-maintaining:** of an affix, when added to a stem, does not change the word class of the stem, e.g. the prefix *un-* (*undo* is a verb, the same as *do*)
- clipping:** the formation of a new word by omitting some of the sounds/letters, e.g. *pram* from *perambulator*, *fridge* (originally *frig*) from *refrigerator*
- collocation:** a combination of words that has a higher than chance expectancy of co-occurrence, e.g. *kettle* and *boil*
- colloquial:** of a word that is usually restricted to use in informal contexts, e.g. *suss out* for *investigate*

common core: the vocabulary shared by all varieties of the language, as against 'specialist' vocabulary

complementary antonym: a pair of words whose meaning is opposite but complementary, e.g. *parent – child, wife – husband*

complex word: a word formed from a root and one or more affixes

componential analysis: the analysis of the meaning of a word into components, e.g. *girl* has the components [+human, –male, –adult], while *man* has the components [+human, +male, +adult]

compound word: a word formed by combining one or more roots, e.g. *horsebox, seatbelt, house-proud, treasure hunt*

concordance: a list of the occurrences of a word in a corpus, usually with one occurrence per line, together with a specified amount of context to the left and to the right of the word

connotation: the emotive overtones of the meaning of a word, e.g. *champagne* has overtones of luxury or celebration; contrast 'denotation'

converse (antonym): a pair of words that are opposite in meaning and represent opposite perspectives on the same situation, e.g. *buy – sell, above – below*

conversion: the process by which a new word is formed, simply by assigning it to a different word class, without any alteration to its form (spelling or pronunciation), e.g. *bottle*, noun and verb

corpus: from the Latin word for 'body', a collection of citations, texts or text extracts, especially held in electronic form (computer corpus)

definition: a description of the meaning of the sense of a word, especially in dictionaries

denotation: the meaning of a word in terms of its reference to an object, concept, etc. in the real world; contrast 'connotation'

derivation: the process of word formation involving the addition of prefixes or suffixes to a stem

dialect: a variety of a language spoken in a particular geographical area (country or region) or by a particular group of people (social dialect)

dictionary: a reference book containing a description of a selection of the vocabulary of a language, with the headwords usually arranged in alphabetical order

elicitation: a technique for finding out about language, involving the use of a questionnaire administered to a sample of speakers

etymology: the study and description of the origins of words

formality: a dimension of language variation affecting the choice of vocabulary, leading to some words considered to be 'formal' or 'informal'/'colloquial'

function word: see: 'grammatical word'

free morpheme: a morpheme that may stand alone as an independent word, e.g. *box, trapeze, whisper*

frequency: the number of times that a word occurs within a text or corpus

gradable antonym: a pair of words that are opposite in meaning but imply a gradation, e.g. *wide – narrow* can be compared (*wider, narrower*) and modified (*quite wide, very narrow*)

grammatical word: a member of the pronoun, determiner, preposition or con-

junction word class, used mainly to express grammatical meanings and relations within a sentence; also called 'function word'; contrast 'lexical word'

headword: in a dictionary, the lexemes that form the headings for the entries, usually printed in bold type

homograph: two or more more lexemes with the same spelling, but a different pronunciation, e.g. *wind* /wɪnd/ (force of air) and *wind*/waɪnd/ (turn, e.g. with a handle)

homonymy: two or more lexemes that have the same spelling and the same pronunciation, e.g. *hide* /haɪd/(conceal, skin of animal), *sound* /saʊnd/ (noise, stretch of sea)

homophone: two or more lexemes that are pronounced the same, but are spelled differently, e.g. *steel, steal* /sti:l/

hyponymy: a hierarchical meaning relation of inclusion, in which a hyponym is a 'kind of' hypernym, e.g. *fork* is a kind of *cutlery*

idiom: a more or less fixed expression with a non-literal meaning, e.g. *face the music, a storm in a teacup*

inflection: a bound morpheme expressing grammatical meaning, e.g. 'plural' of nouns, 'past tense' of verbs

initialism: a word formed from the initial letters of a compound or phrase and pronounced letter by letter, e.g. *FAQ* /ef eɪ kju:/ (Frequently Asked Questions), *SMS* /es em es/ (Short Messaging Service)

jargon: the vocabulary of a variety of language associated with a particular profession, occupation or other activity

lexeme: a word viewed as a vocabulary item, rather than as an item of grammar or spelling, constituting a headword in a dictionary

lexical gap: a potential meaning, identified for example in a hyponymy tree, without a word to express it

lexical field: a set of words that refer to the same area of meaning, e.g. communication, cooking

lexical word: a member of one of the word classes of noun, verb, adjective or adverb, which provide the main referential meaning of a sentence; contrast 'grammatical word'

lexicography: the process of compiling dictionaries, and the study of dictionaries and their contents

lexicology: the branch of linguistics that studies words and vocabulary

lexicon: another term for 'vocabulary' or for 'dictionary', or for the stock of words that a person knows (also called their 'mental lexicon')

lexis: another term for 'vocabulary'

LDB: 'lexical database': words and information about them stored electronically in a database format; often the initial stage in preparing a dictionary

loanword: a word that has been 'borrowed' from another language, e.g. *goulash* from Hungarian

meaning relation: a relation of synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy or meronymy between words in the vocabulary of a language; also called 'sense relation'

meronymy: a hierarchical meaning relation, in which a 'meronym' is in a 'part of' relation with its superordinate term, e.g. *heel* is part of *foot*

- metaphor:** the use of a word in a context in which its meaning is 'transferred' or figurative, e.g. the *face* of a 'clock', the *thrust* of an 'argument'
- morph:** the realization of a morpheme in spelling or pronunciation, e.g. 'decide' is realized as *decis* in *decision*
- morpheme:** the minimal meaningful recurrent segment of a word
- morphology:** the study of the structure of words and word formation processes
- MRD:** 'machine readable dictionary': a dictionary in electronic form that can be used by other computer applications to access lexical data
- multiword lexeme:** a lexeme composed of more than one orthographic word, including phrasal verbs (*take off*), open compounds (*fire engine*), phrasal compounds (*will o' the wisp*), etc.
- neologism:** a new word, which may or may not become an established item of vocabulary
- Old Norse:** the Germanic language(s) spoken by the Viking invaders from Scandinavia during the eighth and ninth centuries
- onomatopoeic:** a word whose spelling reflects the sound of the object that it denotes, e.g. *cuckoo*, *didgeridoo*
- orthographic word:** word from the perspective of its spelling, i.e. a sequence of letters bounded by spaces
- parse:** a 'parsed corpus' is one on which a basic syntactic analysis has been carried out and into which the appropriate syntactic labels have been inserted
- phonological word:** a word from the perspective of its pronunciation, i.e. a sequence of phonemes together with its stress pattern
- phrasal verb:** a multiword lexeme consisting of a verb word and an adverb particle, e.g. *give up*, *stand down*
- polysemy:** having many meanings; dictionaries distinguish the 'senses' of polysemous words
- prefix:** an affix that precedes the stem to which it is joined, e.g. *re-* *apply*, *semi-* *automatic*
- reference:** the relationship of meaning between a lexeme and the concept to which it relates
- restricted language:** a language with a limited vocabulary used for a very specific purpose, e.g. in recipes or card games
- root:** the base of a word, without the addition of any affixes; e.g. *frequent* is the root of *infrequently*; contrast 'stem'
- rhyming slang:** a form of slang in which a phrase is linked by rhyme to the word that it stands for, e.g. *apples and pears* – *stairs*
- semantic component:** an identifiable part of meaning that recurs in the meaning of several words and is identified by componential analysis, e.g. [+/- human]
- semantic field:** see: lexical field
- semantic primitive:** an irreducible meaning that combines with others to form the meaning of more complex words, e.g. 'you', 'want', 'good', 'if'
- semantics:** the branch of linguistics that studies meaning
- sense:** 1) one of several meanings of a polysemous word; 2) see: meaning relation
- slang:** very informal vocabulary, restricted to particular groups of people; e.g. military slang, youth slang, criminal slang

- stem:** a word form to which a further affix may be joined, e.g. *frequently* is a stem to which *in-* may be added; contrast 'root'
- stress:** the varying emphases that may be given to the syllables of polysyllabic words; it may make a difference between words, e.g. *con'duct* (noun), *con'duct* (verb)
- style:** the nature of a spoken discourse or written text, especially in relation to its level of formality
- suffix:** an affix that follows the stem to which it is joined, e.g. *quick -ly*, *class -ify*
- synonymy:** a meaning relation between words of 'sameness' or 'similarity', e.g. *big* – *large*, *change* – *mutate*
- taboo:** slang words, mainly relating to sexual and excretory functions, that are severely restricted in their contexts of use; sometimes labelled 'coarse slang'
- tag:** a 'tagged' corpus is one in which each word has been assigned a word class or subclass label (a 'tag')
- thesaurus:** an arrangement of the vocabulary according to lexical fields
- type/token ratio:** the ratio between the number of running words (tokens) in a text or text extract and the number of different word forms (types); an indicator of lexical density
- usage:** the contexts in which a word is typically used, especially if those contexts are restricted; also, advice in dictionaries on the 'correct' use of words
- vocabulary:** 1) the total stock of words in a language; 2) the words associated with a particular specialist activity, e.g. 'the vocabulary of music'
- word:** the object of lexicological study, used in a number of senses
- word class:** a set of words grouped together on the basis of their common morphological and syntactic features; lexical classes comprise noun, verb, adjective, adverb; grammatical classes comprise pronoun, determiner, preposition, conjunction
- word family:** a word and its associated inflected and derived words
- word formation:** the processes, e.g. compounding, derivation, by which new words are created, usually from existing lexical items