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LEXICOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF ANGLO-SAXON AND LATINATE NEAR-SYNONYMS IN ENGLISH MONOLINGUAL AND ENGLISH-ITALIAN BILINGUAL LEARNERS' DICTIONARIES

Keywords Anglo-Saxon; Latinate; near-synonyms; lexical-semantic change; lexicographic representations

It is a known fact that the lexicon of English consists of a basic indigenous vocabulary of Germanic origin with many foreign borrowings especially from French, Latin and Greek. According to Minkova/Stockwell (2006), only 31,8% of the 10,000 most frequent words in the spoken component of the BNC are of Anglo-Saxon origin, while over 60% of them are loanwords that were imported into English from the classical languages, typically via French. This has produced an etymologically diverse word-stock characterized by distinct features (Baugh/Cable 1993; Hughes 2000; Durkin 2014, 2020): the Anglo-Saxon core is made up of morphologically simple and semantically indispensable words referring to common concepts and situations from everyday life, e. g. body parts (*hand*, *foot*, *arm*), animals (*horse*, *cow*, *sheep*), elements of the natural landscape (*land*, *field*, *hedge*), etc.; on the other hand, borrowed (non-Anglo-Saxon) words tend to be polysyllabic and to have a higher level of phonological complexity (e. g., *abdomen*, *cerebellum*, *halitosis*), in addition to describing more elaborate and abstract notions from various areas of specialization, e. g. politics (*capitalism*, *administration*, *bureaucracy*), economics (*money*, *commerce*, *finance*), law (*jurisdiction*, *constitution*, *justice*), etc. In many cases, the addition of Latinate words has produced a duplication of meanings which now complement those of the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon words.

The aim of this presentation is twofold: it intends to provide an initial analysis and a preliminary classification of the meaning relations holding between Anglo-Saxon and Latinate equivalents in contemporary English (Franceschi 2019), such as *speed*/*velocity*, *sweat*/*perspire*, *lunatic*/*insane*, *before*/*prior*, etc. from the theoretical perspective of cognitive lexical semantics, and then discuss the possible lexicographic representations of these relations in English monolingual and English-Italian bilingual learners' dictionaries.

Previous studies within the field of lexical semantics (Bauer 1998; Burnley 1992; Cruse 1986, 2000; Firth 1951; Geeraerts 2010; Hanks 2013, 2015; Hoey 1991; Leech 1981; Sinclair 1998; Pinnavaia/Brownlees (eds.) 2010; among others) have only marginally addressed the phenomenon of near-synonymy when it involves words of different origin; those works that focus more specifically on synonymy (Murphy 2003, 2010) tend to explain meaning variation in terms of contextual use, i. e. they are pragmatics oriented. After an in-depth analysis of both empirical data from corpora and Google Books as well as of example sentences accompanying lexical entries in dictionaries, it has instead been possible to observe that pairs of apparently equivalent words actually present differences at the level of semantics, too. It thus makes sense to explain variation in terms of truth values before addressing the non-denotational differences between them. The use of a near-synonym may for instance be justified by the need to expand or restrict the semantic "contour" of an already existing word.

There are a series of cognitive factors that appear to motivate the use of words borrowed from Latin and French. In addition to causing the narrowing or broadening of the meaning of the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon items through metonymy, meronymy and metaphor, Latinate words also seem to determine semantic shifts of focus, Aktionsart, implicature, etc.

Monolingual and bilingual dictionaries of English, however, tend to distinguish between etymologically unrelated synonyms and only in terms of style, register and connotation: Latin-based words are typically labelled as (more) formal, technical or as belonging to a specialized domain, e.g. medicine, biology, engineering, and so on. Examples sentences do not always clarify the limits of substitutability and interchangeability between near-synonyms, nor do they motivate restrictions on semantic grounds. It would instead be appropriate to provide information regarding the connections and the processes of meaning differentiation between Anglo-Saxon and Latinate words through codes, labels and/or usage notes. This metadata would be particularly useful for learners of English whose L1 is a Romance language. Italian EFL learners, for instance, often struggle with words such as *velocity*, *embrace*, *courageous*, etc., in that they are similar in form to their Italian counterparts, i.e., *velocità*, *abbracciare*, *coraggioso/a*, but which cannot be used in the same way, because they are either false friends (Chamizo-Domínguez 2008; Ferguson 1994) or partial cognates and thus different in their scope of reference. A lexicographic improvement with respect to the representation of what appear as recurrent patterns in near-synonymous relations is thus called for. Some examples of possible, finer-grained metadata will be provided.

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