The morphosemantics of selected English doublets: Synchrony and diachrony[1]

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Abstract

Doublets are "etymological siblings", and, even though the term suggests it, they do not necessarily only form pairs. In English, where – because of its history of extensive influence exerted by speakers of different languages – the lexicon is extremely broad and complex, there are many cases of multiplets, i.e., whole word families with a common etymological root which can often be traced back to Proto-Indo-European. Usually their meanings are similar (e.g. *fragile* and *frail*), in other cases, though, the meaning can be very different or even opposite (e.g. *host* and *guest*). The aim of this paper is to highlight the scope of semantic evolution of lexemes of the same origin, as there is no place for absolute synonymy in a language. Similarities, or shared semantic scopes connecting the words, will also be provided.

Key words

doublet, etymology, synonym, semantic change

Synchroniczna i diachroniczna morfosemantyka wybranych angielskich dubletów

Abstrakt

Dublety są „etymologicznym rodzeństwem" i, mimo że sama nazwa to sugeruje, niekoniecznie występują jedynie w parach. W języku angielskim, którego słownictwo jest niezwykle bogate i zróżnicowane z powodu wieloletniego mieszania się języków zdobywców Anglii i autochtonów, występuje wiele przypadków multipletów, czyli całych rodzin słów o tej samej etymologii. Znaczenia dubletów są zazwyczaj podobne (np. *frail* 'wątły, drobny' i *fragile* 'kruchy, delikatny'), lecz w niektórych przypadkach mogą się znacznie różnić, lub być nawet przeciwne (np. *host* 'gospodarz' i *guest* 'gość'). W większości przypadków możemy prześledzić pochodzenie tych słów aż do języka praindoeuropejskiego, który jest językiem-matką wszystkich dzisiejszych języków indoeuropejskich. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest unaocznienie zakresu zmian semantycznych pomiędzy słowami o tym samym pochodzeniu, gdyż nie ma w języku miejsca na absolutną synonimię. Podobieństwa i pojęcia łączące te słowa również zostaną podane.

Słowa kluczowe

dublet, etymologia, synonim, zmiany semantyczne

1.   Introduction

Absolute synonymy is redundant in any language. Thus, when we encounter synonyms they must differ in some way, be it register, connotations, emotive responses, meaning spectrum or poetic value. English, being abundant in synonyms – due to the British Isles' history of multiple conquests by speakers of different languages, intensive trade and colonialism – possesses a large number of doublets, so-called "etymological siblings" or, according to Walter Skeat (1887: 414) "examples of *dimorphism,* or the appearance of the same word under a double

form". Even though the term suggests it, a doublet may (and in most cases it indeed does) involve not two, but many more words of the same origin, that is, words which share the same etymological root; words, which started their existence as one item in Proto-Indo-European (or in Proto-Germanic) and over the course of time split into two (or more) different words. Of course, most certainly doublets exist in all human languages. Nevertheless, the purpose of this paper is to discuss such lexemes and their semantic change in English.

Doublet participants may share very similar form and meaning (e.g. *frail* and *fragile*), they may also vary in form and meaning significantly (e.g. *host* and *guest*).

There are many different cases of doublets in English. We can classify them in terms of the language of provenance of a word (or words) constituting doublet parts or with regards to the route through which they entered English.

2.   Origin of doublets

2.1. Native-native origin

A doublet may evolve from a single word which at some point in time split into two or more separate lexemes slightly diverged in meaning, usually by means of specialisation or metonymy, with all those words remaining in the language, e.g. *shadow*, *shade* and *shed*, which come from the Old English *sceadu* 'shadow, shade' and thus are of "native" origin.

Old English *sceadu*

ModE *shadow*   ModE *shade*   ModE *shed*
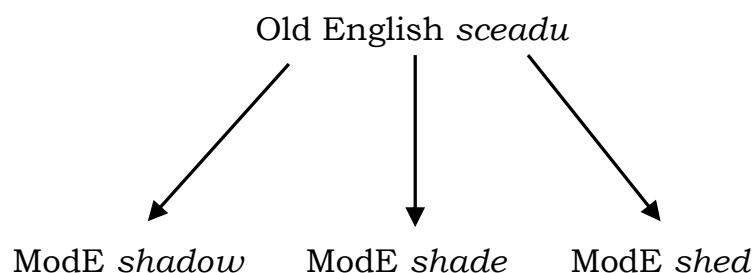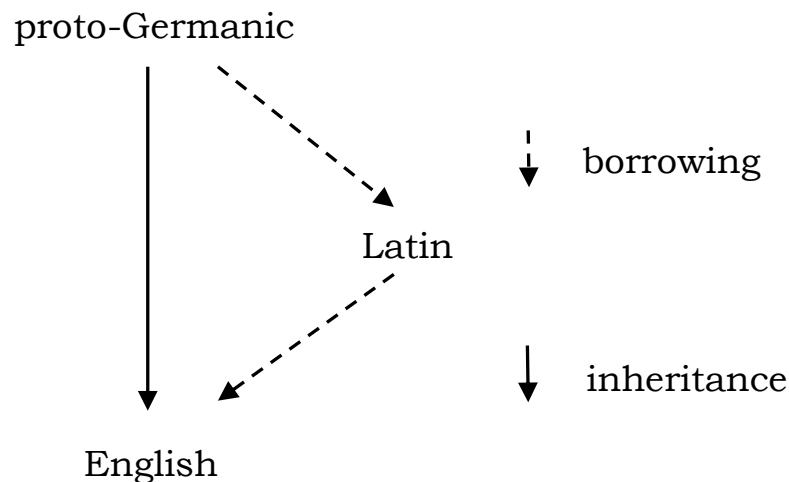
2.2. Native-borrowed origin

In other cases, doublets are formed by pairs where one word is "native" – i.e. descended directly from a parent language (from PIE to Proto-Germanic, and then to English) – and the other is a cognate (a word in a different language descended from the same source) borrowed from a sister or cousin tongue. Thus, a doublet is formed by a "native" and a "borrowed" word. As far as English is concerned, in most cases the parent language is Proto-Indo-European and the cousin language Latin or French, e.g. the Germanic *cow* and the Romance *beef* (both from the PIE root *gwou-* 'cow, ox, bull').
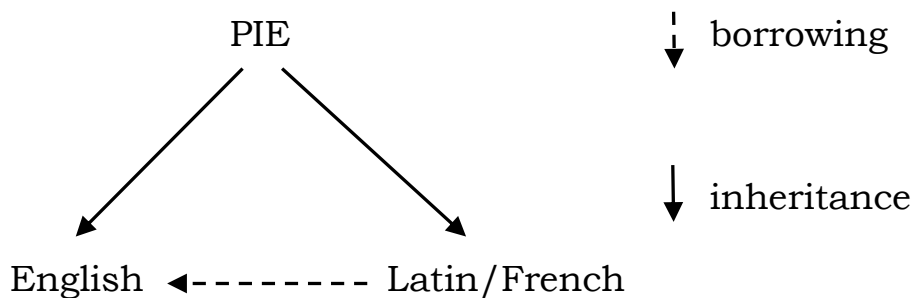

There are also borrowings in which the parent language is Proto-Germanic and the sister language – Old Norse, e.g. the English *shirt* and the Scandinavian-based *skirt* (both from the P.Gmc. *skurtijon* 'a short garment' and ultimately from the PIE *(s)ker-* (1) 'to cut').

proto-Germanic

English ◄- - - - - - - Scandinavian
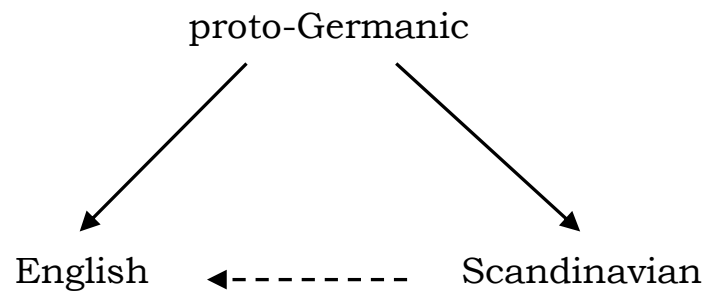
There are also cases of Latin or French words of Germanic origin borrowed into English, which form doublets with English words inherited directly from Proto-Germanic. e.g. the native *ban* and the Latin borrowing of Germanic origin via French *abandon* (both from the PIE root *bha-* (2) 'to speak').

proto-Germanic
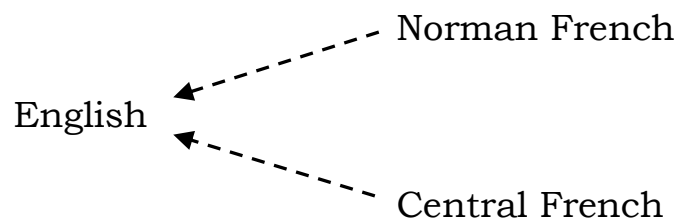
Latin

↓ borrowing

↓ inheritance

English

In the rarest cases, English words are borrowed by another language and then re-borrowed forming a doublet with the original word, e.g. the English *animation* and the Japanese *anime* 'Japanese animation'.

English ⇢ Japanese
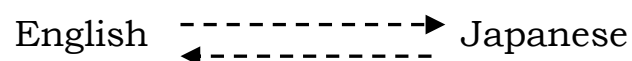
2.3. Borrowed-borrowed origin

Numerous doublets are formed by words borrowed twice from the same language but spanning a considerable period of time (e.g. borrowings from Norman French after the Norman Invasion in the 11th c. and from Central French from the 14th c. on, such as the NF *warden* and the CF *guardian,* both from the Frankish **warding-* 'keeper, custodian').

Norman French

English

Central French

Doublets may also include words borrowed from a certain language and its daughter tongue, e.g. Latin and French. There are many doublets of such origin, as most loan words in English have been borrowed exactly from these two languages; e.g. the French-based *flame* and the Latin-based *conflagration* (both from PIE **bhleg-* 'to shine, flash').

Latin

English
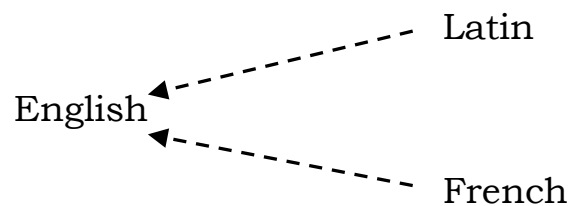
French

There are also cases of direct and indirect borrowing, that is, one doublet member is borrowed directly from Latin and a second member is borrowed indirectly from Latin via French; or one word may be borrowed directly from Greek and the other indirectly from Greek via Latin, e.g. the immediate Greek

borrowing *cyclone*, the Greek via Latin borrowing *cycle* and the Latin via French borrowing *circle* (all from PIE *k(w)e-k(w)lo-* 'wheel, circle').

Greek

English

Latin ◄--------- Greek

Latin

English
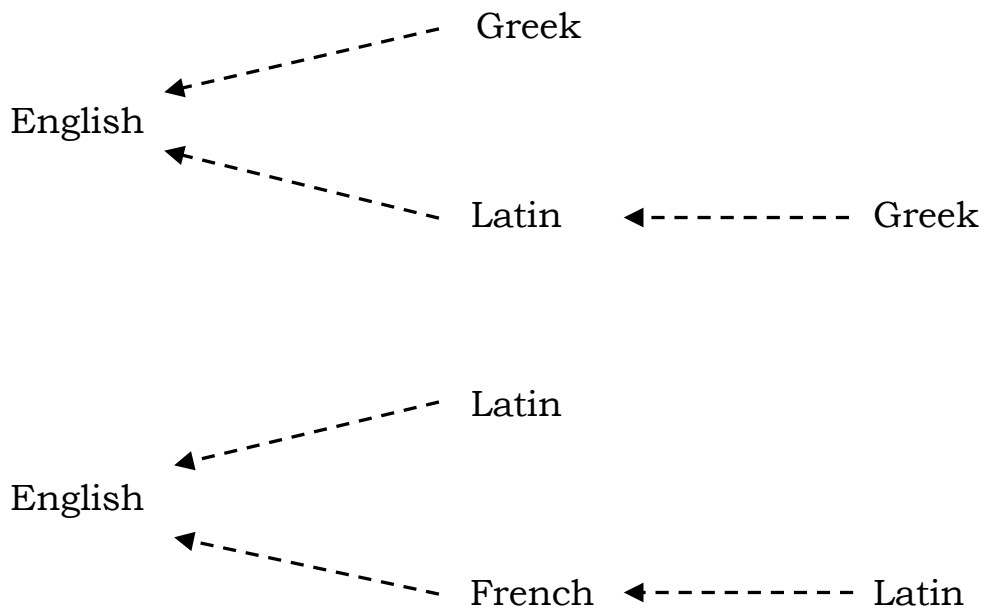
French ◄-------- Latin

Less commonly, cognates from different languages may be borrowed to form a doublet in a target language, e.g. *sauce* (Old French) and *salsa* (Spanish), both ultimately from Latin.

Latin

English ◄---- French   Spanish

↓ borrowing   ↓ inheritance
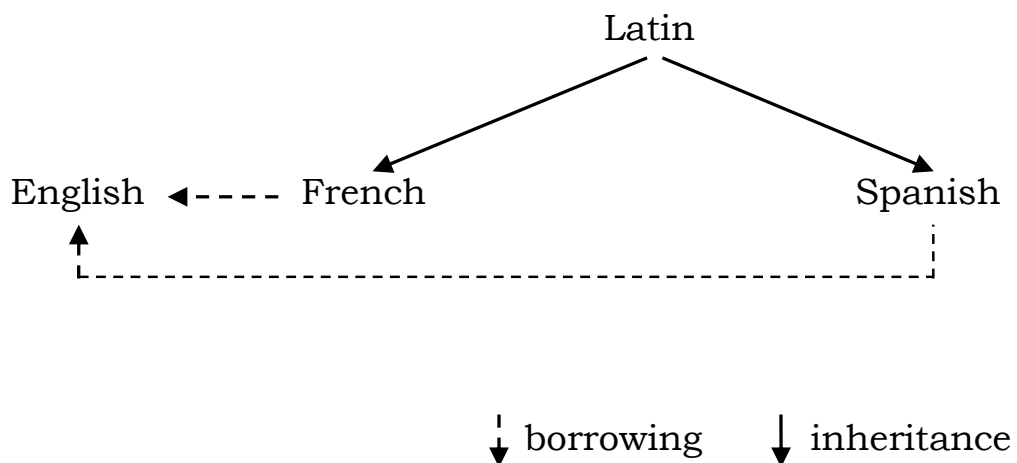
3.   Routes through which doublets entered English

3.1. Words of Latinate origin

The influence of Latin upon the English lexicon is extremely significant. English speakers borrowed from Latin in several different periods of time. The first period occurred even before the Germanic tribes settled on the isle of Britannia, as it was called by the Romans. Those tribes spoke Old Low German and not yet English, which originated from the fusion of closely related dialects, now collectively termed Old English, which were brought to the eastern coast of Great Britain by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the 5th century (since 449). The contact and trade of these tribes with the Roman merchants on the European continent resulted in borrowings related to commonplace concrete objects rather than to abstractions, for example: *plant, mule, cheese, belt, pillow, wall, sickle, mile, tribute, camp, minster* (Brinton, Arnovick 2006: 166).

We find these early borrowings both in Old English and in Old High German because communities speaking those languages had not yet separated at the time of the borrowing. As Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 167) claim,

> it appears that the Romans had a higher standard of living and more refinements than the Germanic people, and that the contact between them was of an intimate kind. The loan words are generally [...] in a familiar rather than formal variety of language, suggesting that the borrowings were popular and oral rather than written.

It is easy to distinguish the early borrowings from the late ones because the former underwent all the sound changes that occurred in Old English, and the latter did not.

The second period of borrowing from Latin occured after the Germanic conquest, during the early Anglo-Saxon period, in the 5th century. The following words may have entered English

through Latinised Celtic, or they may have been borrowed directly from Latin, for example:

- *port* 'harbor, gate, town' (Lat. *portus*);
- *munt* 'mountain' (Lat. *montu*s);
- *torr* 'tower, rock' (Lat. *turris*).

The third period was concomitant to the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons at the end of the 6th century. It was the Roman missionaries who introduced the new vocabulary, thus these borrowings were learned words related to religion and scholarship, as the priests and monks were responsible for education and introducing literacy to the British Isles at that point in time. Some examples of such words are: *cross, creed, mass, monk, holy, accent, chapter, notary, temple, organ.*

The subsequent borrowing period followed the Norman Conquest. Due to a serious change that English underwent as a result of a substantial admixture of Norman-French, from this point on historians refer to Middle English instead of Old English. Still, Latin was a significant source of loan words, even though it is not easy to distinguish between direct borrowings and borrowings via French. It is believed that the learned words and specialised vocabulary concerning law, religion, scholarship, medicine, science and literature, were borrowed directly from Latin (Brinton, Arnovick 2006). Some examples of such words are: *immortal, scripture, client, homicide, legal, testimony, desk, formal, history, index, imaginary.*

Borrowing simultaneously from Latin and French produced three levels of synonyms in English, which differ in register. The words of Germanic origin tend to be colloquial or informal, whereas words of French origin are literary and finally those derived from Latin are scholarly.

Borrowing from Latin continues to the present day, chiefly in the world of science, to describe newly discovered plants, chemicals, new inventions etc. We observe that even though

Latin is a dead language, it survives through the borrowings which are used by speakers of contemporary tongues.

Table 1 presents some examples of doublets containing a word of native Germanic origin and a cognate borrowed from Latin.

Table 1

Doublets formed by borrowing a cognate from Latin

Germanic origin	Borrowing from Latin	PIE root
hemp	cannabis	*kan(n)abi 'cannabis'
corn, kernel	grain (from Lat. *granum*)	*grənom 'grain'
foot(man)	ped(estrian) (from Lat. *pedes* 'one who goes on foot', from *pes* 'foot')	*ped- 'foot'
under(world)	infern(al) (from Lat. *infernalis* 'of the lower regions')	*əndhero- 'under'
father(ly)	pater(nal) (from Lat. *pater* 'father')	*pəter 'father'
raw (from Old Eng. hreaw)	cruel (from Lat. *cruor* 'thick blood') crude (from Lat. *crudus* 'not cooked')	*krewə 'raw meat, blood'
light	lucid (from Lat. *lux* (gen. *lucis*) 'light')	*leuk- 'to shine, be bright'
eat(able)	edible (from Lat. *edo*)	*ed- 'eat'
word	verb (from Lat. *verbum*)	*werə- 'to speak'
naked	nude (from Lat. *nudus*)	*nogʷ- 'naked'
short	curt (from Latin *curtus* '(cut) short, shortened, incomplete')	*(s)ker- 'to cut,' with notion of 'something cut off'

3.2. Words of French origin

The Norman Conquest of 1066 exerted a massive influence on the English language. After the invasion, for about two hundred years, the English rulers were primarily monolingual French speakers (Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 233). Neither the majority of aristocracy and higher church officials, nor the Norman troops garrisoned by the king, spoke English. This resulted in an exceptionally low number of literary works and records accomplished in English. During that entire time, English was primarily a spoken rather than written language, and that may have caused the great change it underwent. As Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 233) indicate,

> change originates in variation in the spoken language, and languages which are not written tend to change more rapidly to those that are. One of the strongest forces of change in Middle English, then, was the infrequency of keeping records in English during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

French became a fashionable and prestigious language. People who knew French as their second language, or were bilingual, very often used foreign words to enrich their expression. Later, from the 15th to the 19th century, the impact that French exerted on English became even greater – France was the epicenter of fashion, style, and art trends which everyone wanted to follow. This is why the word stock of English overflows with French vocabulary.

French words could have been borrowed into English twice or multiple times. Normally, the first borrowing was a Norman French word, and in a later period its cognate was borrowed from Central French. We can distinguish these borrowings by phonetic differences presented in Table 2.

This led to the emergence of many pairs of doublets of Norman French/Central French origin, some examples of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Sound changes in borrowings of Norman
French and Central French origin

Norman French-based words	Central French-based words
[k] (velar voiceless stop) before *a* remained pronounced as [k]	[k] before *a* became pronounced as [tʃ] (postalveolar voiceless affricate)
[w] (voiced labial-velar approximant) remained pronounced as [w]	[w] became pronounced as [g] (velar voiced stop)

Table 3

Doublets of Norman French and Central French origin

Norman French origin [k], [w]	Central French origin [tʃ], [g]	Origin of both
cattle	chattel	Medieval Latin *capitale* 'property, stock'
cant	chant	Latin *cantare*, frequentative of *canere* 'to sing'
canal	channel	Latin *canalis* 'groove, channel, waterpipe'
car	chariot	Late Latin *carrum* 'chariot'
castle	chateau (late borrowing, instead of [tʃ] there is [ʃ])	Latin *castellum* 'castle'
catch	chase	Latin *captare* 'to take, hold'
warranty	guarantee	from a Germanic source, from Proto-Germanic *war-* 'to warn, guard, protect'
warden reward wardrobe	guardian regard garderobe	Proto-Germanic *wardon* 'to guard'
wimple	gimp	Old French *guimple* 'wimple, headdress, veil' (12c.), from Frankish *wimpil-* , Proto-Germanic *wimpilaz*
wallop	galop	Proto-Germanic *hlaupan* 'leap'

We can also differentiate doublets of French origin determined by the difference in the time that they entered English – in the medieval era or in the modern one. We can easily distinguish these words because the early borrowings underwent the

process of nativisation, that is, they existed in English long enough to acquire more typically English sounds. Those phonetic changes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Sound changes in words of French origin
which entered English in different time periods

Early borrowings	Late borrowings
[ʃ] (postalveolar voiceless fricative) became pronounced as [tʃ] (postalveolar voiceless affricate)	[ʃ] remained pronounced as [ʃ]
[ʒ] (postalveolar voiced fricative) became pronounced as [dʒ] (postalveolar voiced affricate)	[ʒ] remained pronounced as [ʒ]
stress pattern: irregular	stress pattern: oxytone (on the last syllable)

Table 5 presents some examples of doublets formed by borrowing French words twice in different periods of time.

Other examples of doublets of French origin are words that lost the original [s] (alveolar voiceless fricative) before [t] (dental voiceless stop); there are some words borrowed before and after this shift, as presented in Table 6.

3.3. Words of Scandinavian origin

Anglo-Saxon England was invaded in the 8th century by the Vikings. By the mid-ninth century they began to winter in England, slowly transforming robbing raids into colonisation. A vast territory called the Danelaw, situated in northern and eastern England, stayed under the jurisdiction of the Scandinavians who ruled in England for 26 years. Thus, the conquest had a significant influence on the indigenous language.

Table 5

Doublets constituted by words of French origin borrowed
into English twice in different periods of time

Earlier borrowing [tʃ, dʒ]	Later borrowing [ʃ, ʒ]	Origin of both
chief	chef	Old French *chief* 'leader, ruler, head'
chain	chignon (from French *chignon* 'nape of the neck', from Old French *chaignon* 'iron collar, shackles, noose')	Latin *catena* 'chain, fetter, restraint'
gender	genre	Old French *gendre, genre* 'kind, species; character; gender'
burgess	bourgeoisie	Old French *burgeis, borjois* 'town dweller'

Earlier borrowing (English stress pattern)	Later borrowing (French stress pattern)	
moral	morale	Latin *moralis* 'proper behavior of a person in society'
gentle	genteel	Old French *gentil* 'high-born, noble'
liquor	liqueur	French *liqueur* 'liquor, liquid'
salon	saloon	French *salon* 'reception room'
dragon	dragoon (from French *dragon* 'carbine, musket', because the guns the soldiers carried 'breathed fire' like dragons)	Old French *dragon* 'huge serpent, dragon'
caddie (Scottish form of French *cadet*)	cadet	French *cadet* 'military student officer'
cream	crème	Old French *cresme* 'chrism, holy oil'

Table 6

Doublets of French origin borrowed
before and after the loss of [s] before [t]

Earlier borrowing: with [s]	Later borrowing: without [s]	Origin of both
feast	fete	Old French *feste* 'feast, celebration'
beast	bete (noir)	Old French *beste* 'animal, wild beast'
hostel	hotel	Old French *ostel, hostel* 'a lodging'
crisp	crepes	Old French *crespe*, from Latin *crispus* 'curled, wrinkled, having curly hair' (It began to mean 'brittle' 1520s, for obs-cure reasons, perhaps based on what happens to flat things when they are cooked.)
(e)squire	equerry	Old French *esquier* 'squire', literally 'shield carrier'

The North Germanic dialects spoken by the Scandinavians were closely enough related to the West Germanic dialects of the Anglo-Saxons to permit communication. The Scandinavians settled in significant numbers in areas of Northern England [...] and seem to have assimilated and adopted well to Anglo-Saxon society; there was undoubtedly intermarriage between the two groups. (Brinton, Arnovick 2006: 170)

As a result, there is a vast number of words of Scandinavian origin in English. About 1000 of them are place names, personal names ending with *-son* and *-sen,* specialised words connected with seafaring, law and warfare, as well as the names of everyday objects and even some function words (e.g. the plural pronouns *they, their, them*). Some of these words completely replaced their Old English counterparts, but others stayed on to function as synonyms and many of them formed doublets with native Anglo-Saxon lexemes. For example, the Old Norse word *kirkja* gave rise to the regional Scottish form

kirk in contrast to the Modern English *church,* and *hale* (from
O.N. *heill)* is the Scottish and northern English form of *whole.*
Some words underwent the process of specialisation, as in the
case of Scandinavian-based *skirt* (a garment worn below the
waist) and the native *shirt* (a garment worn on the upper part
of body), both from the P.Gmc. **skurtijon* 'a short garment'
(Etymonline, access 04.2018). Further examples of doublets in
which one is of Scandinavian origin are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Doublets formed by borrowing a cognate from Scandinavian

English	Scandinavian-based	Origin of both
shirt	*skirt* (from O.N. *skyrta* 'shirt,')	P.Gmc. **skurtijon* 'a short garment'
from	*fro* (from O.N. *fra* 'from')	P.Gmc. **fr-* , PIE **pr-*
rear	*raise* (from O.N. *reisa* 'to raise,')	P.Gmc. **raizjan*
no	*nay* (from O.N. *nei,* compound of *ne* 'not' + *ei* 'ever.')	P.Gmc. **ne,* PIE root **ne-* 'no, not'
draw	drag (from O.N. *draga* 'to draw')	P.Gmc. **dragan* 'to draw, pull,' from PIE root **dhragh-* 'to draw, drag on the ground'
shout	scout ('to reject with scorn')	from PIE root **skeud-* 'to shoot, chase, throw'

It may prove difficult to distinguish a Scandinavian loan from
an original Old English word. However, there are certain
phonological changes which native lexemes underwent while
Scandinavian ones did not. Those changes are presented in
Table 8.

Table 8

Sound changes of words of Old English
origin and of Scandinavian origin

Word of Old English origin	Word of Scandinavian origin
Palatalisation of [sk] to [ʃ] (postalveolar voiceless fricative), e.g. _shirt_	No palatalisation of [sk], e.g. _skirt_
Change of [g] (velar voiced stop) to [j] (palatal approximant) _yet_, _day_ (compare: Old English _get_; Old E. _dæg_, Norwegian _dag_)	No change of [g] e.g. _guild, girth_
Change of [k] (velar voiceless stop) to [tʃ] (postalveolar voiceless affricate) e.g. _child_ from Old E. _cild_	No change of [k] e.g. _kid_ 'young goat'

4.   Semantic change

It is common for the meaning of words to change over time. The resulting differences in meaning may be slight or major, depending on a variety of factors and the changes can be assigned to a variety of categories.

Generalisation is a process by which a word acquires a broader meaning than it originally had. This widening of the scope of a word's meaning indicates that specific aspects of its designation must be have been dropped. For example, the word _holiday_ formerly referred only to 'holy days', i.e. 'days of religious celebrations', but now it refers to any non-work day, not necessarily anything sacred or related to religious practices. Some other examples comprise:

  – _box_, formerly 'a small container of boxwood';
  – _scent_, formerly 'an animal odor used for tracking';
  – _carry_, formerly 'to transport in a vehicle';
  – _butcher_, formerly 'one who slaughters goats'.

Specialisation is the opposite process. It leads to narrowing down the meaning of a word, making it name a subcategory of

the category it originally named. It often happens that specialisation of a word coincides with the borrowing a foreign word. The semantic scope of a corresponding native word shrinks, so that the borrowed word can stay in the language and bear a portion of the original, native meaning. The example from English that Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 77) provide is the Germanic word *lust,* which originally referred to 'desire in general', a meaning now expressed by the French borrowing *desire. Lust* is now specialised to 'sexual desire'. "Whether this process is a matter of the borrowed word forcing the native word to be specialised or, conversely, the specialisation causing a need for a more general term to be borrowed is not entirely clear" (Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 79). Other examples of specialisation are as follows:

- *acorn,* formerly 'wild fruit';
- *adder,* formerly 'a snake';
- *adventure,* formerly 'happening';
- *meat,* formerly 'food'.

Pejoration is the process by which the meaning of a word becomes negative, or less elevated, over a period of time. It often coincides with specialisation. Some examples of pejoration are the following:

- *villain,* formerly 'a low-born or common person';
- *clown,* formerly 'a rural person';
- *smug,* formerly 'neat';
- *poison,* formerly 'potion, drink'.

Amelioration, in contrast, consists of acquiring a more positively charged meaning, which may involve a change in denotation or connotation. It also often coincides with specialisation. Some examples are as follows:

- *queen,* formerly 'a woman of good birth';
- *jolly,* formerly 'arrogant, wanton, lustful';

- *spill*, formerly 'to shed blood';
- *nice*, formerly 'silly, simple';
- *engineer*, formerly 'a plotter, schemer'.

Weakening and **strengthening** also occur when a speaker uses a *weaker* or a *stronger* word than required by the circumstances. Strengthening and weakening have to do with the *force* of word meaning, with its *intensity*. "In general, strengthening is rarer in language than weakening – evidence that people are more prone to exaggeration (which tends to weaken meanings) than to understatement (which tends to strengthen meanings)" (Millward 1988:181-182). Instead of using a taboo word, that is, a word describing topics people find it difficult to talk about, such as unpleasant jobs, parts of the body, sex, pregnancy, birth, bodily functions, disease, old age and death, they tend to use socially accepted words called *euphemisms* (from the Greek word meaning 'to speak favourably'). Examples of weakening are the following:

- *adore* from 'worship as divine' to 'like';
- *swelter* from 'faint from excessive heat' to 'be hot';
- *starve* from 'die from lack of food' to 'be hungry'.

An example of strengthening is:

- *molest* acquired the denotation 'to subject to unwanted or improper sexual activity'.

5.   Methodology

An etymological dictionary is an indispensable aid for the task of recognizing and studying doublets. Such a dictionary provides the earliest attested use of a word, the route through which it entered English, e.g. via French or Latin or directly from Proto-Germanic and Proto-Indo-European; cognates in other languages, semantic changes the word underwent and

sometimes some additional information, e.g. collocations with other words or useful expressions with the given word.

For the purpose of this paper, the main source of information was Online Etymology Dictionary, an exceptionally thorough compilation of a vast number of written sources, based mainly on Weekley's *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, Klein's *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, *Oxford English Dictionary* (second edition), *Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology*, Holthausen's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Englischen Sprache*, and Kipfer and Chapman's *Dictionary of American Slang*. Apart from these main sources, there are a considerable number of others, which can be found at the following web address: https://www.etymonline.com/columns/post/sources [accessed 04.2018].

The pairs of words analysed below have been selected randomly out of the pool of available doublets, some of which have already been given as examples earlier in this paper or from other collections which the present author has gathered them. The doublets have been classified into a number of categories discussed in detail in part 2. These categories are:

1. Doublets where both words are of native origin.
2. Doublets where one of the words is of native origin and the other is a borrowing:
   a) of Latinate origin;
   b) of Scandinavian origin;
   c) a foreign word of Germanic origin borrowed into English.
3. Doublets where both words are of borrowed origin.
   a) one word is of Norman-French origin and the other is of Central-French origin;
   b) the words are borrowed from a certain language and its daughter language, e.g. Latin and French;
   c) one word is borrowed from a certain language and the other is borrowed from the same source via a different language.

For each category, one pair of doublets has been selected as its example.

The words forming respective doublets have been studied in terms of their earliest attested use in an ancestral language, their way of entering English and the semantic change they underwent.

6.   A comparison of selected doublets

6.1. Both words are of native English origin

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, such pairs include a native word which at some point in time split into two separate lexemes slightly diverged in meaning, and both of these words have remained in the language.

Table 9

Comparison of *shadow* and *shade*

	Shadow	Shade
borrowed from	native Germanic	native Germanic
entered English	N/A (not applicable)	N/A
common origin	Old English *scead* 'partial darkness; shelter, protection', *sceadu* 'shade, shadow, darkness; shady place, arbor, protection from glare or heat' both from Proto-Germanic *skadwaz*, from PIE *skot-wo-*, from root *skot-* 'dark, shade'	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.etymonline.com [access 04.2018])	From mid-13c. as 'darkened area created by shadows, shade.' From early 13c. in the sense 'anything unreal'; mid-14c. as 'a ghost'; late 14c. as 'a foreshadowing, prefiguration'.	Meaning 'a ghost' is from 1610s. Sense of 'window blind' first recorded in 1845. Meaning 'cover to protect the eyes' is from 1801. Meaning 'grade of colour' first recorded 1680s; that of 'degree or gradation of darkness in a colour' is from 1680s.

semantic change	From OE *sceadu* 'shade, shadow, darkness; shady place, arbour, protection from glare or heat' to OE *sceadwe, sceaduwe* 'the effect of interception of sunlight, dark image cast by someone or something when interposed between an object and a source of light' to ModE *shadow* 'the dark shape that sb/sth's form makes on a surface (...) when they are between the light and the surface' (Oxford Dictionary 2010: 1402).	From OE *sceadu* 'shade, shadow, darkness; shady place, arbour, protection from glare or heat' to late OE *scead* 'partial darkness; shelter, protection' to ModE *shade* 'an area which is dark and cool under or behind sth (...) because the sun's light does not get to it' (Oxford Dictionary 2010: 1402).
comment	The two words bear opposite axiological loads: *shadow* evokes rather negative connotations, whereas *shade* gives rise to rather positive ones. The "parent" word, thus, may have covered both meanings which were later distributed between two separate lexemes. What can be observed in this case is specialisation, rather than a considerable change in meaning.	

6.2. One word is of native origin and the other is a borrowing

The next example of a doublet is a pair of words, one of which is inherited directly from a parent language (from PIE to Proto-Germanic, and then to English) and the other is a cognate borrowed from a sister or cousin tongue.

6.2.1. Native word – Latin borrowing

Table 10
Comparison of *cow* and *beef*

	Cow	Beef
borrowed from	native Germanic	Latin via Old French
entered English	N/A	c.1300
common origin	from PIE root *gwou-'cow, ox, bull'	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.etymonline.com [access 04.2018])	In Germanic and Celtic, of females only; in most other languages, of either gender. Other 'cow' words sometimes are from roots meaning 'horn, horned,' such as Lithuanian *karve*, Old Church Slavonic *krava*.	Original plural was *beeves*. Modern French *boeuf*.
semantic change	From PIE *gwous* 'cow' to Proto-Germanic *kwom* to *kwon* 'cow' to Old English *cu* 'cow,' to ModE 'cow'.	From PIE *gwous* 'cow, ox, bull' to Latin *bovem* (nominative *bos*, genitive *bovis*) 'ox, cow', to Old French *buef* 'ox, beef, ox hide' to ModE 'the meet of a cow'.
comment	*Beef* underwent specialisation of meaning on the basis of a metonymic relation: the name of the animal came to represent the meat of the animal. *Cow* did not undergo any semantic change, or it may be onomatopoeic, imitative of lowing. If so, then it also is an instance of metonymy: the sound emitted by an animal represents the animal.	

6.2.2. Native word – Scandinavian borrowing

Table 11

Comparison of *shirt* and *skirt*

	Shirt	Skirt
borrowed from	native Germanic	Old Norse
entered English	N/A	Early 14c.
common origin	from Proto-Germanic *skurtjon 'a short garment', from PIE *(s)ker- (1) 'to cut'.	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.etymonline.com [access 04.2018])	Related to Old English *scort, sceort* 'short'. Formerly of the chief garment worn by both sexes, but in modern use only of that for men.	Sense development from 'shirt' to 'skirt' is possibly related to the long shirts of peasant garb (compare Low German cognate *Schört*, in some dialects 'woman's gown').
semantic change	From PGmc *skurtjon* 'a short garment' to OE *scyrte* 'skirt, tunic,' ModE *shirt* 'a piece of clothing (usually for men), worn on the upper part of body, made of light cloth, with sleeves and usually with a collar and buttons down the front' (Oxford Dictionary 2010:1412).	From PGmc *skurtjon* 'a short garment' to Old Norse *skyrta* 'shirt, a kind of kirtle' to MidE *skirt* 'lower part of a woman's dress' to ModE *skirt* 'a piece of clothing for a woman or girl that hangs from the waist' (Oxford Dictionary 2012:1443).
comment	When compared to the first common ancestor, the meaning of the above two words did not change considerably: both *shirt* and *skirt* name a short garment (from the waist up or down), the words specialised. In comparison to the older ancestor, PIE *(s)ker- (1) 'to cut', their meaning changes more considerably, but a connection is easily observable: a 'short garment' has to be 'cut' to become short.	

6.2.3. Native word – foreign word of Germanic origin borrowed into English

There are cases of Latin or French words of Germanic origin borrowed into English, which form doublets with English words inherited directly from Proto-Germanic.

6.2.3.1. Native word – Germanic borrowing via Latin and French

Table 12

Comparison of *ban* and *abandon*

	Ban	Abandon
borrowed from	native Germanic	Frankish via Latin and French
entered English	N/A	Late 14c.
common origin	from Proto-Germanic *bannan* 'proclaim, command, forbid'; originally 'to speak publicly,' from PIE root *bha-* (2) 'to speak'.	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.ety monline.com [access 04.2018])	Main modern sense 'to prohibit' (late 14c.) is from Old Norse cognate *banna* 'to curse, prohibit', and probably in part from Old French *ban*, which meant, among other things, 'outlawry, banishment' and was a borrowing from Germanic. The sense evolution in Germanic was from 'speak' to 'proclaim a threat' to (in Norse, German, etc.) 'curse'.	Etymologically, the word carries the sense 'put someone under someone else's control.' Meaning 'to give up absolutely' is from late 14c.

semantic change	From PGmc *bannan* 'proclaim, command, forbid' to OE *bannan* 'to summon, command, proclaim', to ModE *ban* 'to prohibit', the last sense is a semantic loan from Old Norse and probably from Old French.	From PGmc *bannan* 'proclaim, command, forbid' to Latin *bannum* 'proclamation' to Old French *abandoner* (12c.), from adverbial phrase *à bandon* 'at will, at discretion,' from *à* 'at, to' + *bandon* 'power, jurisdiction', to MidE 'to give up, surrender (oneself or something), give over utterly; to yield (oneself) utterly (to religion, fornication, etc.)', to ModE 'to leave completely and finally; forsake utterly; desert'.
comment	The semantic change of *ban* is rather moderate. Its meaning specialised from 'proclaim, command, forbid' to the current 'prohibit, forbid'. *Abandon*, on the other hand, has changed considerably in the semantic respect.	

6.2.3.2. Native word – Germanic borrowing via French

Table 13

Comparison of *ring* and *arrange*

	Ring	Arrange
borrowed from	native Germanic	Old French
entered English	N/A	late 14c.
common origin	from Proto-Germanic *hringaz* 'circle, ring, something curved'	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.etymonline.com [access 04.2018])	From PIE *(s)kregh-* nasalized form of *(s)kregh-*, from root *(s)ker-* (3) 'to turn, bend,' with wide-ranging derivative senses.	A rare word until the meaning generalized to 'to place things in order' c.1780-1800.

semantic change	From PGmc *hringaz* 'circle, ring, something curved' to OE *hring* 'small circlet, especially one of metal for wearing on the finger or as part of a mail coat; anything circular', to ModE 'circular band'.	From PGmc *hringaz* 'circle, ring, something curved', to Frankish *hring* 'circle, ring', to OFr *arengier* (12c.), from *a-* 'to' + *rangier* 'set in a row' (Modern French *ranger*), from *rang* 'rank', to Middle English 'draw up a line of battle', to ModE 'place things in order'.
comment	The semantic change of *ring* is very slight, nowadays it also carries a very broad meaning, as seems to have been the case in Proto-Germanic. *Arrange*, on the other hand, has changed its meaning considerably. The sense which connects it to the other member of the doublet is 'to neatly place as around a circle'.	

6.3. Both words are borrowings

6.3.1. One word is of Norman-French origin and the other is of Central-French origin

Table 14

Comparison of *catch* and *chase*

	Catch	Chase
borrowed from	Anglo-French or Old North French (Norman French)	Old French (Central French)
entered English	C.1200	C.1300
common origin	from Vulgar Latin *captiare* 'try to seize, chase'	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.etymonline.com [access 04.2018])	Old French *chacier* 'hunt, pursue, drive (animals),' Modern French *chasser* 'to hunt'. Senses in early Middle English also included 'chase, hunt,' which later went with *chase.*	Meaning 'run after' developed mid-14c.

semantic change	From Latin *captare* 'to take, hold' to Vulgar Latin **captiare* 'try to seize, chase' to Old North French *cachier* 'catch, capture' to ModE *catch* 'to take, capture'.	From Latin *captare* 'to take, hold' to Vulgar Latin *captiare* 'try to seize, chase' to OFr *chacier* 'to hunt, ride swiftly, strive for' to OE *chacen* 'to hunt; to cause to go away; put to flight' to ModE *chase* 'to run, drive, etc. after sb/sth in order to catch them' (Oxford Dictionary 2012:245).
comment	Both words underwent specialisation. The notions of chasing something and catching something are strongly related. They both participate in the Idealised Cognitive Model of a hunt, as whence the polysemy of the original Latin word.	

6.3.2. Words borrowed from a certain language and its daughter language, e.g. Latin and French

Table 15
Comparison of *flame* and *flagrant*

	Flame	Flagrant
borrowed from	Latin via Franch	Latin
entered English	Mid-14c.	C.1500
common origin	from PIE **bhleg-* 'to shine, flash,' from root **bhel-* (1) 'to shine, flash, burn'	
semantic change	From PIE **bhleg-* 'to shine, flash, burn' to Latin *flamma* 'flame, blazing fire' to Latin *flammula* 'small flame' to OFr *flamme* and ModE *flame* 'a hot bright stream of burning gas that comes from sth that is on fire' (Oxford Dictionary 2010:585).	From PIE **bhleg-* 'to shine, flash, burn' to Latin *flagrans* 'to burn, blaze, glow' to figurative 'glowing with passion, eager, vehement' to Early ModE 'resplendent' to ModE *flagrant* 'shocking because it is done in a very obvious way and shows no respect for people, laws, etc.' (Oxford Dictionary 2010:585).
comment	The meaning of *flame* has remained almost unchanged. *Flagrant* has assumed a figurative sense – instead of real fire it describes a passionate thing, a deed accomplished with a negative kind of passion, a temper which is "as hot as fire".	

6.3.3. One word is borrowed from a certain language and the other is borrowed from the same source via a different language.

Table 16

Comparison of *cyclone* and *cycle*

	Cyclone	Cycle
borrowed from	Greek	Greek via Latin
entered English	1848	Late 14c.
common origin	from Greek *kyklos* 'circle, wheel, any circular body, circular motion, cycle of events' from PIE *kw(e)-kwl-o-*, suffixed, reduplicated form of root **kwel-* (1), also **kwele-*, 'to roll, to move around, wheel'	
additional information (from Etymonline http://www.ety monline.com [access 04.2018])	Coined by British East India Company official Henry Piddington to describe the devastating storm of December 1789 in Coringa, India. Applied to tornadoes from 1856. Irregularly formed from Greek *kyklon* 'moving in a circle, whirling around,' present participle of *kykloun* 'move in a circle, whirl,'	
semantic change	From Gr *kyklos* 'circle' to Gr *kykloun* 'move in a circle, whirl' to ModE *cyclone* 'a violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle'.	From Gr *kyklos* 'circle, wheel, any circular body, circular motion, cycle of events', to ModE *cycle* 'a set of repeated series or events'.
comment	*Cyclone* is a comparatively recent borrowing, but its meaning changed considerably due to specialisation and the association of a type of wind moving in circles with a circle itself. *Cycle* has also changed its meaning to a figurative one, as in *nature moving in a circle, a circle of life;* a series of events regularly following one another (as if they were rolling around).	

7. Conclusion

It is interesting to observe the evolution of meaning of certain words, especially those sharing the same etymology. Back-tracking the semantics of a word and comparing it with its etymological 'siblings' and ancestors gives an insight into the evolution of language in general and helps us to understand the processes which have caused language users to make words represent senses different from the original sense.

It is only too natural that doublet participants underwent semantic change, be it a slight change, as in the case of *frail* (usually describing people) and *fragile* (usually describing objects), or a considerable change, as in the case of *clock* (in Medieval Latin *clocca* literally meant 'bell') and *cloak* 'a garment in the shape of a bell'. The fascinating examples provided above are only the tip of the iceberg in the task of describing semantic change in words of common etymology.

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