DYNAMIC ATTRIBUTE AND CHANGE OF CHINESE LEXICON
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ABSTRACT

This study makes a distinction between word and lexicon. A word is an individual lexical item. The lexicon is an aggregate of words. Past discussions of differences among lexicons could only list individual words for comparison. In this study, words of digital texts in Old Chinese, Pre-Modern Chinese, Modern Chinese, ancient poetic writings and modern press releases were examined and a small number of significant lexical elements were extracted to capture the distinct nature of the lexicons. The crucial point of distinction is how words are used and not whether particular words exit. Therefore, the lexical attribute discussed here is called dynamic attribute. The words in the text streams were tabulated for their frequency and percentage of the occurrence with respect to the entire texts. The cumulative percentage of occurrences of the 15 highest frequency words was also tabulated. It was then used as the concentration level of high-frequency words in use. This concentration level clearly differentiates the types of texts used in Old Chinese, Pre-Modern Chinese, Modern Chinese, ancient poetic writings and modern press releases. It is hoped that this quantitative lexical attribute may be of some use in future lexicological research.

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KEYWORDS
Word and lexicon   **L**exical dynamic attribute   **C**umulative frequency percentage   **C**oncentration level of high-frequency words

1. WORD AND LEXICON

        "Word" and "lexicon" seem to be used in publications as synonyms. For example, Zhu's (1987) title "Tan Hanyu fangyan de cihui chayi 谈汉语方言的词汇差异" can be interpreted as "On lexical differences in Chinese dialects" or "On differences of lexicons in Chinese dialects". The title refers to lexicon, but the contents give word examples to show some sense differences in dialects. For example, '爹' meaning "father" in many other Chinese dialects means "grandfather" in Hubei (湖北) Tianmen（天门）speech. Moreover, in Jingshan（京山）of the same province the sense of the word '爷爷' is "father" while in most other dialects it means "grandfather". Thus in this way, differences in lexicons can only be expressed with the variation of words. Comparisons of lexicons of languages or dialects can only be given with a piecemeal listing of individual words. As a result of this view, the characteristics of the aggregate of words of a contemporary language or of its historical stage will not be expressed.

        Ge (2001) regards lexicon as an integral system. Then examples are given to discuss system-internal contradictions and their adjustments, which may sometimes cause chain reactions to modify word senses. However, no explicit explanation is given to show what a lexical system is like. In the introductory chapter of *Xiandai Hanyu Cihui* (Modern Chinese Lexicology, revised edition) by Fu (2004), a small section deals with systematic matters of lexicon, including the systematic nature of morphological patterns and word sense relations, but nothing is said about the nature of lexicological systems. In the preface of *Xiandai Hanyu Cihui Yanjiu* (Studies in Modern Chinese Lexicology), Cao (2004) states that the issues concerning 'system characteristics of Modern Chinese lexicon' originally planned as part one and 'functional words in modern Chinese lexicon' as part two were scratched at the manuscript submission time due to lack of full deliberation and unsatisfactory argumentation. Zhou (2004) has a chapter on flavors of the times of

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汉语词汇动态属性与变异

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提要

本文区分词语和词汇，词语是个别词，词汇是词语的集合体。过去讨论不同词汇的差异都只能列举词语的异同，本文考查上古汉语、近代汉语、现代汉语、古代韵文以及现代汉语新闻稿文字，从中提炼出少数词汇要素。区别的关键在于词语的使用而不在于词语的有无。因此，本文所提出的从最高词频往下累积，得出词频在全部词语数目中的百分比。我们以词频统计中最高的 15 个词语的词频累积百分比作为高频词集中度，以高频词集中度当作词汇动态特性。从文本计算出来的词汇动态特性能清楚划分出所考查的古代、近代、现代、古代韵文和现代新闻稿的词汇属性。希望这个计量性质的词汇属性对今后的词汇研究有些助益。

关键词

词语与词汇   **词**汇动态属性   **词**频累积百分比   **高**频词集中度