Doublets

A Study of Old Norse Influence on English Vocabulary

B.A. Essay

Arna Rún Sesarsdóttir

Kt.: 280783-4719

Supervisor: Þórhallur Eyþórsson

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Abstract

Considerable remnants of Scandinavian settlers are to be found in England, not in terms of ruins or such material, but in the English language. The English vocabulary is made up of an estimated 70 percent loanwords from several languages and despite not knowing exactly how many of these words are of Scandinavian origin, it is safe to say that the number is substantial as many of them are in the everyday vocabulary of the English. This means that Scandinavian, or Old Norse, had great influence on the evolution of the English language, and that relationship will be studied to an extent focusing on loanwords and doublets, although the latter will be main subject of this thesis. Loanwords are words of a foreign origin which have been inserted into the language borrowing the word and adapted to its grammar rules. Doublets are word pairs, often of a different origin, standing side by side, co-existing in modern vocabulary. Usually one of the two words has entered the language as a loanword from a different language, in this case Old Norse, whilst the other is a native word. The main focus of this essay will be on doublets and the specific differences between the examined word-pairs as well as plausible reasons for these differences. The findings of the study reveal that the words which make up each doublet pair do not always have the same ancestor, in which case it is quite difficult to understand how the words formed into a doublet. The categorisation of the doublets may shed light on the reason for the pairings, as there are five different groups of doublets; morphological, lexical, cognate, etymological and semantic.
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1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis the etymology of the English language will be reviewed, its influential factors and the relationship between Old Norse and modern English in the form of loanwords and lexical doublets, many of which are still in use today. The main focus of this essay will be doublets and what the differences within the pairs are and the reason for these differences. The evolution of the English language has a long history, and is essentially divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English and Modern English. However, in the beginning the English language did not even exist as such; it only started to evolve into what we know as Old English as the settlers brought their languages, Old Norse, French, Frisian, and Latin among others, to England and came in contact with each other.

The period extending from the 8th century on to the 12th is known as the Old English period. Old English is such an old language that any speaker of Modern English would have great difficulty understanding old manuscripts such as Beowulf for instance.

The time between the 12th and 16th century is called Middle English. In 1066 the Normans invaded England and fought the Battle of Hastings from which they emerged victoriously. This battle is also known as the Norman Conquest. During this time the language of the Norman invaders, Franco-Norman, slowly began to take over as the language to be spoken and English, as it was then, slowly lost its ground. After that, French took over as the language of the courts and aristocracy. However, after the middle class protested at the increased use of French, English was put in legislation. The English language by that time had become more simplified than before as cases, numbers and declensions changed, as well as the Roman alphabet having replaced the Runic one.

From the 16th century onward is a period known as Modern English, which is again divided into three periods; Early Modern English, Late Modern English, and Contemporary English (History of the English Language, n.d.).

1.1 ON OLD ENGLISH

There were four major dialects of Old English: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish (Hurley, n.d.). On page 79 in his book, Geipel (1971) discusses the provincial speech of the old Danelaw and he is quite sure that it is not as replete with Nordicisms as it was before, although there are communities in the north and north-west of England which seem to have retained quite a substantial number of Scandinavian expressions,
even to this day. He also mentions that as recently as 1967, it would still have been possible for a Swedish investigator to remark of one particular dialect, that of West Riding, and that the same investigator would soon find the dialect to be saturated with Norse words. Further on in his book, Geipel (1971) gives us examples of documents which were written in the Orkneys and Shetland in Scandinavian. A text document written in 1426 in the Orkneys is written in Scandinavian and another document written in Shetland about 200 years later also written in Scandinavian. The Orkney document was written about forty years before the islands were pledged to Scotland and the Shetland document about 150 years after the pledging. According to Thomason and Kaufman, the dialects of the north appear to be structurally simpler than those of ME, and are more influenced by Norse (p.276). In their book, they examine the differences between Northern ME English and Southern (p. 276-77). They do so by listing the differences between Northumbrian OE and West Saxon. Northumbrian is the ancestor of Northern ME and West Saxon represents the South. Let us consider the first two items on their list of differences. The first item is the loss of the vowel /i/ in early West Germanic languages in the second and third person singular of the present indicative of strong verbs. Old Northumbrian retains the vowel /e/. The second item is the dropping of word-final /n/ in inflectional suffixes, except in past participles of strong verbs and in the preterit plural. This meant that when post-tonic short vowels all merged as schwa, weak nouns had no distinctive case or number forms, and the infinitive and the subjunctive plural did not have a distinctive ending.

2 OLD NORSE SPREADS TO ENGLAND

2.1 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN OLD NORSE AND THE PRE-EXISTING ANGLO-SAXON

Old Norse, or Scandinavian, essentially consists of Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Icelandic. Despite being closely related, there were differences, and these differences would come to influence different dialects within English as the Scandinavians started to settle in different parts of England. In The Viking Legacy, John Geipel says that the languages of the Angles and the Saxons, and the language of the Scandinavians were in fact so similar that the incorporation of Norse elements into English did not violate the English sound-system. Furthermore, Geipel mentions the ‘Saga of Gunnlaugr Serpent’

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Tongue’, written around the year 1200, in which it is stated that the languages spoken in Norway and England were the same (Sanz 2000, 54).

‘How then,’ one might ask, ‘did Old Norse, or Scandinavian, spread to England?’ England is a country open to external influence because it has a large coastline, and that facilitates changes brought by people from other countries coming to England by ships. This is what happened when Old Norse started making its way into the English language. Of course, the language spoken in England at that time was not like the English spoken today. The language has undergone extensive changes through these hundreds of years; changes in vowels, spelling, pronunciation, and inflection among others. The effects of Old Norse on English were brought about by tradesmen coming to England by ships, and even more so, when Scandinavians started to settle in England. Scandinavians lived in settlements of their own before spreading out further, but still needed to have contact with native English people. Fortunately, Old Norse, or Scandinavian, was very similar to Old English, the language spoken at the time, and that is how Scandinavians could make themselves understood to English people and vice versa. Similarities between Old English and Old Norse were for example a few letters found in the Roman alphabet, which had been introduced by Irish missionaries. These are æ (ash), þ (thorn), and ð (eth). These are not used in Modern English.

English is, as mentioned above, a language made up of several languages, tracing its official start back to the year 449, when Germanic tribes reached the British Isles (Gelderen, p.2). It has been argued by several scholars that Middle English (1100-1500) was a creole. A creole is a fully functional product of the pidgin, acquired by children. A pidgin, however, is, as Elly van Gelderen says (p. 106) in her book A History of the English Language, “[…] a language that comes into being when speakers of different languages need to communicate”. She continues (p. 267):

[...] a pidgin is a language learned by adults in cases of intense language contact between very different languages and is typically used in limited domains e.g. trade.

The argument, she says, is that, “due to French-English contact, a pidgin must have arisen that then developed into a creole characteristics: SVO word order and lack of verbal and nominal endings.”
If Middle English was a creole then it is very plausible that Old Norse contributed to that evolution, despite the fact that Old English and Old Norse were so similar that speakers of each language could understand each other. Old Norse must have contributed to the process of pidginising English.

2.2 Old Norse effects on the English language

The incorporation of Scandinavian loan words into the English vocabulary caused a meaning shift in the original sense of the word. Examples of this are the words gift and dream. The meaning of the word gift was not always as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

1. a notable capacity, talent, or endowment
2. something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation
3. the act, right, or power of giving

The original meaning of the word was ‘payment for a wife’, but the Old Norse meaning had shifted and caused the change that led to the modern meaning of the word.

The same happened with the word dream. The modern meaning of the word, according to Merriam-Webster, is:

1. a series of thought, visions, or feelings that happen during sleep
2. An idea or vision that is created in your imagination and that is not real
3. Something that you have wanted very much to do, be, or have for a long time

The meaning of the word in Old English is ‘joy’ and becomes ‘vision in sleep’ (Geldereren 2006, 96).

Scandinavian affected Old English beyond its vocabulary, it also affected the grammar. It introduced the third person plural they, them, their (Geldereren, 98). The process of English losing its inflectional morphemes was sped up by Scandinavian, which also left its mark on place-names in England. These place-names can often be recognized by their endings; -by, -thorpe, -toft, -holme, -kirk, -thwaite, -wick, -borough, and –ness (Place-names in the Danelaw, 2004).
The languages of the natives and the invaders were completely fused into one language in a matter of merely five or six generations due to the close inhabitation of the two groups (Geipel, 14). Despite that, the effects that Old Norse had on the English language are to be seen, for example, in the consonants Y and CH. These consonants, G and K respectively, in Old Norse, have a hard articulation before front vowels E, I, Y in Norse, whilst they have been palatalized in English. This causes the correspondences we see in words such as yarn/garn, chest/kista, and shroud/skruð. And so, when examining words displaying an occlusive G or K, Old Norse is generally considered to be the influential factor leading to this. Instances of Norse substitution are fairly rare in English but they do, however, exist, and they are most commonly found in the north and Scotland, where the influence was the most intense. Writers often tended to favour the Scandinavian spelling over the native one, and this has also left its mark on the dialects, influencing the pronunciation of words such as yarn, where it is often substituted by garn, or yard, often substituted by garth (Geipel, 19-20). In 1169, there were still Norse speaking communities in the ‘Ostman’ ports of Ireland, and a form of Norse was still to be found on the Isle of Man up until the fifteenth century (Geipel, 56). In 1851, the Danish archaeologist J. J. A. Worsaae wrote in his book, *Minder om Danske og Nordmændene i England, Skotland og Irland*, that in the north of England there were many words and phrases that, while unknown or incomprehensible to people of other parts of the country, would sound very familiar to a Northman, and these words are commonly used in daily life (Worsaae, 1851, 113-114).

2.3 **SOUND-CHANGES IN OLD ENGLISH AND OLD NORSE**

Here we see a shortened list, although displaying the most important information from Townend’s book, of the sound-changes that have taken place in both Old English and Old Norse. These sound-changes have played a part in the formation of doublets, as there have been palatalisations of consonants, mutations of vowels and umlauts among others. We will now review these changes.

2.3.1 **Vowels.**

2.3.1.1 **Breaking, umlaut / i-mutation, Back mutation / fracture**

a) Breaking of vowels took place in Old English: What happens in a breaking of vowels is that front vowels were diphthongised before certain velar
consonants or consonant-clusters. This means that \( i \) became \( io \), \( e \) became \( eo \) and \( æ \) became \( ea \) when occurring before \( h \), \( h + \) consonant, \( r + \) consonant, and \( l + \) consonant. For example the Proto-Germanic form of the word ‘earth’. Before breaking of vowels, it would have been written \( erþō \) and after breaking it became \( eorþe \). (Howell, 1991). A process similar to the breaking of vowels in Old English, took place in Old Norse, but it did so under other conditions than in Old English. There were different constrictions determining the process of the breaking, \( e \) became \( ja \) if followed by \( a \), for example \( berg > bjarg \), \( e \) became \( jø \) if followed by \( u \), for example \( fell > fjöll \).

b) Umlaut was a process involving sound-changes in Old Norse. Matthew Townend explains three types of umlaut in his book (35):
the \( a – \) umlaut, \( i – \) umlaut, and the Labial umlaut.
What happens in

- \( a – \) umlaut: when \( i \) was followed in the next syllable by \( a, o \) or \( æ \), it would be lowered to \( e \).

- \( i – \) umlaut. The process of \( i – \) umlaut is similar to what takes place in Old English \( i – \) mutation, that is, when front vowels were followed by \( i \) or \( j \), they would be raised, and back vowels would be fronted – \( æ \) became \( e \), \( a \) became \( æ \), \( u \) became \( y \). And so, the corresponding process in Old Norse would be that \( a \) became \( e \), \( á \) became \( æ \) and \( o \) became \( ø \), and \( au \) became \( ey \). Examples of \( æ > e \), \( a > æ \) and \( u > y \) are taken from R. F. S. Hamer (1967).
An example of \( æ > e \) is Gmc \( *rakjan > reccan \) meaning ‘to narrate’, and \( a \) having earlier become \( æ \).
An example of \( a > æ \) is Prim. OE word \( farþ > færþ \) which means ‘he goes’.
And an example of \( u > y \) is Gmc \( *gulden > gylden \) ‘golden’.

- The third, and final umlaut is known as Labial Umlaut, which subdivides into \( u \)-umlaut and \( w \)-umlaut. In Labial Umlaut unrounded vowels, such as \( a, e, i, \) and \( ey \) would become rounded \( ø, ø, y, ey \) respectively.
c) Another sound change in this category is Back mutation of vowels which took place in Old English. It caused short vowels to be diphthongised if followed by a single consonant and a back vowel, *i* became *io*, *e* became *eo*. A corresponding process in Old Norse is known as fracture, which involves *e* to be broken to *ea* if followed in the next syllable by *a* or *u* unless preceded by *w*, *l*, or *r* or followed by *h*. An example of *i>io* and *e>eo* is *libban* ‘to live’ > *leofan*. Since later *io>eo* in West Saxon the result always appears as *eo*.

2.3.1.2 Diphthongisation

A diphthong is the sound formed by a combination of vowels (diphthong, n.d). Hence, diphthongisation is the change of a monophthong (a vowel that has a single perceived auditory quality, (monophthong, n.d.)) into a diphthong.

a) In Old English there was a process called Palatal Diphthongisation. This involved the diphthongisation of the front vowels *e* and *æ* after palatal *g*, *c*, *sc* into *ie* and *ea* respectively. Example of *e>ie* is *geaf* > *giefan* ‘to give’ (Hamer, R. 1967, 16).

b) The diphthongisation in Old Norse was a little different. The diphthongs would be raised from the first element to the second.

2.3.1.3 Monophthongisation

A third sound-change concerning vowels is one that took place in Old English and involves a monophthongisation of diphthongs, which is a reversal of the process occurring in diphthongisation. There are generally three types of this process.

a) Anglian Smoothing.

Before the consonants *c*, *g*, and *h*, all diphthongs were monophthongised, as well as before consonant clusters *r* or *l+c, g, or h*. This means that *ea* became *æ*, *eo* became *e*, and *io* became *i*. Examples of this are Anglian *maht, ferh, hēh* corresponding to *meaht, feorh, hēah* respectively in West Saxon (Old English Sound Changes, 1954, 29).
b) ‘Unstable i’. ie was, in early West Saxon, monophthongised to a so-called ‘unstable i’ and would later be rounded to y.

c) Late West Saxon Smoothing. A monophthongisation of ea to e before c, g, and h and after c, g, and sc took place in Late West Saxon.

2.3.1.4 Labialisation and Delabialisation
The fourth sound-change to take place was in late West Saxon which involved i becoming y when in proximity to labial consonants m, b, p, and y to become i when in proximity to palatal consonants g, k, j, ŋ (a symbol for the sound ng (IPA symbol: [ŋ], n.d.).

Monophthongisation and Labialisation/Delabialisation do not have a corresponding process in Old Norse.

2.3.2 Consonants

2.3.2.1 Rhotacism
A process in which the Germanic z became r took place in both Old Norse and Old English. The Indo-European s became voiced [z] in some instances because a preceding vowel was not accented. Later the [z] passed to r. (Robertson & Cassidy, 1954, 138).

2.3.2.2 Loss of nasal consonants m, n, ŋ
a) Old English – before voiceless fricatives f, ð, s, compensated for with the lengthening of the preceding vowel

b) Old Norse – only lost n when it occurred before s.

2.3.2.3 Gemination
a) Old English – a doubling of all consonants except r between a short vowel and when following j, between a short vowel, and also when following r or l. An example of this is nn in thinness (gemination, n.d.).

b) Old Norse – g and k were the only consonants doubled between a short vowel and following j, sometimes between a short vowel and following w.
2.3.2.4 Gmc ð > d.
   a) Old English – Gmc ð became d in all positions.

   b) Old Norse – ð became d only when occurring after l or n.

2.3.2.5 Palatalisation and Assibilation.
This process only took place in Old English, affected k and g, and involved an allophonic distinction between palatal and velar k and g. Palatal k and g developed before and sometimes after front vowels or diphthongs with a front first element. Velar k and g remained before back vowels and all consonants. An example of this is German Kinn and English chin (Robertson & Cassidy, 1954, 81).

2.3.2.6 Metathesis.
Is a process in which sounds can be changed or moved within a word and thus creating a new word.
   r – metathesis occurred in Old English. Ex: Orpah > Oprah
   s – metathesis occurred in Old English.
   l – metathesis occurred in Old English as well as Old Norse in the combinations fl, sl and ðl (dl) becoming lf, ls, and ld.

2.3.2.7 Sharpening
A consonantal development only occurring in Old Norse in which medial jj and ww become ggj and ggv respectively.

2.3.2.8 Loss of /j/.
Loss of the semi-vowel j in initial position, and medially except before back vowels only in Old Norse.

2.3.2.9 Loss of /w/.
In Old Norse the semi-vowel w was lost in all positions except before non-rounded vowels or before r followed by a non-rounded vowel. An example of this is the word knee. In its Proto-Germanic form it was written knewam (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). In Old English the spelling was cneowes (gen. sg).which then became cnēo. (Old English Sound Changes, 1954, 23)
2.3.2.10 Assimilation.

Assimilation is a process by which a speech sound becomes similar or identical to a neighbouring sound. Assimilation of consonants in Old Norse was an attempt to simplify the new consonant-clusters that would arise. The main clusters that were assimilated were nasals, \( R, h \) and \( \delta \) as follows:

2.3.2.10.1 Progressive assimilations:

a phoneme (the smallest phonetic unit in a language that is capable of conveying a distinction in meaning (phoneme, n.d.)) influences another phoneme that comes after it. (Progressive assimilation, n.d.).

\[
mp > pp, \ nk > kk, \text{ and } nt > tt \\
Rd > dd, \text{ and } Rn > nn \\
h\delta > tt \\
\delta l > ll \\
\delta t > tt
\]

2.3.2.10.2 Regressive assimilations:

a process in which a phoneme influences another phoneme that comes before it. (Regressive assimilation, n.d.)

\[
l\beta > ll \text{ and } n\beta > nn
\]

2.3.2.11 Loss of consonants in final unaccented syllables.

This process was more advanced in Old Norse than Old English. The most notable loss of a consonant in a final unaccented syllable is \(-n\) which is still preserved in the infinitive in Old English, but not in Old Norse (OE *beran*, ON *bera*) (Townend, 40). Northumbrian, a dialect of Old English, also shows this loss of final unaccented syllables, thus rendering it similar to Old Norse.
3 LOANWORDS

3.1 DEFINITION OF LOANWORDS

English vocabulary is, as said above, of diverse origin, having borrowed words from various languages such as French, Old Norse, and Latin among others. Whilst being a language of which the vocabulary is made up of many other languages, English has nevertheless influenced other languages of the world as the world evolves and technology advances. English is a world language, a lingua franca, and English technical words and terms are often adopted into a language along with new technology, sometimes consolidating in the language. When a word is adopted from one language and inserted into another, that same word becomes a loanword. The word is then modified in order to comply with the rules of grammar and pronunciation of the language borrowing the word. However, a word cannot be defined as a loanword unless the form of the Scandinavian word for example, is different from the corresponding English one. There are many loanwords in English but the exact number is unknown. It is, nonetheless, estimated by various linguists that all loanwords in the English vocabulary are in the region of 70%. That number, however, applies to all loanwords in the English language, not only those of Old Norse origin (Şekerci, 2007). This percentage may also be dictionary count. How does one recognize a loanword? Is it possible at all to know by just looking at a word? The answer is yes, in many cases it is indeed possible to know if a word is of a Norse origin, and the key feature providing the clue to the origin of the word are clusters such as [sk]. This sound sequence would have been palatalized in Old English but not in Scandinavian. In Scandinavian there was also a special development, known as the Faroese hardening which involved an unexpected consonantism as in the word egg with a final /g/, where the Old English word would probably have been homophonous with the word aeg [æj] ‘eye’ (The Scandinavian period, n.d.). Words of native origin would, for example, be ship, shin, shall, whilst words of Scandinavian origin would be sky, skin, skill (The Scandinavian period, n.d.). Old Norse contained certain words which were synonymous to corresponding Anglo-Saxon words, both of which still remain in the English vocabulary to this day. Not only do Old Norse words such as skill, want, and raise still survive in the English vocabulary, Old Norse also provided English with some grammatical forms. This is evident in the pronouns they, them and their which appear to have eclipsed the native forms he, hem and hire. The reason for the Scandinavian terms
(they, them, their) having succeeded is probably due to the fact that the native terms (he, hem, hire) were easily confused. The Scandinavian form eliminated the possibility of confusing the singular pronouns with the plural ones. Words that have survived from their appearance in vernacular manuscripts to modern times are, for example, knife, root, rag, score, snare, haven, die and hit (Geipel, 63).
4 DOUBLETS

4.1 DEFINITION OF DOUBLETS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Rev. Walter Skeat’s definition of doublets in his book *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1911, 648), is that “[d]oublets are words which, though apparently differing in form, are nevertheless, from an etymological point of view, one and the same, or only differ in some unimportant suffix.” That is to say, one can have two words that look nothing at all similar, and yet these two words can come from the same root, for example shirt/skirt (Linguistics 201, n.d.) or rear/raise (Hurley, n.d.). Doublets can also be cognates, that is, two words that share their origin. In order to understand how doublets come about, we need to have some knowledge of the background of the language. In English, as in other languages, sound-changes have taken place through the centuries, such as breaking, diphthongisation, i-mutation, back mutation, smoothing, labialisation, a-umlaut, i-umlaut, labial umlaut of vowels. With regard to consonants, there has been Rhotacism, loss of nasals, gemination, palatalisation, metathesis, ON loss of /j/ and /w/ and assimilation among others. Doublets are word-pairs consisting of two words from two different languages. In English, these pairs most commonly consist of one native word and one from Latin, Norse, or French for example. Words in the English vocabulary of Norse origin are numerous, many of which are used on everyday basis. Doublets in the English language are numerous, quite a few of which contain one word of Norse origin. They will, however, not all be enumerated in this thesis. As the next section will attempt a categorisation of the doublets, it is worth noting that of the five categories listed, two may very well be one and the same, namely etymological doublets and cognate doublets. The process of etymological doublets coming can be described as follows: a cognate word is borrowed from a related language and, subsequently, the borrowed word and the inherited (‘native’) word sit side by side but with different meaning (Nativlang.com. 2015). The definition of *etymology* according to merriam-webster.com is:

“the history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by analyzing it into its component parts,
by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognates to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language“

The meaning of the word ‘cognate’ according to merriam-webster.com is “linguistics: having the same origin”. These definitions, although different, basically tell us the same thing, that a word is etymologically related, or cognate, to another word if they share the same origin. For this reason, the two groups, etymological doublets and cognate doublets, will be joined together in one group called etymological cognates.

4.2 CATEGORISATION OF DOUBLETS

Based on the aforementioned the description of the sound-changes that have taken place, an effort will be made to categorise the pairs into the following four categories:

- Morphological doublets which "are pairs of synonymous complex words which share the same base but involve distinct formatives, e.g. two different affixes." (Nordquist, n.d.). The following doublets are considered to fit into this category according to the definition given:

  1. rear/raise – these two words have a common ancestor, Proto-Germanic *raiz-
  2. from/fro – the Proto-Germanic word from which the pair originates is *fra

- Lexical doublets which are pairs of words with very different spelling but the same meaning, for example brotherhood/fraternity (Ledesma, 147-152). The following pairs are put into this category for they are considered to fulfil given requirements.

  1. heaven/sky
  2. egg/edge (both words as verbs)
  3. hide/skin
• Etymological cognates. This category is made up of two groups; etymological doublets and cognates.
  - Etymological doublets “may occur when a cognate word is borrowed from a related language so that the inherited cognate and borrowed cognate sit side-by-side with different meanings. (Nativlang.com. 2015).
  - Cognate doublets – a cognate pair is known as doublets if the words are from within the same language, but as cognate doublets if the words have the same meaning but come from two distinct languages.

The definitions of the two categories are essentially the same, that is, a pair belonging to each category contains one word of inherited origin (‘native’) and one from another language, that is, a borrowed word. The following doublets fit in this category:

1. skirt/shirt
2. craft/skill
3. no/nay
4. from/fro
5. rear/raise
6. egg/edge (on a knife for example)
7. shatter/scatter

Whilst the above mentioned explanation of etymological doublets is quite simple there is another explanation which might only serve as to complicate the definition of this group because it seems to define etymological doublets in a different way. On wordhistories.com it says: Doublets (or etymological twins) are words in one given language that go back to the same etymological source but differ in form and meaning because they arrived at their present state by different routes.

It is difficult to categorize pairs into this group if we go by the definition just quoted, because it says that the words would differ in form AND meaning. However, if it were to say that the words would differ in form OR meaning then it would be fairly easy to put more pairs into this group than just the two mentioned above.
• Semantic doublets “may occur when one language borrows loanwords with similar meanings from another language, related or not.” (Nativlang.com. 2015). These doublets meet the given criteria of a semantic doublet:

1. hide/skin
2. rear/raise
3. craft/skill
4. heaven/sky
5. egg/edge

It appears as if the doublets have not been categorised before and therefore this thesis is but an attempt to categorise them. Considering that this discussion contains five categories of doublets, two of which have been combined, it is interesting to note that each pair discussed above appears to belong to either two or three categories, except the etymological cognate shirt/skirt which only belongs to this one category. This fact might lead one to assume that the definitions for each group are merely preliminary, which only goes to show that there is indeed great work still left to do in order to establish a clear-cut analyses for Old Norse doublets in English.

In order for both words in the pair to survive side by side, it is imperative that either of the two has, or develops, a different meaning (Baldi 1990, 83). Language is a living thing in the sense that it evolves and changes as time goes on (Linguistic Society of America, n.d).

As mentioned above the aim of this thesis is to examine several sets of doublets. These sets are: rear /raise, craft/skill, hide/skin, from/fro, no/nay, heaven/sky, shin/skin, shirt/skirt (Linguistics 201 n.d.).

How do doublets come into being? This question most likely requires a very complex answer as there are many factors that contribute to the process. Among these are language contact and the evolution of nations and their languages. English is often considered a hybrid language because the modern version of English contains many words of non-native origin. It has words of Latin origin, French and Old Norse among others. Palatalisation, or sound change, is another factor in how doublets came about. Old English words underwent palatalisation whereas Scandinavian words did not. This enabled the English to keep their native, palatalized word as well as incorporating the Old Norse, non-palatalized word into their vocabulary, thus having two distinct words stemming from the
same origin distinguished only by one sound difference. Following this sound change the
cognate doublets shirt/skirt, for example, appeared. Most of the words in the doublet sets
examined here are nouns, although there are also verbs, prepositions and adverbs.
To continue the discussion on how doublets came about, it is important that England be
split in two; north and south. On the website of the British Museum (Discover..., n.d.), we
can find a map of place-names of Old Norse origin in England. Looking at it, it is evident
that the vast majority of these names are to be found in the centre of modern England,
although quite a few can be found in Scotland and even in Ireland. However, not all the
place-names in central England have only Old Norse origin, some of them are formed by
a combination of languages, such as the name *Framwellgate*, found in North-East
England. *Framwellgate* is believed to be comprised of three languages; Old English –
Fram, Anglian – wella, and Old Norse – *gata*. It would appear that all, or at least most of
the place-names of Old Norse origin in Ireland are only made up of Old Norse. As we
move further east, into England, and south, it seems as if the place-names with their origin
in Old Norse are a combination of at least Old Norse and Old English. As we move further
up north, it is as if the number of place-names with Old Norse origin become fewer and
fewer. However, and this is an interesting fact, they also seem to be solely made up of
words of Old Norse origin. The fact that the place-names in Scotland are made up of Old
Norse words only could help explain why we still have such strong evidence of Old Norse
in Scotland, much stronger than further south, and it may be safe to say that the further
south we go, the fewer the remnants of Old Norse. Regarding the splitting up of England
into north and south. The reason for doing this when examining the doublets is that we
see differences in dialects when it comes to use of words; words of Old Norse origin are
more commonly used in the northern parts of England than in the south.
Doublets are sometimes due to a difference in dialect. Examples are seen in the Southern
English *ridge, bridge, birch, church, shred*, as distinct from the Northern *rig, brig, birk, kirk, screed*. Or they are due to the fact that we have sometimes borrowed a word from a
cognate language, when we already possessed it in our own; the reason being, probably,
that it was not used in precisely the same sense (Skeat 1887, 414-15).
4.3 EXAMINATION OF DOUBLETS

In this section the doublet pairs mentioned above will be summarised in terms of their origin and use in an attempt to establish the difference between each word in a pair and the reason for this difference. Appendix A shows a detailed discussion of each word in a pair; its obsolete meaning, if it exists, and also its modern meaning from the Oxford English Dictionary as well as the history of the word from etymonline.com which shows the language of origin of the words.

- raise/rear:

The following is taken from the OED on the word *rear*.

The main senses of *rear* run parallel with those of the Scandinavian equivalent *RAISE*, but the adopted word has been much more extensively employed than the native, and has developed many special senses which are rarely or never expressed by *rear*. Hence, on the one hand, *rear* has in many applications been almost or altogether supplanted by *raise*, [...].

The meaning of the verb ‘rear’ is, among others, in all sources used, applicable to the raising of children. The modern meaning of the word, according to Oxford English Dictionary, is still to raise a person. The difference is that the interpretation of the word has gone from raising a person *from* something for instance, to raising a child to its adulthood. Some argue that the modern sense of the word is applicable to animals and not humans, that there is a distinction between ‘rear’ and ‘raise’. However, in the example sentence the word is applied to children and their upbringing.

The modern meaning of the verb ‘raise’ is the same as the meaning of ‘rear’, and its obsolete meaning is to encourage, inspire. However, the first example of the word in its modern sense given in the OED is placed in the year 1744, while the example given of the modern meaning of ‘rear’ is said to be from 1558. The modern meaning of both words are overlapped by their obsolete meanings, ‘rear’ for 118 years (1558 first ex. of mod. mean., 1676 last ex. of obs. mean.), and ‘raise’ for 141 years (1744 first ex. of mod. mean., 1885 last ex. of obs. mean). The first example given in the OED of the obsolete meaning of the word ‘raise’ is from 1533, 25 years before the modern meaning of ‘rear’ is instated. Some 350 years pass before the modern meaning of the word is consolidated in the
English language. A distinction in the modern meaning of the two words is quite clear, ‘rear’ being more often applied to livestock and ‘raise’ to the human race, and possibly no way of determining if one of the words is dominant.

a) skill/craft

The modern meaning of the noun ‘craft’ is ‘skill or art applied to deceive or overreach; deceit, guile, fraud, cunning’. The modern meaning of the noun ‘skill’ is ‘capability of accomplishing something with precision and certainty; practical knowledge in combination with ability; cleverness, expertness.’ The meaning of the two is nowhere near the same, yet they both convey the same meaning. The obsolete meanings of each word are neither the same; ‘craft’ ‘an application of deceit; a trick, fraud, artifice.’, whilst the meaning of ‘skill’ was ’to make free or quit of.’ It is quite ambiguous as to the reason for how these two words came to be a pair for there seems to be no connection at all, and as mentioned above, the very definition of a doublet is “[d]oublets are words which, though apparently differing in form, are nevertheless, from an etymological point of view, one and the same, or only differ in some unimportant suffix” or as defined in The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Edition “One of two words derived from the same historical source by different routes of transmission, such as skirt from Scandinavian and shirt from English.“ In the case of this word pair one of the words comes from Old English and the other from Old Norse and they do not share the same meaning whatsoever. However, they might be considered to have a very similar meaning in modern English, for example when one is a very skilled artisan, he would be very good at his craft. Also, good craftsmanship means that the person that made a specific object is very skilled in his field of work. This sharing of a modern meaning might tell us that somewhere along the way these two words have intertwined and each gained a little meaning from the other.
b) hide/skin

The noun ‘hide’ is of an Old English origin and has an Old Norse cognate ‘húð’, whilst the noun ‘skin’ is of an Old Norse origin ‘skinn’. ‘Hide’ has alliterative collocation with hue in its obsolete form but in its modern meaning it is applied to the skin of larger animals whereas ‘skin’ is more commonly used to refer to the skin of smaller creatures and humans. It is quite obvious that Skeat’s definition of doublets does not apply to this word-pair as they do not have any part of their spelling in common. What they do share, however, is that each word describes the outermost layer on mammals. This may be the reason for the words being categorised as doublets, but they are not true doublets according to the definition applied in this thesis.

c) from/fro

In Old English ‘from’ fram denoted departure or movement away in time or space whereas in its modern meaning, if followed by a preposition of similar meaning, as out, out of, forth, off, each preposition serves to strengthen or supplement the sense of the other. Fro is from Old Norse frá, which is equivalent to fram, which thus makes it a doublet of from. Despite the OED giving an example of a ‘modern meaning’ of the word ‘fro’ it most likely is not used in everyday spoken English, although the saying ‘to and fro’ may be used at times.

d) no/nay

‘No’ is of Old English origin and used to give a negative answer to a question. Its modern use is still the same, but the word was used in an obsolete form after verbs of thinking or implying. ‘Nay’ is Old Norse origin and carries a twofold meaning: to convey a negative answer and also to emphasise an opinion being expressed, for example “he was good, nay, he was great!” Its modern meaning is to express negation, denial, etc.
e) heaven/sky

‘Heaven’ is of an Old English origin and used to refer to a place regarded in some religions as the abode of God and the angels, whereas its modern meaning refers to a region of space beyond the clouds or the visible sky. The obsolete form of the noun ‘sky’ is ‘a cloud’ singular, but its modern form refers to ‘the clouds’ plural, or, the heavens. Still to this day, there is a strong connection between ‘heaven’ and God, at least in Christianity. The same may apply to this word-pair as to the ‘hide/skin’ pair. They both cover the same subject but they have no common spelling. Hence, the subject may be the only reason pairs of this kind are categorised as doublets.

f) shin/skin:

‘Shin’ is of Old English origin referring to the bone between the knee and the ankle. ‘Skin’ is of Old Norse origin referring to the external covering of humans and animals. The two words do not seem to share any common origins, at least not if the word ‘shin’ is the original word. Hence, this pair really does not belong here at all, for the word do not even cover the same subject, unlike the ‘untrue’ doublets ‘hide/skin’ and ‘ski ll/craft’ which both are terms cover the same subject.

g) shirt.skirt:

‘Shirt’ is a word originating in Old English scyrte, meaning skirt or tunic. ‘Skirt’ originates in Old Norse skyrta, and refers to a woman’s garment hanging from the waist. The modern meaning of ‘shirt’ is, according to the OED, an undergarment for the upper part of the body, but it does refer to a piece of clothing for the upper body worn by both sexes. The modern meaning of ‘skirt’ is the lower part of a woman’s dress or gown, or a separate outer garment. In this pair we clearly see the very definition of doublets in action. These two words come from different language and their spelling is the same except for one letter.
h) egg/edge:

‘Egg’ is of Old Norse origin and refers to the sharp edge of a knife or the roundish reproductive body produced by the female of certain animals. The word can also be used as a verb, in which case it means to incite a person. ‘Edge’ is of Old English origin with the modern meaning to impart sharpness to a weapon or tool. The obsolete meaning would have been applied to people when referring to their inclination. The obsolete form of ‘egg’ appears to be non-existent except in a phrase such as to come in with five eggs: to break in fussily with an idle story.

There are many more doublets to be found within the English language, but the reason for their not being examined in this thesis is that they were not found to contain a word of Old Norse origin. English has its origin in so many languages that the possibility of there not being doublets with words tracing their origins to these other languages would be non-existent. A few doublets to mention of other origin than Old Norse are for example:

- Carve/Cut

Carve is a word of OE origin, the word ceorfan.

Cut is from the Middle English word cutten.

- Ship/Skipper

Ship is of an Old English origin from the word scip.

Skipper traces its origins back to the Middle Dutch word scipper.

- Shatter/Scatter

Shatter comes from the ME word schateren.

Scatter comes from the ME word scateren.
5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Results

rear/raise – the meaning of the two is very similar and, according to the OED, it has been from the onset. The OED places the first modern meaning of the word ‘rear’ in 1558 and ‘raise’ in 1744. As the first known use of the word ‘raise’ in its modern sense is in 1744 it took 350 years for it to consolidate in the vocabulary and has since been much more applied to the act of bringing up children than its counterpart, in the English language.

skill/craft – have quite a different meaning in its modern form but both still, in essence, mean the same thing, that is, to be good at something. The meaning of the two words having changed over the years, and the meaning of each word coming closer to the other, may tell us that somewhere along the way that the words have intertwined and gained a little meaning from each other.

hide/skin – as verbs the two words have the same meaning in terms of animals although ‘hide’ is more often used in reference to bigger animals and ‘skin’ to smaller ones.

from/fro – have the same meaning. ‘fro’ however is not used in the everyday language, it is more common in literature and poetry, often as to and fro.

no/nay – both words had a meaning of negation to begin with. The modern meaning is still the same for the word ‘no’ but for the word ‘nay’ the meaning has changed from being to convey negation, to being used for express emphasis.

heaven/sky – ‘heaven’ had a religious connotation and still does, but ‘sky’ refers to the skies (pl.) but used to refer to a cloud (sg.). To this day there is a strong connection between ‘heaven’ and God, but there has not been a special connection between ‘sky’ and God – it is as if ‘heaven’ is above the ‘sky’.

shin/skin – there does not appear to be any apparent connection between the two words because ‘shin’ refers to a bone whereas ‘skin’ refers to the outside lining of the body.
shirt/skirt – the only difference between these words seems to be a sound-change which led to the existence of two distinct words, as the original spelling of the ‘shirt’ was *scyrte*. This pair exhibits the very definition, according to Skeat, of doublets.

egg/edge – ‘egg’ appears to have a threefold meaning, two of which are the same as those of ‘edge’.

After reviewing literature on Old Norse loanwords and doublets in the English language it is very clear that Scandinavian had a big influence on the formation of English and had a had a big part in making English what it is today, for there are many place-names in England of Scandinavian origin, as well as there are many everyday words of Old Norse origin.

As was said in the introduction, the purpose of this essay was to examine word pairs in English known as doublets. The doublets up for examination were not all the doublets found in the English language, rather, the focus here was on word pairs in which one word is of Old Norse origin and the other of a native origin. Information was gathered on nine word pairs and subsequently an evaluation of said information performed and the doublets categorised according to the information provided by the definitions of each category of doublets. The doublets were the main focus point of the essay although some attention was given to influences of Old Norse in England other than in the context of doublets. A section discussed place-names all over England, where we saw that the influence of Old Norse was the greatest in the north of England and Scotland, although it stretched its way southward. In the north place-names are more often of purely Norse origin, in middle England they are of a mixed origin, that is, both Norse and native, and in the south they are primarily of native origin although some traces of the Norse influence is there to be found. It was also discussed that English might, in fact, be a creole, as it has its origin in several languages.
5.2 WIDER CONTEXT

The arrival of doublets into the English language would only serve as to increase its vocabulary, as it regained words with cluster [sk], which it had previously lost. What this meant was that English now had for example, words such as shirt/skirt, two words having very different meaning in Modern English despite coming from the same root. The English vocabulary contains many words of Old Norse origin, many of which are everyday words such as knife, law, skin, sky, egg and gift. Studies on words of Old Norse origin are more extensive than the studies on doublets. Although studies have been performed on the Old Norse/ Old English doublets, more extensive studies have been made on doublets containing words of other origin, such as French or Latin. Despite the surviving of words of Old Norse origin in England, it is more common that English words are substituted by their Norse counterpart in the north of England and in Scotland than in the south. It is worth noting that the classification of the doublets is according to the writer’s understanding of the definition of each group of doublets. As has been mentioned previously, studies of doublets have been performed but there seems to be a lack of extensive and exhaustive study in this area. And as for Skeat’s definition of doublets, that they are words which only differ in an unimportant suffix while still being one and the same word from an etymological point of view, might need an update as this definition only applies to the group of etymological cognates and not the other groups which are semantic doublets, morphological and lexical doublets.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

- Rear:

Etymonline.com:

Old English *ræran* “to raise, build up, create, set on end; arouse, excite, stir up,” from Proto-Germanic *raizjanau* “to raise,” causative of *risanan* “to rise”. Meaning “bring into being, bring up” (as a child) is recorded from early 15c.

OED:

Obsolete meaning of the word:

To raise (a person) to (also *out of, or from*) a certain condition.
Cf. RAISE v. 19, 18. Obs.

Last example: 1676 tr. H. C. Agrippa *Vanity Arts & Sci.* xliv. 113 By their powerful Charms dead bodies rear’d From out their Graves in open Air appear’d.

Modern meaning of the word:

To bring up (a child) to maturity; to care for, nourish, educate; = RAISE v. 11.
Also intr. and in extended use.

First example: 1558 T. PHAER tr. Virgil *Seuen First Bks. Eneidos* v. sig. O.i, Than one among them all, dame Pyrgo matrone most of age, King Priams nurse that was, and princely children up dyd reare.

- Raise:

Etymonline.com:

c.1200, “cause a rising of; lift upright, set upright; build, construct,” from a Scandinavian source, such as Old Norse *reisa* “to raise,” from Proto-Germanic *raizjan*. Meaning “make higher” is from c.1300 in the physical sense, as is that of “restore to life.” Of the voice, from late 14c. Meaning “increase the amount of” is from c.1500; from 1530s of prices, etc. meaning “to bring up” (a question, etc.) is from 1640s. Card-playing sense is from 1821. Meaning “promote the growth of” (plants, etc.) is from
1660s; sense of “foster, rear, bring up” (of children) is from 1744. Meaning “to elevate” (the consciousness) is from 1970.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

to encourage, inspire (a person) *with* courage, confidence, hope, etc. *Obs.*

Last example: 1885 – Manch. Even. News 23 June 2/2 A large number of people still rush to such methods of raising the wind.

Modern meaning:

To foster, rear, bring up (a person).

First example: 1744 M. BISHOP Life Matthew Bishop 268 The Child..she..says..is the Picture of his Father, and that she would endeavour to raise it for his Sake.

- Craft:

*Etymonline.com:*

Old English *craeft* (West Saxon, Northumbrian), -*creft* (Kentish), originally “power, physical strength, might,” from Proto-Germanic *krab-*kraf- (cognates: Old Frisian *kreft*, Old High German *chraft*, German *Kraft* “strength, skill;” Old Norse *kraptr* “strength, virtue”). Sense expanded in Old English to include “skill, dexterity; art, science, talent” (via a notion of “mental power”), which led by late Old English to the meaning “trade, handicraft, calling,” also “something built or made.” The word still was used for “might, power” in Middle English.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

An application of deceit; a trick, fraud, artifice. Last example: 1686 Burnet Trav. II (1730) 103 That being one of the Crafts of the Italian Priests.

Modern meaning:

In a bad sense: Skill or art applied to deceive or overreach; deceit, guile, fraud, cunning.

First example: 1205 LAY. 27007 Euander king hine aqualde mid luðere his crafte.
• **Skill:**

_Etymonline.com:_

Late 12c., “power of discernment,” from Old Norse _skil_ “distinction, ability to make out, discernment, adjustment,” related to _skilja_ (v.) “separate; discern, understand,” from Proto-Germanic * skaljo- “divide, separate” […] Sense of ability, cleverness” first recorded early 13c.

_OED:_

**Obsolete:**

To make free or quit _of_. Last example: _1481_ Caxton _Reynard_ xvii. (Arb.) 44 The kynge hath skylled hym quyte of alle his brokes and forguyen him all his trespaces and mysdedes.

**Modern meaning:**

Capability of accomplishing something with precision and certainty; practical knowledge in combination with ability; cleverness, expertness. Also, an ability to perform a function, acquired or learnt with practice. First example: _a1300_ Cursor _Mundi_ 26181 Ga Til a wijser to sceu þi wond, þat skill has for to mak it sond.

• **Hide:**

_Etymonline.com:_

“skin of a large animal,” Old English _hyd_ “hide, skin,” from Proto-Germanic *hudiz_ (cognates: Old Norse _hūd_, Old Frisian _hed_, Middle Dutch _huut_, Dutch _huid_, Old High German _hud_, German _Haut_ “skin”), related to Old English verb _hydan_ “to hide,” the common notion being of “covering.”

All of this is from PIE root *(s)keu-* „to cover, conceal“ (cognates: Sanskrit _kostha_ “enclosing wall,” _skunati_ “covers;” Armenian _ciw_ “roof;” Latin _cutis_ “skin,” _scutum_ “shield,” _ob-scurus_ “dark;” Greek _kytos_ “a hollow, vessel,” _keutho_ “to cover, to hide,” _skynia_ “eyebrows;” Russian _kishka_ “gut,” literally “sheath;” Lithuanian _kiautas_ “husk,” _kutis_ “stall;” Ols Norse _sky_ “cloud;” Old English _sceo_ “cloud;” Middle High German _hode_ “scrotum;” Old High German _scura_, German _Scheuer_ “barn;” Welsh _cuddio_ “to hide”)

33
The alliterative pairing of *hide* and *hair* (often negative, *hide nor hair*) was in Middle English (early 15c.) but earlier and more common was *hide ne hewe*, literally “skin and complexion (‘hue’)” (c.1200).

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

In alliterative collocation with *hue* colour, complexion, countenance)

Last example: 1825-80 Jamieson s.v. *Hyd*, ‘It’s sae dirty, it’ll neber come to hyd or hew.’

**Modern meaning:**

The skin of an animal, raw or dressed: more particularly applied to the skins of the larger beasts and such as may be tanned into leather. First example: 900 *O. E. Chron.* An. 891 Se bat wæs ðegworht of þriddan healfre hyde þe hi on foron.

- **Skin:**

**Etymonline.com:**

c.1200, “animal hide” (usually dressed and tanned), from Old Norse *skinn* “animal hide, fur,” from Proto-Germanic *skinha* (cognates: Old English *scinn* (rare), Old High German *scinten*, German *schinden* “to flay, skin;” German dialectal *schind* “skin of a fruit,” Flemish *schinde* “bark”), from PIE *skent* “to cut off” cognates: Breton *scant* “scale of a fish,” Irish *scainim* “I tear, I burst”), from root *sek-* “to cut”. The usual Anglo-Saxon word is *hide*. Meaning “epidermis of a living animal or person” is attested from early 14c.; extended to fruits, vegetables, etc. late 14c.

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

*as the skin between one’s brows*, etc., used to emphasize the force of an adjective.

Last example: 1643 CARTWRIGHT *Ordinary* v. iv, I am honest as the skin that is Between thy Brows. First example: 1575 Gamm. Gurton v. ii. 121, I am as true, I wold thou knew, as skin between thy browes!

**Modern meaning:**
The integument of an animal stripped from the body, and usually dressed or tanned (with or without the hair), or intended for this purpose; a hide, pelt, or fur; also occas., an article made of this. First example: 1200 ORMIN 3210 Hiss girrdell was off shepess skinn.

- **From:**

*Etymonline.com:*

Old English *fram*, preposition denoting departure or movement away in time or space, from Proto-Germanic *fra “forward, away from”* (cognates: Old Saxon, Old High German, Gothic *fram “from, away,” Old Norse *fra “from,” fram “forward”), from PIE *pro-mo, suffixed form of *pro;* the Germanic sense of “moving away” apparently evolved from the notion of “forward motion.” It is related to Old English *fram “forward; bold; strong,”* and *fremian “promote, accomplish”.*

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

Followed by inf. instead of the vbl. Sb. Last example: 1596 *F.Q. IV. V. 7* He sau’d the victor from fordonne.

**Modern meaning:**

Followed, more or less pleonastically, by a prep. of similar meaning, as *out, out of, forth, off,* where each prep. serves to strengthen or supplement the sense of the other.

First example: 1592 Marlowe Massacre Paris II. iii, His soul is fled from out his breast.

- **Fro:**

*Etymonline.com:*

“away, backwards,” c.1200, Northern English and Scottish dialectal *fra,* Midlands dialect *fro,* from Old Norse *fra “from,”* from Proto-Germanic *fra “forward, away from,”* from PIE *pro-.* The Norse word is equivalent to Old English *fram,* thus *fro* is a doubler of *from.*
OED:

Obsolete meaning:

fro oneself: ‘beside oneself’, out of one’s wits. Last example: 1530 Arth. Lyt. Bryt. (1814) III He was so sore displeased, that he was nye therwyth fro from him selfe. First example: 1483 Vulgaria abs Terentio 18 b, I am fro my selfe for anyyre.

Modern meaning:

1200 ORMIN 211 Fra þiss daʒʒ þu shallt ben dumb.

- No:

Etymonline.com:

“negative reply,” early 13c., from Old English na (adv.) “no, never, not at all,” from ne “not, no” + a “ever.” First element from Proto-Germanic *ne (cognates: Old Norse, Old Frisian, Old High German ne, Gothic ni “not”), from PIE root *ne “no, not”. Second element from PIE *aɪw- “vital force, life, long, eternity”. As an adjective meaning “not aby” (c.1200) it is reduced from Old English nan, the final –n omitted first before consonants and then altogether.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

After verbs of thinking or implying.

Last example: 1634 Canne Necess. Separ. (1849) 243 His words import positively no, but we are sure yes, and so will every wise man.. affirm too.

Modern meaning:

A word used to express a negative reply to a question, request, etc., or to introduce a correction of an erroneous opinion or assumption on the part of another person.

First example: 1225 Anocr. R. 222 Noa, he seiðe, [I] ne mei nout makien þeos to sunezen þuruh þiuernesse.
• Nay:

Etymonline.com:

Word of negation, late 12c., from a Scandinavian source such as Old Norse nei, compound of ne “not” + ei “ever”.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

Without nay, beyond doubt or dispute, assuredly, certainly.

Last example: 1563 Man Musculus’ Commopl. 31 We do al declare without nay.. that this law is wryten within us.

Modern meaning:

A word used to express negation, dissent, denial, or refusal, in answer to some statement, question, command, etc.

First example: 1175 Lamb. Hom. 27 He.. weneð þat hit wulle him helpen. Nei, soðliche, nawiht.

• Heaven:

Etymonline.com:

Old English heofon “home of God,” earlier “sky, firmament,” probably from Proto-Germanic *hibin-, dissimilated from *himin- (cognates Low German heben, Old Norse himinn, Gothic himins, Old Frisian himul, Dutch hemel, German Himmel, “heaven, sky”), perhaps from PIE root *kem- “to cover” (also proposed as the source of chemise). Plural use in sense of “sky” is probably from Ptolemaic theory of space composed of many spheres, but it also formerly was used in the same sense as the singular in Biblical language, as a translation of Hebrew plural shamayim. Heaven-sent (adj.) attested from 1640s.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

A model showing the motions of the heavenly bodies; an orrery, a planetarium. Last example: 1605 VERSTEGAN Dec. Intell. ii. (1628) 52 The heauen of silver
which...was sent vnto Soliman the great Turke wherein all the planets had their seuerall
courses.

Modern meaning:

The ‘realm’ or region of space beyond the clouds or the visible sky, of which the latter
is popularly or poetically viewed as the ‘floor’. Esp. in the collocation heaven and
earth, as constituting the universe.

First example: 1000 ÆLFRIC Gen. i. I On anginne ɣesceop God heofenan and eorþan.

- Sky:

Etymonline.com:
c.1200, “a cloud,” from Old Norse sky “cloud,” from Proto-Germanic *skeujam “cloud,
cloud over” (cognates: Old English sceo, Old Saxon scio “cloud, region of the clouds,
sky;” Old High German scuwo, Old English scua, Old Norse skuggi “shadow;” Gothic
skuggwa “mirror”), form PIE root *(s)keu- “to cover, conceal”. Meaning “upper regions
of the air” is attested from c.1300; replaced native heafon in this sense. In Middle
English, the word can still mean both “cloud” and “heaven,” as still in the skies,
originally “the clouds.”

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

A cloud.

Last example: 1529 Skelton Replyc. 165 Ye soored ouer hye.. Your names to magnifye,
Among the scabbed skyes Of Wycliffes flesshe flyes.

First example: 1220 Bestiary 66 Up he teð, til ðat he ðe heuene seð, ðurʒ skies sexe and
seuene til he cumeð to heuene.

Modern meaning:

the skies, the clouds; the upper region of the air; the heavens. Chiefly poet. First
eexample: 1300 XV Signa in E.E.P (1862) II þe holi man tellǐþ..þat þe skies so sal spec
þþan..in steuen as hit wer man.
• **Shin:**

*Etymonline.com:*

Old English *scinu* “shin, fore part of the lower leg,” from Proto-Germanic *skino* “thin piece” (cognates: Dutch *scheen*, Old High German *scina*, German *Schiebein* “shin, shinbones”), from PIE root *skei-* “to cut, split”.

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

to cut off by the shins, to leave not a leg to stand on, undermine. Last example: **1594** NASHE *Unfort. Trav.* H I, Post-hast letters came to him..to return as speedily as he could possible..whereby his fame was quit cut off by the shins.

**Modern meaning:**

The front part of the human leg between the knee and the ankle; the front or sharp edge of the shank-bone. First example: **1000** *Ags. Gloss.* In Wr.-Wülcker 216/3 *Cruscula*, scinu.

• **Skin:**

*Etymonline.com:*

c.1200, “animal hide” (usually dressed and tanned), from Old Norse *skinn* “animal hide, fur,” from Proto-Germanic *skintha-* (cognates: Old English *scinn* (rare), Old High German *scinten*, German *schinden* “to flay, skin;” German dialectal *schind* “skin of a fruit,” Flemish *schinde* “bark”), from PIE *sk*en-* “to cut off” (cognates: Breton *scant* “scale of a fish,” Irish *scainim* “I tear, I burst”), from root *sek-* “to cut”. The usual Anglo-Saxon word is *hide*. Meaning “epidermis of a living animal or person” is attested from early 14c.; extended to fruits, vegetables, etc. late 14c.

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

An obsolete form of the word does not seem to exist – it is nowhere to be found in the 1989 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.
Modern meaning:

The integument of an animal stripped from the body, and usually dressed or tanned (with or without the hair), or intended for this purpose; a hide, pelt, or fur; also occas., an article made of this. First example: 1200 ORMIN 3210 Hiss girrdell was off shepess skinn.

- **Shirt**:

*Etymonline.com:*

Old English *scyrte* “skirt, tunic,” from Proto-Germanic *skjurton* “a short garment” (cognates: Old Norse *skyrta*, Swedish *skjorta* “skirt, kirtle;” Middle Dutch *scorte*, Dutch *schort* “apron;” Middle High German *Schurz*, German *Schurz* “apron”), related to Old English *scort, sceort* “short,” from PIE *(s)ker-* “to cut”.

Formerly of the chief garment worn by both sexes, but in modern use long only that for men; in reference to women’s tops, reintroduced 1896.

From OED:

**Obsolete meaning:**

*one’s shirt:* used as a type of shat is nearest to one’s person. *not to tell one’s shirt:* to keep a matter strictly secret. *near is my shirt but nearer is my skin:* a proverb meaning that one’s own interests come before those of one’s nearest friends. Last example: 1654 *Clarke Papers* (Camden) III. 12 The designe is secret, knowne to the designer onely, whoe saith if hee thought his shirt knew it hee would burne it.

Modern meaning:

An undergarment for the upper part of the body, made of linen, calico, flannel, silk or other washable material. Originally always worn next to the skin; now sometimes an undershirt or ‘vest’ is worn beneath it. Formerly a garment common to both sexes, but now an article of male attire with long sleeves. Also an infant’s undergarment with short body ad sleeves. First example: 1000 *Boulogne Glosses* 143 in *Germanina* (N. S.) XI. 393 Scyrte *prætexta*, tunecan *toge*. 
• **Skirt:**

*Etymonline.com:*

Early 14c., “lower part of a woman’s dress,” from Old Norse *skyrta* “shirt, a kind of kirtle.” Sense development from “shirt” to “skirt” is possibly related to the long shirts of peasant garb (compare Low German cognates *Schört*, in some dialects “woman’s gown”). Sense of “border, edge” (in outskirts, etc.) first recorded late 15c.

**OED:**

**Obsolete meaning:**

There does not seem to be an obsolete form of the word in the 1989 OED.

**Modern meaning:**

The lower part of a woman’s dress or gown, covering the person from the waist downwards; also, esp. in modern use, a separate outer garment serving this purpose.

First example: 1300 *Cursor M.* 8963 Sco lift hir skirt wit-vten scurn, And bar-fote wode sco þat burn.

• **Egg:**

Verb: urge (egged us on to it; egged them on to do it). [ME f. ON eggja = EDGE]

*Etymonline.com:*

Mid-14c., *egge*, mostly in northern England dialect, from Old Norse *egg*, from Proto-Germanic *æjja(m)* (cognates: Old Saxon, Middle Dutch, Dutch, Old High German, German, *ei*, Gothic *ada*), probably from PIE *øyyo-/*oyyo- “egg” (cognates: Old Church Slavonic *aja*, Russian *jajco*, Breton *ui*, Welsh *wy*, Greek *oon*, Latin *ovum*); possibly derived from root *awi- “bird.” This Norse-derived northern word is vied in Middle English with native cognates *eye*, *eai*, from Old English *æg*, until finally displacing the others after c. 1500.

**OED:**

**Obsolete V and N**

It appears as if an obsolete form of the word does not exist. The OED does, however, give examples of obsolete forms of the word egg, but only in the context of phrases, for
example to come in with five eggs: to break in fussily with an idle story. The last example given of this is from the year 1551 ROBINSON tr. More’s Utop. (Arb.) 56 Another commeth in with his fiue egges. The first example is from 1542 UDALL Erasm. Apoph. 272 Persones coming in with their fiue egges, how that Sylla had geuen ouer his office of Dictature.

Modern meaning:

V. To incite, encourage, urge on; to provoke, tempt.

First example: 1200 Trin Coll. Hom 195 Alse þe deuel him to eggede.

N. The (more or less) spheroidal body produced by the female of birds and other animal species, and containing the germ of a new individual, enclosed within a shell or firm membrane. First example: 1000 Boeteh. Metr. Xx. 169 On æye bið violeca on middan.

- Edge:

Etymonline.com:

Old English ecg “corner, edge, point,” also “sword” (also found in ecgplega, literally “edge play,” ecghete, literally “edge hate,” both used poetically for “battle”), from Proto-Germanic *agjo (cognates: Old Frisian egg “edge;” Old Saxon eggja “point, edge;” Middle Dutch egghe, Dutch eg; Old Norse egg; Old High German ecka, German Eck “corner”), from PIR root *ak- “sharp, pointed” (cognates: Sanskrit asrih 2edge,” Latin acies, Greekakis “point;”). Spelling development of Old English –cg to Middle English –gg to Modern English –dge represents a widespread shift in pronunciation.

OED:

Obsolete meaning:

Of persons: Ardour, keenness in pursuit of an object; in weaker sense, inclination, liking. Last example: 1868 W. Collins Moonstone I. v. 55 ‘Betteredge, your edge is better than ever…’ ‘He is a wonderful man for his age.’

Modern meaning:

To give an edge, impart sharpness, to (a weapon, etc. or tool); chiefly in fig. sentences. First example: 1297 R. Glouc. Chron (1810) 274, I- egged yt [the sword] ys in on alf.
### Appendix B


#### Norwegian

cog  
dollop  
fjord  
 iceberg  
krill  
lemming  
nudge  
quisling  
rig  
silt  
ski  
slalom  
walms

#### Norse

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### Icelandic
- eider
- geyser
- narwhal
- saga
- viking

### Swedish
- boulder
- dahlia
- flounder
- kink
- lug
- mink
- moped

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### Danish
- dangle
- drip
- fog
- kidnap
- ombudsman

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