

CHN 457: Chinese Words and the Lexicon

TR 9:00-10:15 p.m. Moore 224

August 22-December 16, 2016

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BACKGROUND

The goal of the Chinese undergraduate program is to produce students who are not only highly proficient in the Chinese language, but also have the capacity to work between Chinese and English language in their chosen fields. Chinese linguistics courses give students the tools to reflect on the form and function of the language, and enable them to appreciate and analyze the Chinese language in use. Current undergraduate courses in Chinese language and linguistics listed in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Catalogue cover many specific topics, such as Chinese phonology (CHN 451), syntax (CHN 452), Chinese characters (CHN453, CHN 454), and other areas of pragmatics and discourse (CHN 455), semantics and communication (CHN456). However, among these established courses, one crucial component in the Chinese language system — the lexicon— has been missing for a long time from the Chinese B.A. linguistics curriculum.

From the viewpoint of linguistic studies, the lexicon of a language is one of the three constituents in the tripartite schema of the language proper, being complementary to morphosyntax and phonology. This is particularly true in the case of Chinese, in which the morphemes and lexical items have a very special position in its grammatical system. They not only share the same structural principles as the syntax, but also to a certain extent exert impact on phonetic configuration. Some Chinese grammarians regard morphemes and lexical items as the basic unit of Chinese grammar and this view has led directly to the rise of a specialized school of word-based Chinese language teaching pedagogy.

Aiming at filling the gap in the B.A. curriculum map and presenting a holistic picture of Chinese language, this course, upon approval, will augment students' understanding of Chinese morphemes and lexical items; increase their knowledge of key issues, principles, theoretical approaches and methodologies in Chinese lexicology studies. Under the theoretical framework of lexical semantics, this course is designed for undergraduate students who are majoring in Chinese or those who are interested in acquiring systematic knowledge about the Chinese lexicon. Specifically this course will define the general properties of the Chinese language lexicon, to provide a holistic view of the organizational feature of the Chinese lexicon, and to outline the similarities and differences between the lexicons of Chinese and English. Moreover, this course will help students as learners of Chinese to expand their Chinese vocabulary system, to be exposed to Chinese vocabulary building strategies, to improve the accuracy and proficiency of their Chinese vocabulary use, and to advance their Chinese language proficiency in general.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Under the theoretical framework of lexical semantics, this course is designed for undergraduate students who are majoring in Chinese or those who are interested in acquiring systematic knowledge about the Chinese lexicon. The goal of this course is to augment students' understanding of Chinese morphemes and lexical items and to increase their knowledge of key issues, principles, theoretical approaches and methodologies in Chinese lexicology studies. Specifically this course will (a) define the general properties of the Chinese lexicon, (b) provide a holistic view of the organizational features of the Chinese lexicon, and (c) outline the similarities and differences between the Chinese and English lexicons. Moreover, (d) this course will help students as learners of Chinese language to expand their Chinese vocabulary system, to be exposed to Chinese vocabulary building strategies, to improve the accuracy and proficiency of their Chinese vocabulary use, and to advance their Chinese language proficiency in general.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In completing this course, students will be able

- To gain a systematic knowledge of the Chinese lexicon;
- To understand the characteristics and the lexicalization process of Chinese words;
- To understand the relationships among the graphic composition, syntactic, and sense relations of the Chinese lexicon;
- To distinguish and identify relationships among lexical items, such as hyponymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, etc.;
- To analyze the internal structure and semantic relations of Chinese lexical items;
- To optimize their existing Chinese vocabulary system as a Chinese language learner;
- To expand their Chinese vocabulary in a systematic and effective way based on the properties of the Chinese lexicon;
- To explore and enjoy the Chinese language as a medium of social and cultural meaning.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- Yip, Po-Ching. 2000. *The Chinese Lexicon: A Comprehensive Survey*. London and New York: Routledge.

OPTIONAL REFERENCE

- Packard, Jerome L. 2000. *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

COURSE CONTENTS

This course will be offered as a three-credit course, meeting twice a week for 75 minutes each.

Weeks 1-2

Course syllabus and introduction

Students become familiar with the course syllabus, including objectives, topics covered and Student Learning Outcomes. Student responsibilities and student assessment criteria will also be discussed in full detail. Student will reflect on their own learning experience and identify their initial interests.

- *Defining the words in Chinese*
- *The composition of Chinese lexicon*

- *The development of evolution of Chinese lexicon*

Reading: Introduction (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp1-15)

Homework assignment 1

Weeks 3-4

- *The phonological make-up of the Chinese lexicon*
- *The graphitic composition of the Chinese lexicon*
- *Chinese Words, Morphemes, and Morphology*

Reading: Chapter 1 and 2 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp.20-56)

Homework assignment 2

Weeks 5-6

Morphological features of the Chinese lexicon

- *Affixes*
- *Suffix*
- *Negative Prefixes*
- *Infixes*
- *Parafixes*

Reading: Chapter 3 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp.57-86)

Homework assignment 3

Weeks 7-8

The syntactic features of the Chinese lexicon

- *Juxtapositional*
- *Modificational*
- *Governmental*
- *Predicational*
- *complemental*

Reading: Chapter 4 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp.90-168)

Midterm exam

Weeks 9-10

Meanings of Chinese lexicon

Sense relations of the Chinese lexicon

- *Hyponymy*
- *Polysemy*
- *Synonymy*
- *Anonymy*
- *Meaning structure in the Mononyms*

Chapter 7 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp.265-292)

Homework assignment 4

Weeks 11-12

Lexicalization and Chinese words

The development of Chinese lexicon

Etymological motivation of Chinese lexicon

Reading: Chapter 6 (Jerome L. Packard, 2000 pp. 216-284)

Homework assignment 5**Weeks 13-14**

Idioms, proverbs, xiehouyu (a saying with the latter-part suspended: “the hare's tail—it cannot be too long”), and loanwords in the Chinese lexicon

Reading: Chapter 7 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp. 327-346)

Homework assignment 6**Weeks 15-16**

Cultural and socio-political features of the Chinese lexicon

- The Chinese national characteristics of the Chinese lexicon
- The cultural and social differences reflection in the Chinese lexicon

Chapter 8 (Po-Ching Yip, 2000, pp.296-322)

Final exam**EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Students will be evaluated in an overall assessment by the instructor that includes the amount and quality of their attendance, engagement, and participation in lectures, individual contributions to class discussion and activities, facilitation of course readings, homework assignments and result of midterm and final written exams.

GRADING

The course grade will be based on

- Class attendance, engagement, participation.....10%
- Contributions to class discussions and activities.....10%
- Facilitation of course readings30%
- Homework assignments20%
- Midterm and Final exams30%