



Lexicographic representations of Anglo-Saxon and Latinate near-synonyms in English monolingual and English-Italian bilingual learners' dictionaries

Daniele Franceschi

'Roma Tre' University, Italy

daniele.franceschi@uniroma3.it

Aim of the presentation

- Analysis & classification of the meaning relations between near-synonyms of Anglo-Saxon and Latinate origin in present-day English (synchronic approach):

e.g. speed/velocity, sweat/perspire, shy/timid, before/prior, etc.

- Do they differ only in terms of style, register and connotation?
 - To what extent does the semantics of Latinate borrowings overlap with/differ from that of the pre-existing Germanic word-stock?
- Initial proposal of metadata that may be used to better represent differences between near-synonyms in dictionaries.

Why Latinate near-synonyms?

- Latinate lexical component of English is the most significant (Minkova & Stockwell 2006).
- EFL learners often struggle with near-synonymous words (Chamizo-Domínguez 2008), e.g., *hug* or *embrace*, *brave* or *courageous*?
 - ❑ Tendency of Italian EFL learners to overuse Latinate words because they are similar in form to their Italian counterparts (*velocità*, *abbracciare*, *coraggioso/a*).
- Monolingual, bilingual and learners' dictionaries/thesauri do not clearly distinguish between etymologically unrelated near-synonyms.

Some examples

embrace *verb*



/ɪm'breɪs/

/ɪm'breɪs/

(formal)



+ Verb Forms

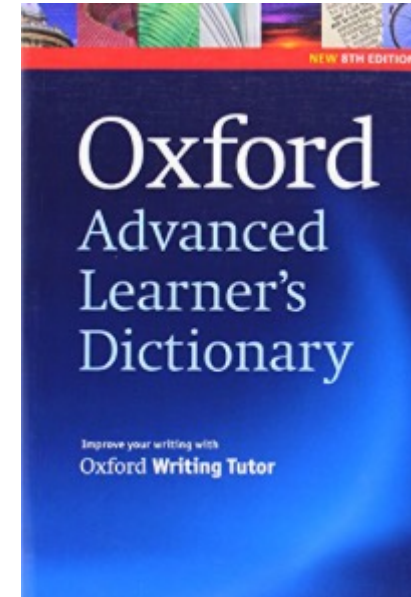
1 ★ [intransitive, transitive] to put your arms around somebody as a sign of love or friendship

SYNONYM hug




- *They embraced and promised to keep in touch.*
- **embrace somebody** *She embraced her son warmly.*
- *He rose from his chair and embraced her warmly.*

TOPICS **Family and relationships**



*They **hugged** and promised to keep in touch.
She **hugged** her son warmly.
He rose from his chair and **hugged** her warmly.*

Some examples

2 ★  [transitive] **embrace something** to accept an idea, a proposal, a set of beliefs, etc., especially when it is done with enthusiasm

- *to embrace democracy/feminism/Islam*
- *It is unlikely that such countries will embrace capitalist ideas.*

to **hug democracy/feminism/Islam.*

It is unlikely that such countries will **hug capitalist ideas.*

— Extra Examples

- *the only party which fully embraces the concept of a united Europe*
- *Soccer has become more widely embraced by Americans.*
- *She embraced the feminist cause with enthusiasm.*

3 ★  [transitive] **embrace something** to include something

- *The talks embraced a wide range of issues.*
- *The word 'mankind' embraces men, women and children.*
- *Decisions were made by reaching a consensus embracing all sectors of the financial community.*

The talks **hugged a wide range of issues.*

The word 'mankind' **hugs men, women and children.*

...a consensus all **hugging sectors of the financial community.*

Some examples

[OXFORD Collocations](#) | dictionary for students of English

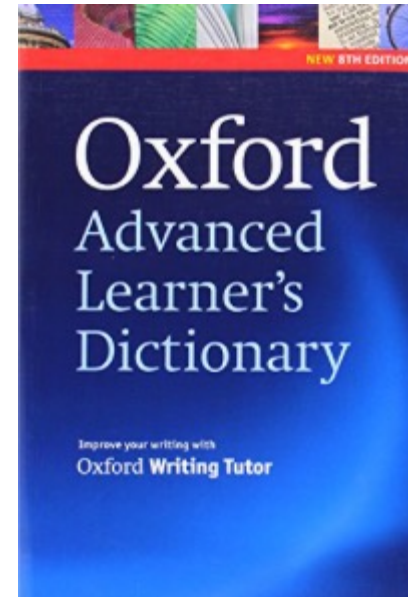
embrace *verb*

1 **put your arms round sb**

ADV. tightly, warmly *He rose from his chair and embraced her warmly.*

2 **accept sth**

ADV. fully, genuinely *the only party which fully embraces the concept of a united Europe* | **enthusiastically, wholeheartedly, with enthusiasm** *She embraced the feminist cause with enthusiasm.*



Some examples

hug *verb*

🔊 /hʌg/

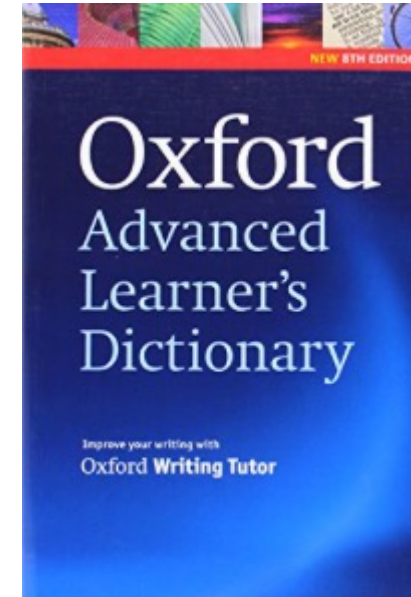
🔊 /hʌg/

+ Verb Forms

- 1 ★ [transitive, intransitive] **hug (somebody)** (+ adv./prep.) to put your arms around somebody and hold them tightly, especially to show that you like or love them

SYNONYM **embrace** ←

- *They hugged each other.*
- *She hugged him tightly.*
- *He hugged Anna to him.*
- *They put their arms around each other and hugged.*



*They **embraced** each other.*
*She **embraced** him tightly*
*He **embraced** Anna to him.*
*They put their arms around each other and **embraced**.*

Some examples

2 ★ [transitive] **hug something** to put your arms around something and hold it close to your body

- *She sat in the chair, hugging her knees.*
- *He hugged the hot-water bottle to his chest.*

...**embracing** her knees.
...**embraced** it to his chest.

3 ★ [transitive] **hug something** (of a path, vehicle, etc.) to keep close to something for a distance

- *The track hugs the coast for a mile.*
- *We crept along, hugging the perimeter fence.*

?...**embraces** the coast...
?...**embracing** the perimeter fence.

4 ★ [transitive] **hug something** to fit tightly around something, especially a person's body

- *figure-hugging jeans*

figure-embracing jeans.

Some examples

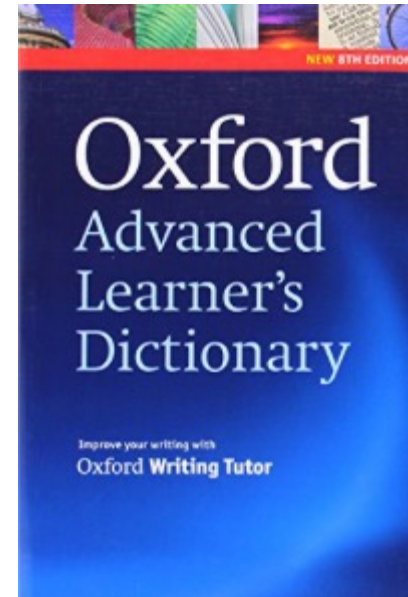
[OXFORD Collocations](#) | dictionary for students of English

hug *verb*

ADV. *close, tight/tightly* James went to his daughter and hugged her tightly. | *gently* | *fiercely*

PREP. *to* He reached out and hugged her to him.

PHRASES hug and kiss sb



Some examples

[OXFORD Collocations](#) | dictionary for students of English

embrace *verb*

1 **put your arms round sb**

ADV. **tightly, warmly** *He rose from his chair and embraced her warmly.*

2 **accept sth**

ADV. **fully, genuinely** *the only party which fully embraces the concept of a united Europe* | **enthusiastically, wholeheartedly, with enthusiasm** *She embraced the feminist cause with enthusiasm.*

[OXFORD Collocations](#) | dictionary for students of English

hug *verb*

ADV. **close** **tight/tightly** *James went to his daughter and hugged her tightly.* | **gently | fiercely**

PREP. **to** *He reached out and hugged her to him.*

PHRASES **hug and kiss sb**

In fact...



"and hugged her warmly"



Q All

🖼 Images

📺 Videos

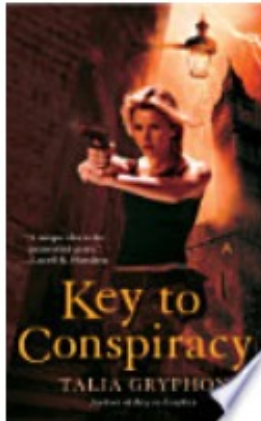
📰 News

📖 Books

⋮ More

Tools

About 1,410 results (0.64 seconds)



books.google.it › books

Key to Conspiracy

Talia Gryphon · 2008

FOUND INSIDE

Tanis was a bit taken aback but he caught her **and hugged her warmly**, clearly glad to see her. "We are glad you are safe, little warrior." Anubis's smile was warm and reached his eyes. Maybe they all weren't pissed off at her after all.

In fact...



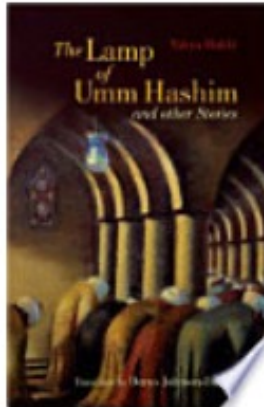
"embraced him to her"



All Images Videos News **Books** More

Tools

About 23,700 results (0.86 seconds)



books.google.it > books

The Lamp of Umm Hashim and other stories - Page 65

Yabya Hakki, Yaḥyá Ḥaqqī · 2006

FOUND INSIDE – PAGE 65

This dark eastern youth had captivated her heart and she had fallen for him and had **embraced him to her** . When she had given herself to him , it was she who had deprived him of his virginal innocence . She had removed him from a state ...

In fact...



"embraced and kissed"



All

Images

Videos

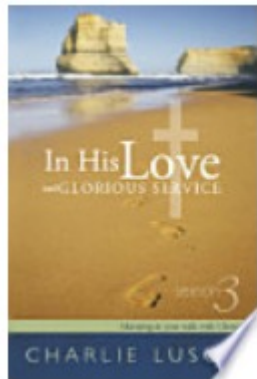
Shopping

Books

More

Tools

Page 2 of about 160,000 results (0.46 seconds)



books.google.it > books

In His Love and Glorious Service: Season 3 Maturing in Your ...

Charlie Lusco · 2011

FOUND INSIDE – PAGE 108

When my wife and I **embraced and kissed** that day, we were not just embracing each other. We were embracing a relationship that we hoped would be forever. At that moment in time we hoped that our desires for each other would never end and ...

Some other examples

embrace



Thesaurus > to accept or continue in a situation that is difficult or unpleasant > embrace

These are words and phrases related to **embrace**. Click on any word or phrase to go to its thesaurus page. Or, [go to the definition of embrace](#).

TO ACCEPT OR CONTINUE IN A SITUATION THAT IS DIFFICULT OR UNPLEASANT

- *She embraced her hardships without complaint.*

TO HOLD SOMEONE OR SOMETHING

- *The sisters embraced.*

Synonyms and examples

hold

Can you hold this for a moment?

grip

The baby gripped my finger with her tiny hand.

cling

One little girl was clinging onto a cuddly toy.

grasp

She grasped his hand in a gesture of sympathy.

cradle

She cradled him tenderly in her arms.

clasp

He reached out to clasp her hand.

clutch

Silent and pale, she clutched her mother's hand.

hang on

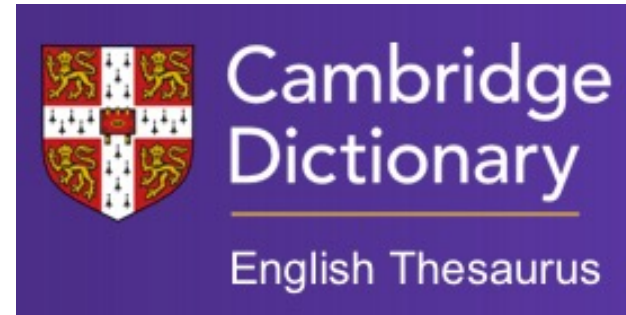
The child was hanging on to her mother's skirt.

grab

He grabbed the rope and pulled it hard.

hug

He hugged his girlfriend.



Some other examples

embrace²

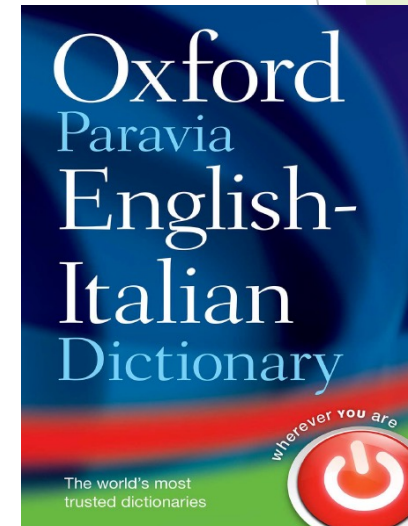
/ɪmˈbreɪs/

I. vt

1. (*hug*) abbracciare
2. [*fig.*] (*espouse, adopt*) abbracciare [religion, ideology, cause]; sostenere [policy]; adottare [principle, technology, method]
 - *to ~ the challenge of Europe* | accettare la sfida dell'Europa
3. [*fig.*] (*include*) comprendere [subject areas]; abbracciare, contenere [cultures, opinions, beliefs]

II. intr

abbracciarsi



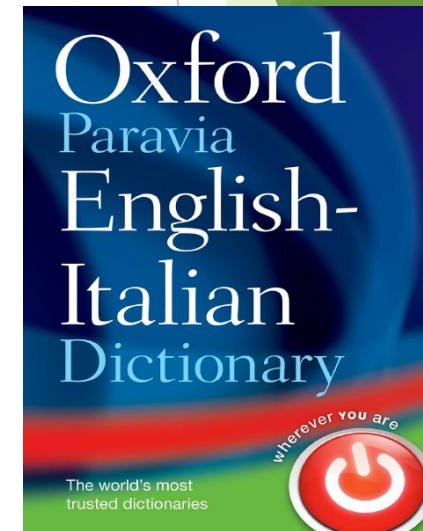
Some other examples

hug²

/hʌg/

vt

1. (*embrace*) [person] abbracciare; [bear, gorilla] abbrancare
 - *to ~ one's knees* | stringersi le ginocchia tra le braccia
2. (*keep close to*) [boat, vehicle] rasentare; [road, path] costeggiare
 - *to ~ the coast* | mar. bordeggiare
 - *to ~ the walls* | [person] rasentare i muri
3. (*fit tightly*)
 - *figure-~ging* | attillato
 - *the dress ~ged her around the hips* | il vestito la fasciava sui fianchi



Room for lexicographic improvement

1. Further investigate and then classify the meaning relations between near-synonymous Anglo-Saxon and Latinate words.
2. Alongside traditional pragmatic labels, other metadata (i.e. tags, notes, cross-references) re semantic differences should be included in (digital) dictionaries to further assist users (learners, teachers, etc.) to better distinguish between related words of different origin.

On synonymy

➤ Three main research orientations:

- ❖ Semanticists (Kempson 1977; Werner et al. 1980; Palmer 1981; Leech 1981; Jackson 1988; Burnley 1992; Church et al. 1994; Lyons 1995; Edmonds 1999; Geeraerts 2010; Durkin 2014, 2020; among others) investigate variation at the level of denotation, both diachronically and synchronically, and from different perspectives.
- ❖ Pragmaticians (Hanks 2010, 2013; Murphy 2003 & references therein) “what actually counts as synonymous is constrained by the demands of communicative language use and the context in which this language use occurs” (Murphy 2003: 168).
- ❖ Cognitive linguists (Cruse 1986, 2000; Cuyckens, Dirven & Taylor 2003; Croft & Cruse 2004; Geeraerts 2006; among others): a classification of synonymy cannot cover all the possible context-sensitive properties, but “construability is not infinitely flexible” Croft & Cruse 2004: 144).

On synonymy

- Absolute synonyms are extremely rare, because they need to satisfy the following three conditions (Lyons 1995: 61):
 - i) all their meanings [must be] identical;
 - ii) they [must be] synonymous in all contexts;
 - iii) they [must be] semantically equivalent [...] on all dimensions of meaning, descriptive and non-descriptive.
- Synonymous words are not semantically equivalent in all contexts or at all levels (→ partial synonyms).

On synonymy

- Main types of variation characterizing pairs and triplets of near-synonymous words (Edmonds & Hirst 2002: 109)

Type of variation	Example
Abstract dimension	<i>seep:drip</i>
Emphasis	<i>enemy:foe</i>
Denotational, indirect	<i>error:mistake</i>
Denotational, fuzzy	<i>wood:forest</i>
Stylistic, formality	<i>pissed:drunk:inebriated</i>
Stylistic, force	<i>ruin:annihilate</i>
Expressed attitude	<i>skinny:thin:slim:slender</i>
Emotive	<i>daddy:dad:father</i>
Collocational	<i>task:job</i>
Selectional	<i>pass away:die</i>
Subcategorization	<i>give:donate</i>

My research

Franceschi, D. (forthcoming), *Near-synonyms of Anglo-Saxon and Latinate origin: the structure of semantic variation*. Springer.

Franceschi, D. (2020), More on English aspectual verbs: a lexicographic investigation of *start*. In: Béjoint, H. & Nuccorini, S. (Eds.) (2020), *Textus - English Studies in Italy* 33(1):165-182.

Franceschi, D. (2019), Anglo-Saxon and Latinate synonyms: the case of *speed* vs. *velocity*. *International Journal of English Linguistics* 6(9): 356-364.

My approach & analysis

- Synonymy is a conceptual relation regulated by distinct, but interacting meaning-making processes.
- Nine main types of processes or relations:

Type of relation	Tag
Generic-specific	GEN>SPE
Specific-generic	SPE>GEN
Literal-figurative (metaphor)	LIT>FIG (MTP)
Literal-figurative (metonymy)	LIT>FIG (MTN)
Figurative-literal	FIG> LIT
Focus shift	FOC
Implicature shift	IMP
Cause-effect	CAU-EFF
Iconicity	ICO

Data & method of analysis

- Data: 165 pairs of Anglo-Saxon and Latinate ‘equivalents’ in English selected from the California State University Northridge website and Wikipedia:

<https://www.csun.edu/science/ref/language/german-latin-english.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Germanic_and_Latinate_equivalents_in_English

- Analysis: comparison of lexical entries in the OED → substitutability and interchangeability test (ad hoc searches via English-Corpora.org and Google Books).

Data



INTERNET RESOURCES TO ACCOMPANY
THE SOURCEBOOK FOR TEACHING SCIENCE

NORMAN HERR, PH.D.
Professor of Science Education
California State University, Northridge

COPYRIGHT 2007

Sourcebook Home | Biology | Chemistry | Physics | Geoscience | Reference | Search | CSUN

Germanic & Latinate Equivalents in the English Language

Germanic	Latinate	Germanic	Latinate	Germanic	Latinate
anger	rage	friendly	amicable	old	ancient
ask	inquire	give	provide	other	different
baby	infant	gladness	joy pleasure delight	seem	appear
back	dorsum	go	depart	sheep lamb	mutton

Science Teaching Series

[The Sourcebook for Teaching Science](#)
[Hands-On Physics Activities](#)
[Hands-On Chemistry Activities](#)

Internet Resources

I. Developing Scientific Literacy

- 1 - [Building a Scientific Vocabulary](#)
- 2 - [Developing Science Reading Skills](#)
- 3 - [Developing Science Writing Skills](#)
- 4 - [Science, Technology & Society](#)

Data

List of Germanic and Latinate equivalents in English

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This list contains [Germanic](#) elements of the [English language](#) which have a close corresponding [Latinate](#) form. The correspondence is semantic—in most cases these words are not [cognates](#), but in some cases they are [doublets](#), i.e., ultimately derived from the same root, generally [Proto-Indo-European](#), as in *cow* and *beef*, both ultimately from PIE *gʷous.

The meanings of these words do not always correspond to Germanic cognates, and occasionally the specific meaning in the list is unique to English.

Those Germanic words listed below with a Frankish source mostly came into English through Anglo-Norman, and so despite ultimately deriving from Proto-Germanic, came to English through a Romance language (and many have cognates in modern Romance languages). This results in some Germanic doublets, such as *yard* and *garden*, through Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman respectively.

Contents [hide]

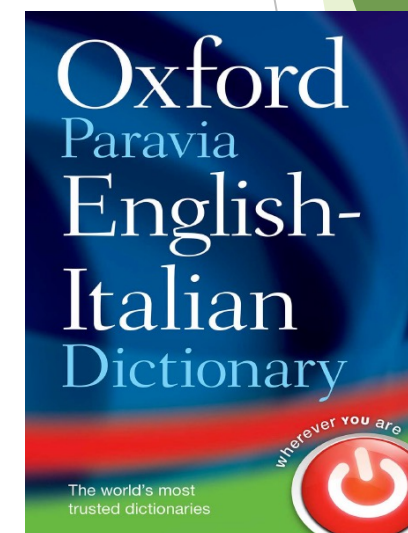
- [List of Germanic and Latinate equivalents in English](#)
- [Noun/adjective doublets](#)
- [See also](#)
- [Sources](#)

List of Germanic and Latinate equivalents in English [edit]

Old English <i>andswaru</i>	answer	response	responsum
<i>WGmc</i> * <i>aiskōn</i>	ask		
<i>PGmc</i> * <i>frignana</i>	frain		
<i>PGmc</i> * <i>besōkijana</i>	beseech	inquire request	<i>in + quaerere</i> <i>re + quaerere</i>
Old English <i>bedecian</i>	beg		
<i>PGmc</i> * <i>sōkijana</i>	seek		

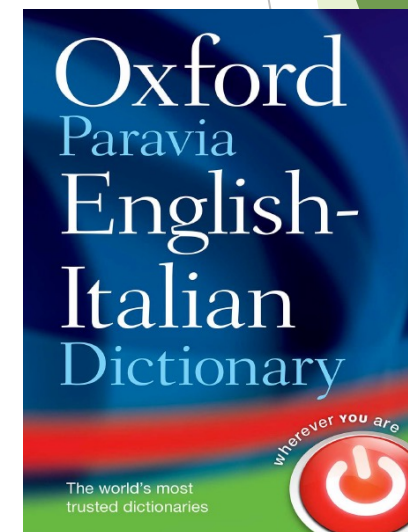
Abbreviations

abbreviazione	<i>abbr</i>	abbreviation
aggettivo	<i>adj</i>	adjective
amministrazione	<i>Admin</i>	administration
avverbio	<i>adv</i>	adverb
aeronautica, trasporti aerei	<i>Aer</i>	aviation, aeronautics
aggettivo	<i>agg</i>	adjective
agricoltura	<i>Agr</i>	agriculture
americano	<i>Am</i>	American
amministrazione	<i>Amm</i>	administration
anatomia	<i>Anat</i>	anatomy
origine anglosassone	<i>AS orig</i>	Anglo-Saxon origin



Abbreviations

abbreviazione	<i>abbr</i>	abbreviation
origine latina	<i>Lt orig</i>	Latinate origin
linguistica	<i>Ling</i>	linguistics
letterale	<i>lit</i>	literal
letterario	<i>liter</i>	literary



Tags & labels

Type of relation

Generic-specific

Specific-generic

Literal-figurative (metaphor)

Literal-figurative (metonymy)

Figurative-literal

Focus shift

Implicature shift

Cause-effect

Iconicity

Tag

GEN>SPE

SPE>GEN

LIT>FIG (MTP)

LIT>FIG (MTN)

FIG> LIT

FOC

IMP

CAU-EFF

ICO



SIZE

DEGREE

MERONOMY

OPPOSITION

...



Tags & usage notes

isle

noun [C]

UK /aɪl/ US

STYLE
SYNONYM

sometimes literary/poetic
island (GEN)

island (AS orig) is
generic



an island, often used in the name of a particular island:

- *the British Isles*



Tags & usage notes

island

noun [C]

UK  /'aɪlənd/ US 

STYLE
SYNONYM

neutral

isle (SPE) 

SIZE

an *isle* (Lt orig) is specific (a type of ~, usu smaller)

A2

an area of land that has water around it:

- *the Caribbean island of Grenada*
- *the Hawaiian Islands*

— More examples

- *a Mediterranean island*
- *a remote island.*
- *an island off the coast of Spain*
- *in the extreme south of the island*
- *an island with clean, unspoiled beaches*

Tags & usage notes

vend *verb*

🔊 /vend/

🔊 /vend/

(formal)

+ Verb Forms

STYLE
SYNONYM

formal
sell (GEN)

sell (AS orig) is
generic

★ **vend something** to sell something

+ Word Origin

Tags & usage notes

sell *verb*



/sel/

/sel/

+ Verb Forms

Idioms

Phrasal Verbs

exchange for money

1 ★ [transitive, intransitive] to give something to somebody in exchange for money

- **sell (something)** *I recently sold my bike.*
- *His father went bankrupt and the family had to sell their home.*
- *The board agreed to sell the company.*
- *The shares were sold in the open market.*
- *We offered them a good price but they wouldn't sell.*
- **sell something to somebody** *The council is **planning to sell** the land to developers for housing.*
- **sell something to somebody for something** *I sold my car to James for £800.*
- **sell somebody something (for something)** *I sold James my car for £800.*
- **sell something at something** *They sold the business **at a profit/loss** (= they gained/lost money when they sold it).*
- **sell at something** *They sold at a loss.*
- *They never buy more than they can **sell at a good price**.*

STYLE
SYNONYM

neutral
vend (SPE)

vend (Lt orig) is more specific, i.e. 'selling esp as a peddler or via a machine'

Some conclusions

- ❖ The differences between Anglo-Saxon and Latinate near-synonyms result also from semantic constraints and/or expectancies.
- ❖ This initial taxonomy is not exhaustive. There may be other types of unidentified meaning relations.
- ❖ Need to examine a wider data set and determine quantitatively the frequencies of the various types of relations. This may be a difficult task → cases of word pairs whose relation can be described in terms of more than one of the categories described here (e.g. *work* vs *labour*):
 - ❑ Difference of implicature (*labour* suggests intense, difficult, painful, alienated or even exploited physical or mental exertion);
 - ❑ General-specific relation (*labour* is more specific in terms of degree of intensity associated with the basic concept of ‘working’);
 - ❑ Cause-effect relation: *labour* is ‘work considered as [...] necessary [...] for the execution of a particular task’. (OED)/*Division of labour leads to the monotonicity of work* (Google Books).

Some conclusions

- ❖ Expand the analysis to word triplets (why just doublets?), e.g. *ban*, *forbid* vs *prohibit*, and carefully observe the collocational behaviour of the various lexical items.
- ❖ Further develop and systematize an easily applicable coding system of meaning relations usable for lexicographic purposes.
- ❖ Propose the coding system to dictionary editors!



References

- ❖ Burnley, D. 1992. Lexis and semantics. In Blake, N. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language*. Vol. II: 1066-1476. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 409-99.
- ❖ Chamizo-Domínguez, P. J. 2008. *Semantics and Pragmatics of False Friends*. New York, NY/Abingdon, UK.
- ❖ Church, K. W., Gale, W., Hanks, P., Hindle, D. and Moon, R. 1994. Lexical substitutability. In: Atkins, B. T. S. and Zampolli, A. (eds.), *Computational approaches to the lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 153-77.
- ❖ Croft, W. and Cruise, D. A. 2004. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Cruse, A. 1986. *Lexical semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Cruse, A. 2000. *Meaning in language*. An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Cuyckens, H., Dirven, R. & Taylor, J.R. 2003. *Cognitive Approaches to Lexical Semantics*. Berlin/New York: Mouton De Gruyter.
- ❖ Durkin, P. 2014. *Borrowed words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Durkin, P. 2020. The relationship of borrowing from French and Latin in the Middle English period with the development of the lexicon of Standard English: Some observations and a lot of questions. *The Multilingual Origins of Standard English*, edited by Laura Wright, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 343-364.

References

- ❖ Edmonds, P. and Hirst, G. 2002. *Near-Synonymy and Lexical Choice*. *Computational Linguistics*, 28(2):105-144.
- ❖ Edmonds, P. 1999. *Semantic representation of near-synonyms for automatic lexical choice*. Doctoral thesis, University of Toronto.
- ❖ Evens, M. W., Litowitz, B. E., Markowitz, J. A., Smith, R. N. and Werner, O. 1980. *Lexical-semantic relations*. Edmonton: Linguistic Research.
- ❖ Geeraerts, D. 2006. Methodology in Cognitive Linguistics. In Kristiansen et al. (eds.) *Cognitive Linguistics: Applications and Future Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- ❖ Geeraerts, D. 2010. *Theories of lexical semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Hanks, P. 2010. Immediate Context Analysis: distinguishing meanings by studying usage. In C. Heffer and H. Sauntson (eds.), *Words in Context: A Tribute to John Sinclair on his Retirement*. University of Birmingham, ELR Discourse analysis Monograph No. 18, pp.10-30.
- ❖ Hanks, Patrick 2013. *Lexical Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- ❖ Jackson, H. 1988. *Words and their meaning*. London: Longman.

References

- ❖ Kempson, R. M. 1977. *Semantic theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Leech, G. 1981. *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- ❖ Lyons, J. 1985. *Linguistic semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Minkova, D./Stockwell, R. 2006. English Words. In A. Bas & A. McMahon (Eds.), *The Handbook of English Linguistics*, pp. 461-482.
- ❖ Murphy, M. L. 2003. *Semantic Relations and the Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Palmer, F. R. 1981. *Semantics* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.