

AN OVERVIEW OF LEXICAL DOUBLETS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Abstract. *In this article the author investigates about lexical doublets in Modern English concerning their Etymology and contemporary usage in today's spoken English. Since the English language was spread to the world through the centuries, the number of lexical doublets has increased according to several reasons such as cross-cultural communication among countries or different variation in the language dialects as well. The author provides a brief and clear information about lexical doublets and explains them with several examples. Besides, some differences and similarities in meaning and form are shown in examples of some doublets.*

Key words: *lexical doublets, set of words, semantic groups, triplets, twinglings, etymology, Latin, Old English, borrowing words, discourse, generalization.*

ОБЗОР ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИХ ДУБЛЕТОВ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Аннотация. *В этой статье автор исследует лексические дублеты в современном английском языке с точки зрения их этимологии и современного использования в современном разговорном английском языке. Поскольку английский язык распространялся по миру на протяжении веков, количество лексических дублетов увеличилось по нескольким причинам, таким как межкультурная коммуникация между странами или различные различия в языковых диалектах. Автор дает краткую и четкую информацию о лексических дублетах и поясняет их на нескольких примерах. Кроме того, на примерах некоторых дублетов показаны некоторые различия и сходства в значении и форме.*

Ключевые слова: *лексические дублеты, набор слов, семантические группы, триплеты, твинлинги, этимология, латынь, древнеанглийский язык, заимствование слов, дискурс, обобщение.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the English language is considered to be the dominant discourse language over the world countries and cultures, it has been influenced and widened by the different countries' languages. Among the words common in discourse there are many thousands of lexical doublets. On a daily basis, we come across words like plate or dish, flat and apartment and wonder what the main differences are. Similarly, there may appear a question: "Why do we call an animal `cow` when it is alive but `beef` when its cooked meat is in our plate? According to the Etymology of the language, lexical doublets are defined as the words that own different phonological forms but the same etymological root. These word pairs may have different phonological form and different versions of speaking but they still have somehow similar meanings in spite of the fact that they do not mean exactly the same notion. They appear in the language through different routes.

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

Doublets can be named in various ways such as etymological twins or twinlings. When this interconnection between words happens among three words, they are now called triplets.

Frequently, doublets are defined as the words that entered the language through different routes and have kinship at least having diverged somewhat in meaning. Words with similar meanings with subtle differences contribute to the vocabulary expansion of modern English and many of them are lexical doublets. A good example for lexical doublets can be the words frail and fragile. Both of their origin ultimately goes back to the Latin adjective fragilis (that means weak, frail, flimsy, perishable). However, frail had an evolution naturally through subtle changing in Old English and Middle English while fragile was directly borrowed from Latin during the 15th century. ``All English dictionaries list "easily broken, fragile" as one meaning of frail, but a frail tea cup would indicate the speaker considers it more easily broken than a fragile tea cup. In other words, fragile is the more usual term used to describe cups and other goods that break as easily as expected, and this is what is written on stickers applied to luggage, for example. When talking about people, both terms can also be used, but frail is the more usual term, so frail old woman is a common expression, whereas fragile old woman adds a nuance implying an infirmity that is not merely physical.`` A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language by Walter William Skeat, a number of lexical doublets are given such as allocate-allow, army-armada, appraise-appreciate, base-basis, assemble-assimilate, cave-cage, influence-influenza, label-lapel, hyper-super, renew-renovate, umbel-umbrella, cavalry-chivalry, compute-count, camera-chamber. In the English language there are a range of lexical doublets that came from Latin source. Katherine Barber says that usually, the earlier word came from Norman French and the later one came from central French, or directly from Latin. In Principles of English Etymology, Skeat (1887) describes doublets as being an 'appearance of the same word under a double form' (p. 414). From this we can understand that a form of a word happens to change over the course of history resulting in the appearance of doublets in language. Furthermore, Skeat(1887) writes that there may be incidents in which three or more words in development together through the languages such as chorus, quire, and choir that all originate in the same Latin base chorus (p. 414). Occasionally we have three words, or a triplet, from the same source, as in cattle (from Norman French), chattel (from central French), and capital, all derived from the Latin capitalis, meaning 'of the head.' Another example is hostel (from Old French), hospital (from Latin), and hotel (from modern French), all derived from the Latin hospitale.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Reasons for the occurrence of doublets in Modern English

Doublets may develop in various ways, based on which route the two forms appeared and developed to their contemporary appearance. Even though complex, multi-step paths are possible, in many cases groups of terms follow the same path. The first reason is the changes in word forms of the English language due to the usage of different dialects in the Native English language Anglo-Saxon since some particular words differ from each other in dialects of the language. In this case, the doublets are considered to have a native origin because the changes in forms happen in dialect variations of the same word. Here is an example for the Anglo-Saxon word *útor* which ultimately brought about *outer* and *utter* in Modern English. In mentioned examples, words are not entirely considered to be a synonymous doublets, though, they both somehow relate to the same context. Most simply, a native word can at some point split into two distinct forms, staying within a single language, as with English *too* which split from *to*.

The second reason is contact with other languages in which English language borrowed some words while there already had been the alternatives in the language. Skeat (1887) also

names these as the main influences on the occurrence of doublets and gives the example of the Latin word *nomen* that can be identified as the source of Modern English name and noun, of which the latter was later brought into the lexicon by French contact (p. 417). Over the course of history some semantic changes occurred to the doublets` meaning that consequently resulted in significant differences between the word pairs. One of the most common semantic change that happened to lexical doublets is generalization is the process in which doublets gained broader meaning than they originally had. This type of semantic change indicates that some specific aspects of the overall scope of the doublets may have been dropped and had extra meaning in the forms. For example, the word `holiday` formerly had the meaning of holy days, in which some religious ceremonies were taken place. However, its contemporary meaning literally has nothing to mean any religious activities but it has the meaning of days that people have free time to get relaxation.

DISCUSSION

Differences in Meaning and Form

According to Tom McArthur, doublets are different from each other in closeness of meaning as well as form. He differentiates meanings and forms of lexical doublets in his work. For example, the words *guarantee/warranty* are nearly similar in both form and the meaning. The words *abbreviate/abridge* are not similar in form but they are close in meaning despite the fact that they serve distinct ends. The doublets *costume/custom* are fairly close in form but distant in meaning, but both relate to human activities; *ditto/dictum* share only *di* and *t* and a common reference to language; *entire/integer* are so far apart that their shared origin is of antiquarian interest only. Here is given several examples of lexical doublets and triplets with information on the etymology that they share:

Shadow and shade

The origin of both words is related to Old English word *sceadu* that means ``blockage from glare or heat`. In Modern English these two words generally means a dark area, however, *shadow* is a neutral word for a creation of dark area while *shade* offers protection from light.

Feast and fest

The origin is Latin word, *festum*. *Feast* in its noun form, means a big celebratory meal in any occasions in which people have fun together while *fest* means a festival, gathering or a party.

Gallop and wallop

The origin is French word *waloper*. *Gallop* refers to a rapid pace of movement, usually that of a four-legged animal. *Wallop* means to give a heavy blow or strike. Its other rarer used meanings are to rush headlong or to rush around.

Diamond and adamant

The origin is Greek *adamantos*. *Adamant* in Modern English meaning is “unyielding or inflexible” was first used in 1930s. It has a direct correlation with phrases such as “an adamant heart”(1677) which meant “a heart of stone”.

Abbreviate and abridge

The origin is Latin word *abbreviare*, “to shorten”. Both words mean “to reduce to a shorter form”. However, *abbreviate* is used to refer to abbreviations – words shortened to initials, or truncated words, while *abridge* refers to shortening entire compositions.

Convey and convoy

The origin is Latin, *conviare*. To convey means to transfer or deliver information, or to communicate. Convoy refers to a group of vehicles or vessels travelling together, usually for protection. Skirt and shirt The origin is Old English *scyrte*. Though shirt and skirt define very different pieces of clothing in modern times, in the 14th century in England, a long shirt was worn by peasants. It was almost a all-in-one clothing that could explain that could explain the similarities between words.

Regard and reward

The origin is Anglo-French, *regarder*, “look back at, recompense”. In spite of the fact that they share the same origin, regard is an appraisal in neutral sense, while reward means something offered as recognition of one’s one’s service and effort.

Tradition and treason

The origin is Latin, *traditionem*, “handing over, delivery, surrender”. While tradition means handing down of cultural traits or norms generation after generation, treason refers to the act of betraying authority.

Poison and potion

The origin is Latin word, *potionem*, a drink. A potion is a drink prepared for a specific purpose – medical or magical. A poison is a potion which would kill the drinker.

Guard and ward

The origin is German language. Both of these words originated in a word which means to defend. They both retain the original sense of protecting someone or something from external threats though a guard is usually charged with keeping someone inside rather than outside.

Cadet, caddie and cad

Origin: Germanic. The French word *cadet* passed to English in the 17th century and as a result, *caddie* was created. At the time, *cade* referred to “junior military officer” usually the younger son of a noble man. “Caddie” meant military trainee. “Cad” came to be used in the 18th century as an abbreviated version.

Capture, catch and chase

The origin is Latin, *capere*, “to hold, seize”. Capture means to take something by using force, while catch means retrieval, in a wide sense. Chase means pursuing someone or something for a specific purpose.

CONCLUSION

"These expressions are mostly centuries old, and some date from a time when it was advisable to use words of various origins either to increase intelligibility for people from different language backgrounds, or more probably it was intended to encompass previous legal usage or legal documents from both early English and Norman French."

1. Lexical doublets are words that developed through either language dialect variations or borrowings from other languages denoting the same notion or a thing.
2. Lexical doublets appeared because of extra-linguistic contacts between countries such as trade or wars and significantly influenced the language vocabulary.
3. Cultural relations among countries are the main source of word changes and borrowing words turning into doublets in Modern English.
4. Further analysis of the problem of lexical doublets may be helpful for understanding general and special problems of language of language development.

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