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Determining Dictionary and Usage Guide Agreement with Real-World Usage: A Diachronic Corpus Study of American English

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ABSTRACT

Determining Dictionary and Usage Guide Agreement with Real-World Usage:
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Dictionaries and, to a lesser extent, usage guides provide writers, editors, and users of American English information on how to use the language appropriately. Dictionaries, in particular, hold authority over correct usage of words. However, historically, usage guides and dictionaries were created using the knowledge of a small group of people. Lexicographers like Noah Webster set out to prescribe a proper way of using American English. To make these judgments, they often relied on a combination of study and idiosyncratic intuitions. A similar process took place in creating usage guides. Though these manuals profess to explain how the language is used by American English speakers—or rather by the selected group of speakers deemed "standard" by usage guide editors and lexicographers—ultimately the manuals can only express the perspectives of the editors and lexicographers on this language. Historically, the views of these editors and lexicographers were the best tools available to assess language, but now computer-based corpora allow for studying larger swaths of language usage.

This study examines how much dictionaries and usage guides agree with real-world usage found in corpus data. Using the *Corpus of Historical American English*, a set of dictionaries and usage guides published throughout the last two hundred years were analyzed to see how much agreement they had with corpus data in noting the addition of denominal verbs (i.e., verbs formed by the conversion of nouns as in 'They *taped* together the box.') in American English usage.

It was found that the majority of the time dictionaries noted new denominal verbs before corpus data reflected accepted usage of these verbs. However, about a quarter of the time dictionaries noted new denominal verbs concurrently with the corpus data. These results suggest that dictionaries—and the subjective opinions of the lexicographers that created them—are more aligned with real-world usage than would be expected. Because of sparse listings, results for usage guide agreement was inconclusive.

Key words: usage, Standard English, dictionaries, corpus linguistics, denominal verb, language change, usage guides

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1: Introduction

At the reference desk at almost any public library in the United States can be found a large open volume displaying packed pages of small print. The volume is the dictionary—most likely a Merriam-Webster dictionary—and the words on the thin pages are a definitional catalog of an entire language. The dictionary's prominent place in libraries as well as in schools and even home bookcases suggests the respect American English speakers have for this work. For many, the dictionary is the source of correct language use, at least as far as accurate vocabulary and spelling is concerned. A game of Scrabble cannot be played without hearing a phrase like "Is that word in the dictionary?" Likewise, it is to the dictionary that English speakers go in order to determine if they have the right definition for *infer* or whether it is appropriate to use a newly coined word like *Instagramming* in a job application (e.g., 'I have broad experience in social media marketing, including managing Facebook accounts and *Instagramming* company photo contests.'). Even the US Government Printing Office had a simple rule that may best showcase the command the dictionary had and continues to have in America: "Follow Webster" (quoted in Leavitt 1947:67).

Respect for the authority of dictionaries is a long-held tradition passed down from teachers and editors and writers—a tradition that has also spurred the creation of other authoritative volumes that suggest rules of proper speech. Grammars, style guides, and usage guides all provide rules on how to use the English language correctly.

Though these works hold great authority, how much do they align with actual usage? The purpose of this thesis is to track whether or not usage materials (i.e., dictionaries and usage guides) over the last two hundred years agree with real-world language found in corpora in noting language change related to the particular phenomenon of noun-to-verb conversion. Noun-

to-verb conversion is a word formation process that creates new verbs, called denominal verbs, from nouns (e.g. 'She *co-authored* the article with three other professors.'). This research tracks when denominal verbs occur for the first time in dictionaries and usage guides compared to when corpus data shows consistent usage of the denominal verbs.

The label *usage* seems to be a bit of a misnomer. The term suggests a description of how something is generally used, but more often than not usage, when applied to language, actually refers to the usage of a subset of the mass of English speakers. In fact, the editors of usage guides and dictionaries, until recently, worked as solo cataloguers of what they idiosyncratically ruled was the right usage. The landmark *American Dictionary of the English Language* was not the compilation of vocabulary used by all Americans in 1828; rather, it was a listing of words that Noah Webster alone had determined—albeit through a well-researched and systematic process—was the proper inventory of American English. Webster and many other dictionary and usage guide creators compiled their works based on the speech of educated persons. But even in describing the usage of this smaller group, how accurate can a solitary dictionary editor be in composing a true consensus of how educated speakers use the language?

To be fair, when Webster and other editors were creating their dictionaries and usage guides in the nineteenth century and later even into the twentieth century, any kind of comprehensive description of a large population was much more difficult. Inventions of mass communication were either nonexistent or new, making it difficult to conduct large-scale polls on language use. Even with these polls, gathering data for every single word in the English language would still be impossible. Computer and internet language research could not be conducted until the late twentieth century. Until recently, the best tools dictionary and usage guide editors had were libraries and their own intuitions.

Today, linguistic corpora furnish a powerful tool to process broad language usage of nearly any word or phrase that a lexicographer could think of. Computer-based corpora provide a large body of digitized, searchable, real world text. The usage statistics found in corpora are means by which a lexicographer or a usage guide editor can substantiate their intuitive beliefs. To determine how to use corpus data in dictionary and usage guide creation, the research herein analyzes the past by testing how well dictionaries and usage guides published in the past two hundred years align with corpus data.

But before going into more detail on the thrust of this research, a fundamental idea must be discussed. Underlying the discussion thus far is the idea of standard language usage. Though *standard* appears to be a technical term in writings about language, the definition of *standard* is not so straightforward. The term has a wide variety of definitions. Though the term has purposefully not been used yet in this writing, the idea of a standard has been presented in a few different ways. For example, there was the notion that many dictionary and usage guide editors use the standard of educated speakers as their basis for correct language. This is using *standard* to represent a group making a judgment call about right and wrong usage. This definition of *standard* suggests that the language of the educated is superior and more right than other forms.

I will use two different definitions for the purposes of this research. First is the definition discussed above: Standard English is the preferred form of the language, accepted as the speech and writing of educated persons and prescribed by teachers, editors, and writers. In this research, this definition applies to the judgments made in dictionary and usage guide listings.

The second definition of standard relates to the utility of language. This is the idea that standard language is a tool to communication, that if a word or phrase or syntax is not aiding communication, then it is not standard. An example of this can be found with language change. It

is presumed with newly coined words that there would be a period of time in which these neologisms were so infrequently used that they would not be readily understood; thus, they would not be standard. For example, about 15 years ago, the phrase "She Googled the recipe" would make little sense. Did she *ruin* the recipe? *Alter* it? But, at some point, these new words would be used enough that they quickly communicate to readers or listeners and then could be considered standard. Now, most English speakers understand that she searched for the recipe on the Internet. In this research, this definition of readily understood communication applies to the data received via corpora. The corpus data is described using word frequencies, suggesting this idea of a communication tool. That is, at some level of frequency (which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters), a term is used often enough that it communicates and meets this definition of standard.

With these two definitions, the problem arises of using the same term to mean two different things. From here on out, I will use *standard* to refer to the preferred and prescribed forms found in dictionaries and usage guides. The term *established* will be used to describe the frequent and communicable use of a term, in this research, meaning the corpus data.

This research looks at both these terms. Professionally, I am an editor, but my academic background is in linguistics. It seems at times that these two fields are at odds with one another—that prescriptivism does not align with the descriptive observations of linguists. In their introductions and prefaces, dictionaries and usage guides suggest that there is a standard language, but is it possible that this standard also reflects the established language? Do usage guides, for example, actually explain how the language is generally being used? Is prescriptivism more aligned with actual usage that linguists may predict?

To answer these questions, a test group of terms is needed. Because this is a diachronic study, a usage phenomenon with a clear shift through time would provide the best data. I chose to study a specific kind of word-formation process, since in the creation of a new word, there would be a time before that word existed and a time after the word existed. Noun-to-verb conversion describes the creation of new verbs by turning nouns into verbs without the use of derivational endings. Examples of denominal verbs—the verbs formed through noun-to-verb conversion—include *interview, audition,* and *ration*.

Using these denominal verbs, I can determine when they first were used widely in the language using the *Corpus of Historical American English,* using criteria discussed in detail in chapter 3. Then the research question on the agreement of dictionaries and usage guides with corpus data can be answered by comparing the corpus data to when the denominal verbs are first listed in dictionaries and what usage guides note on these new forms. I have selected editions of dictionaries and usage guides that were published throughout the past two hundred years to test this question.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

As we begin a look at this research, we must first describe underlying principles and research in this particular field of study. To begin, I will summarize the concept of a standard—an idea that is fundamental to this research. I will then discuss the phenomenon of noun-to-verb conversion, which will be studied to discuss the relationship between real-world usage found through corpus data and prescriptive materials (i.e., dictionaries and usage guides). Next, I will describe corpus research including a brief discussion of the *Corpus of Historical American English.* To conclude, I will then give a brief history of English lexicography and usage theory, as dictionaries and usage guides provide the bulk of my data.

2.1. Seeking a Standard

The word *standard* has been used in application to the English language since at least the early eighteenth century, when notable writers like Jonathan Swift decried the deplorable state of common speech. Swift proposed that if English "were once refined to a certain Standard, perhaps there might be Ways found to fix it forever" (quoted in McArthur 1999:161). Fear of the evolution of language and a belief that languages are defiled by this evolution was a predominant reason to create a standard and the grammars, usage guides, and dictionaries that came with it. A standard could help make permanent the rules of language.

Though the use of the word *standard* in regard to language has only been around for about three centuries, a preferred form of language proposed through grammars has been around much longer in Western civilization, with possible origins dating back to the second century BC in Greece (McArthur 1999:162). *He grammatiké tékhne* (The grammatical craft) by Dionysius Thrax provided prosperous Grecians who spoke nonstandard Greek with the rules of proper oratory. Grecian orators and scholars of the day chose a dialect of the upper-class people of

Attica for their standard. Though this form of speech belonged only to a small group of Greeks, this standard took root in Greece and the language of the upper-class became a recurring practice used as the standard during the Roman Empire (Mayer 1997:11). Cicero defined three classes of speech: city, country, and foreign—city being the most prestigious (Mayer 1997). Using language standards as a means of classifying social hierarchy continued through the centuries in the European nations which formed from the remnants of the Roman Empire, and this classification of social hierarchy became another reason for a standard.

It is from this heritage that the idea of the King's (or Queen's) English arose—a dialect chosen as the best possible English. From the royal courts, the prestige of the King's English spread to respected fields. McArthur notes, "There has been since at least the eighteenth century a tendency to regard the usage of upper- and middle-class life, education, publishing, law, administration, and government as more proper, polite, legitimate, and ultimately *real* than anything used by other English-speakers" (1999:165).

Though the standard of the King's English held less respect in America after its founding, the idea of a linguistic standard was not forgotten in the newly formed states. The former colonists were quick to notice differences between British English and American English and began to create dictionaries and usage guides expressing specific grammatical and orthographic rules for America. These two tools of standardizing American English—dictionaries and usage guides—will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

2.2. Noun-to-Verb Conversion

As discussed in chapter 1, this thesis studies the relationship between established usage (gathered through corpus data) and standard usage (found in the prescribed rules of dictionaries and usage guides). But to test this relationship, we need a set of research items. There are

hundreds of usage items I could have chosen to study, but I selected noun-to-verb conversion because, as a form of language change, conversion can be easily studied diachronically. That is, at some point, a denominal verb—a verb formed through conversion of a noun—is listed for the first time in an edition of a dictionary; these first listings along with corpus data provide concrete time periods for when noun-to-verb conversion happened and when usage publications accepted the form. Below is a more detailed discussion of noun-to-verb conversion.

2.2.1. CONVERSION

The process of conversion entails the changing of a word's part of speech to another part of speech without the use of derivational affixes. For example, the formation of the verb *to finger* from the noun *finger* would be an instance of conversion wherein no morphemes are affixed as they are in the creation of the verb *to sermonize* from the noun *sermon*. Conversion is a frequently implemented word-formation process in English. As one scholar notes, "English has great freedom of shifting forms from one part of speech to another. Because of the sparse morphological marking for parts of speech, almost any English word can be used as a noun, verb, or adjective-like attributive" (Algeo 1998:67). According to diachronic research, conversion has been used quite consistently over the last four-hundred years as inflectional endings became less prevalent in English (Algeo 1998:67).

Conversion occurs with many parts of speech in English, including verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Most frequently, conversion occurs between nouns and verbs, with noun-to-verb conversion being more productive than verb-to-noun conversion (Bauer and Salvador 2005:12, Katamba 2009:101). The formation of verbs via conversion is so prevalent that "new conversion verbs in the 20th century outnumber the new verbs from all the overt affixes combined" (Gottfurcht 2008:15). Though the conversion from nouns to verbs appears to be open to any type

of noun, there are a few forms that are more prone to conversion than others. Most noun-to-verb conversions occur with simple, monosyllabic base nouns, though nouns with suffixes can also convert (Balteiro 1974:48, Potter 1975:168). Compound nouns, such as *daydream* or *earmark*, are especially common among more complex noun bases that form denominal verbs (Balteiro 1974:48). The base nouns used in conversion also seem to be more concrete in idea and most often come from the categories of instruments, animals, and people (e.g., *to hammer, to ape,* and *to man*) (Balteiro 1974:48, Clark and Clark 1979:768–69).

2.2.2. GRADIENCY AND PARTIAL CONVERSION

In some instances, conversion is "clear-cut and instantaneous and simply produce a new word" (Denison 2006:2). However, conversion from one part of speech to another is not always instantaneous. To account for this in-between space at times present in conversion, linguists have theorized two ideas: partial conversion and gradiency.

Partial conversion occurs when "an item is used or acquires functions prototypical of another word-class (different from its own) but this is not accompanied by a change in its morphological characteristics" (Balteiro 1974:40). The most commonly cited example of partial conversion pertains to noun-to-adjective conversion, in structures like *the wealthy* or *the poor*. The adjective functions as a noun (e.g., 'The poor need assistance in providing basic needs.') ; however, it is not able to take on nominal inflectional endings or behave nominally in other instances (e.g., *'The wealthies are my neighbors' or *'There was a wealthy'). These partially converted forms are seemingly part of two word classes simultaneously (Balteiro 1974:40–41). However, Balteiro argues that partial conversion cannot occur with noun-to-verb conversion. "The main reason," she states, "may be that, morphologically, these word-classes still retain some significant inflections which determine whether the shift to a new class is complete or not"

(1974:48). The definition of partial conversion does not allow the term to be readily applied to noun-to-verb conversion; therefore, partial conversion does not provide an explanation for in-between forms evident in this research of noun-to-verb conversion.

Gradiency, another explanation of converted forms that are not entirely one part of speech, provides a space between parts of speech. Rather than explaining conversion as a process from one Aristotelian category directly to another, gradiency suggests that parts of speech can be converted to another word class via a series of graduated steps (Denison 2006:4). These graduated steps are especially clear when studying conversion diachronically, when "it is not always clear when the category transition has taken place" (Denison 2006:4). This theory of stepwise conversion may allow for forms that are in between an unquestionable noun and an unquestionable verb in noun-to-verb conversion studied in this research. Denison argues for gradiency: "Given that the graduated nature of semantic change is reasonably widely accepted, why not allow that morpho-syntactic change may proceed by small steps too?" (2006:5). The idea of gradiency does not mean this is necessarily a gradual process, but gradient forms may, at times, be seen before totally converted forms in diachronically collected data (Denison 1991:122, 2006:5). Denison notes, "To specify any particular moment of transition would be artificial. It seems more like a *period* of transition, and during that period not all instances can be referred with complete confidence either to the verb or to the adjective alone" (2006:4–5) and, in like manner, to the noun or to the adverb or to any other part of speech undergoing conversion.

Some data within this research included verb forms that are not irrefutable verbs; therefore, note must be made of these forms that are not inarguably nouns or verbs nor any one part of speech. Below are a few examples of these forms:

(1) The horses stood in line, *groomed* to perfection in preparation for the parade.
(2) *Implementing* new rules, the director reformed business practices at the factory.

Gradiency provides a plausible explanation for these forms that have attributes of both nouns and verbs. Because the thrust of this research regards how well usage materials align with real-world usage and not on explicating the entrance of denominal verbs, it is necessary to categorize these in-between forms as either nouns or verbs in order to collect quantifiable data. Discussion of when these gradient forms will be considered nouns or verbs for the purposes of this research will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.3. Corpus Research

The denominal verbs created through noun-to-verb conversion provide a research set to gather data from the *Corpus of Historical American English* and from several dictionaries and usage guides. Corpus linguistics allows for research of real-world usage of language. Below is a discussion of corpora in general and using corpora to discuss usage issues.

2.3.1. WHAT ARE CORPORA?

Simply speaking, a linguistic corpus is "a body of naturally occurring language" that can be used for linguistic analysis (McEnery 2006:4). While corpora have been around in one form or another for hundreds of years, corpus linguistics has its beginnings in the last fifty years or so with the rise of the computer age.[1] Prior to computers, some linguists used shoeboxes filled with paper slips of natural language rather than made-up examples that were used in theoretical Chomskyan linguistics popular at the time (McEnery 2006:3). These corpus-like studies were small and, therefore, not representative of language and, thus, inconclusive in nature. But computer technology brought forth corpora with significantly more words, such as the *Brown*

[1] O'Keeffe and McCarthy note the origins of corpora in the Biblical concordances dating back to the 1100s by tracking words across the text of the Bible. Later concordances were for Shakespeare's works in the 1700s. Johnson's and Webster's gathering of illustrative quotations was another form of corpus creation (O'Keeffe and McCarthy 2010:3–4).

Corpus created in 1964, which contains one million words (Francis and Kučera 1979). The *Brown Corpus* and other computer-based corpora were and are constructed carefully to represent a proper sampling of the represented language register. For example, some corpora focus on American English while others focus on British English; other corpora collect natural spoken or written language. Once a well-proportioned sampling of text is gathered, the corpus words can be tagged for part of speech and other linguistic labels for easy searching and analysis.

The range of linguistic research using corpora continues to grow. *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, for example, lists corpus research in grammar, discourse, pragmatics, language pedagogy, lexicography, literature, sociolinguistics, forensic linguistics, and many other fields (O'Keeffe and McCarthy 2010).

2.3.2. USAGE AND CORPORA

Biber notes a benefit of corpora, stating, "As with other areas, analysis of a large body of authentic language can show the actual language patterns being used—rather than having to rely on intuition or anecdotes" (1998:236). For this reason, usage studies fit well with corpus research. Usage, as *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* puts it, is "the way in which words and phrases are actually used" (2005:545), and, as discussed earlier, corpora are made from authentic language from a selected language community. Though in his preface to *Modern American Usage* (1998) Garner suggests that usage guidelines created by language experts were necessary because writers and editors could not "wait idly to see what direction the language takes" (1998:xi), developments in technology have provided clearer and quicker information on the direction of language. Indeed, a larger portion of the usage of the masses is available for analysis through the means of corpora. They provide a statistically sound consensus of the masses which early lexicographers and grammarians could only have dreamed of (Kennedy 1998:88–203). "In

the past, usage experts have relied on their own observations, but now we have a chance to base usage guidelines on actual practice, on actual texts," Snyder states. "Because of increasing computer capabilities and databases, now we can rely on empirical data and not just on expert opinion when we are inquiring about many individual points of usage" (2007:52). For this research I used the 400 million word *Corpus of Historical American English,* which I will describe in detail in chapter 3.

2.4. Dictionaries

Along with analyzing real-world usage of the research set of denominal verbs in COHA, I will also collect data from usage materials on when they accept new denominal verbs as standard forms. Though today dictionaries act, for the most part, as descriptive catalogs of the English language, their origins came out of a need to standardize. As noted in the introductions to the dictionaries selected for this research, Noah Webster and the other editors of the these dictionaries felt responsibility in explicating and defining the rules of the English language. The dictionaries, therefore, have a prescriptive element in the way that they are written and in the reason that they were made—that is, that they were made not merely to catalogue to set up a proper form of language. Below is a survey of English dictionaries with a focus on the dictionaries used within this research.

2.4.1. JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY

A survey of English lexicography would not be complete without mentioning Samuel Johnson. Though not an American dictionary, Johnson's work cannot be overlooked in the heritage of American dictionaries.[2] As the creator of the first complex English dictionary, *A*

[2] Data from Johnson's dictionary will not be examined in this research. Mention of his dictionary is included herein purely as foundational knowledge for the American dictionaries that will be used.

Dictionary of the English Language (1755), Johnson approached his dictionary with a drive borne of a desire not merely to define but to standardize the language (Reddick 1996:15–16). As Johnson began working on his dictionary, he observed, "I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rule: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated" (1755).

Johnson is frequently called the father of English dictionaries. Interestingly enough, he was not the first lexicographer of English. In the previous century, dozens of dictionaries had been published to regulate the language (Reddick 1996:13–14). However, many of these dictionaries were limited in scope, focusing on foreign terms and discipline-specific vocabulary (Reddick 1996:13). They "failed to give sufficient sense of [the English] language as it appeared *in use*" (Hitchings 2005:49). Johnson was the first to include thousands of illustrative quotations from English writers as authorities on usage (Reddick 1996:1). In observing English speakers and writers, Johnson wrote, "Choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority" (1755). Thus, Johnson applied himself "to the perusal of our writers; and noting whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase" (1755). Though earlier dictionaries had sought to provide understanding of proper English, Johnson's work instituted the idea of authoritative usage rather than the idiosyncratic and individual usage suggested by his predecessors. Granted, Johnson's idea of appropriate usage was still based on the writings of the scholarly upper-class rather than the consensus of the masses, but his illustrative quotations created the first agreement of standard usage beyond the viewpoints of a solitary lexicographer.

Nevertheless, much of Johnson's heroic status in English language history stem from the fact that, in nine-year's time, he wrote almost entirely by himself a two-volume dictionary with over 40,000 defined words and 114,000 illustrative quotations without a true library to research in (Reddick 1996:2; Bate 1977:247).[3] Thus, many of his entries *do* reference his particular prejudices: For example, the entry for *lexicographer* reads, "a writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge" (Johnson 1756). Still, Johnson irrefutably changed the world of English lexicography, influencing all the "harmless drudges" that followed in his footsteps—not the least of which was Noah Webster.

2.4.2. WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY

Like Johnson, Noah Webster, the father of American lexicography, also realized the need for a standard. He noted in the preface to his 1828 dictionary:

> It has been my aim in this work, now offered to my fellow citizens, to ascertain the true principles of the language, in its orthography and structure; to purify it from some palpable errors, and reduce the number of its anomalies, thus giving it more regularity and consistency in its forms, both of words and sentences; and in their manner, to furnish a standard of our vernacular tongue. (Webster 1987:[3])

Webster, like previous lexicographers, was quite passionate about the need to mend the English language, so to speak. It was a matter of educational, national, and even Christian pride. Just as the good word of the Bible professed God's work via the word, the language itself was also a source of power in this same realm. "If the language can be improved in regularity," Webster wrote, "[it can] thus be rendered a more useful instrument for the propagation of

[3] During the nine years of production, Johnson was supported by six amanuenses who copied quotations found by Johnson, but their work seems to be inconsistent and slow (Reddick 1996:65; Bate 1997:243) Johnson originally sought to complete the dictionary in only three years, but the immensity of the work delayed the completion six more years.

science, arts civilization and christianity" (1987:[3]). For Webster, the standardizing of the English language became his life's work: "If, in short, our vernacular language can be redeemed from corruptions, and our philology and literature from degradation; it would be a source of great satisfaction to me to be one among the instruments of promoting these valuable objects. If this object cannot be effected, and my wishes and hopes are to be frustrated, my labor will be lost, and this work must sink into oblivion" (1987:[3]).

With the cause of promoting science, arts, and Christianity, Webster worked with the fervor required of his immense task. At the age of 70, Webster presented the 70,000 entry, two-volume dictionary to his "fellow citizens" with his "ardent wishes for their improvement and their happiness; and for the continued increase of the wealth, the learning, the moral and religious elevation of character, and the glory of [his] country" (1987:[3]). Matching the template of Johnson's dictionary, Webster's first dictionary included illustrative quotations with the definitions—once again, pointing to the idea of usage, albeit the usage of the scholarly, as a means of creating a standard. But Webster's standard was an American one. Though part of a fledgling country at the time, Webster esteemed American writers like Franklin and Jay on par with the British authorities used by Johnson as well as Webster.

Even with all his work, Webster admitted that his magnum opus was not perfect: "This Dictionary, like all others of the kind, must be left, in some degree, imperfect; for what individual is competent to trace to their source, and define in all their various applications, popular, scientific and technical, *sixty* or *seventy thousand* words!" (1987:[3]). Truly, the job is quite overwhelming when placed in the hands of one person. Yet, his dictionary laid a substantial foundation for the dozens of American dictionaries that would follow in the next two centuries, including the future editions of his own dictionary that are still generally regarded as the best in

American lexicography. One scholar notes the legacy of Webster: "He was among the last of the solitary lexicographers, and the work he began has been continued by arguably the foremost and unquestionably the oldest dictionary publishing house in his native country" (Kreidler 1998:101).

2.4.3. FROM NOAH WEBSTER TO MERRIAM-WEBSTER

In 1839, at age 81, Webster began a revision of his dictionary, adding about 5,000 words including scientific terms edited by Professor William Tully of the New Haven Medical College (Leavitt 1947:36). The editing by Tully perhaps marks a transition in the history of the Webster dictionary, and dictionaries in general, from lone lexicographer to large production teams of editors.

This second edition was published in 1841 just before Webster's death in 1843 (Leavitt 1947: 36–37). The two-volume publication was a flop due to its expensive price and might have driven Webster's name into obscurity without the help of George and Charles Merriam. After buying the 1841 dictionary from Webster's heirs, the Merriams applied their business acumen in creating a cheaper revised and enlarged, one-volume edition in 1847 edited by a small group of scholars, ranging in specialty from ecclesiastical history to astronomy to fine arts (Leavitt 1947:45, 47, 49).[4] This use of a group of editors was the first in what would become the norm for production of Merriam-Webster dictionaries and a practice that was quickly becoming the model for lexicography elsewhere. Like Webster, the team continued the practice of using illustrative quotations but not to the extent that Johnson had.

Over the next hundred years, Merriam-Webster released several editions of the dictionary, including international and collegiate editions. The number of citations would swell to a whopping 552,000 listings—about 480,000 more than Webster's first dictionary—by the

[4] The *New Revised Edition* added another 10,000 entries to Webster's 1841 edition and was an immediate success (Leavitt 1947:50).

time the second edition of the *New International* dictionary was printed in 1934. The company would make a household name out of the Webster brand; the dictionary could be found in schoolhouses and government offices across the nation.

2.4.4. WEBSTER'S THIRD

Until the 1961 release of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*, Merriam-Webster had published dictionaries that followed a robust tradition of prescriptivism evident in Samuel Johnson's, Noah Webster's, and pretty much everyone else's dictionaries. Along with other defenders of Standard English like grammars, spellers, and usage guides, dictionaries were the professors of the right way, the holders of all definitional truth. Over the previous century, "Webster says" had entered the language as a means of validating and supporting proper usage. But *Webster's Third* changed all of that.

Under the new editorial direction of Philip Gove, Merriam-Webster's latest edition of its *New International Dictionary* would transition from prescriptivist to descriptivist. And this transiton was not well received. When *Webster's Third* was released, it was met with a firestorm of criticism. Propped up as the poster child of all that was wrong with the new dictionary was the word *ain't*, which Gove had described as used by "cultivated speakers" (quoted in Morton 1994:158). One newspaper indignantly described the new publication: "A dictionary's embrace of the word 'ain't' will comfort the ignorant, confer approval upon the mediocre, and subtly imply that proper English is the tool only of the snob; but it will not assist men to speak true to other men. It may, however, prepare us for the future which it could help to hasten. In the caves, no doubt, a grunt will do" (Morton 1994:157). At the heart of the criticism was a difference in opinion on the purpose of a dictionary and on the meaning of standard—a clash in perspectives that may continue today. Gove's definition of *standard* shows a broadening in the meaning of

standard. His definition is more closely related to the definition of *established* discussed earlier than to the idea of a preferred form of the educated.

It seems that Merriam-Webster felt that Gove was right on track, however. Since the release of the 1961 third edition, Merriam-Webster has not released another edition of the dictionary but only added additional words every few years in the same format (About the unabridged. *Merriam Webster* website).

2.4.5. AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

One of the many critics of *Webster's Third* was James Parton, president of American Heritage Publishing Company. Parton attempted to buy out Merriam-Webster in order to take *Webster's Third* out of print and replace it with a more traditional dictionary. He was unsuccessful, but this did not stop Parton from righting what he felt was a failing lexicographical era by creating his own dictionary. Just eight years after the publication of *Webster's Third*, the *American Heritage Dictionary* arrived on the shelf as "the new authority on the English language" (Morton 1994:229)—or at least that was how Houghton Mifflin Company marketed it.

As part of the new dictionary, editor Morris felt that a key part of a proper dictionary should include a word's "social status" (1970:vi). The vocabulary listed in the dictionary should represent "the educated adult" (Morris1970:vi). Morris explained: "The 'educated adult' referred to is, of course, a kind of ideal person, for he has at his fingertips a most comprehensive lexicon, not only for the conduct and discussion of everyday affairs, but also for all of the arts and all of the sciences" (1970:vi).

How would Morris establish this standard of "educated adult" language? By two ground-breaking means: The first was a panel of "100 outstanding speakers and writers" noting their opinions on certain usage items (Morris 1970:vii), and the second was a computer corpus of text.

The combined judgments of the usage panel were tabulated to provide several hundred usage notes throughout the dictionary. "As a consequence," Morris wrote, "this Dictionary can claim to be more precisely descriptive, in terms of current usage levels, than any heretofore published—especially in offering the reader the lexical opinions of a large group of highly sophisticated fellow citizens" (Morris 1970:vii).

Though Morris and Co. suggest that they are descriptive in their guidelines to proper usage, scholars have found division between the *American Heritage Dictionary* usage panel and actual usage. The panel demographics represented a skewed cross section of American English speakers. The average age of the panel was about sixty-four; only 11 women and even fewer ethnic minorities were represented (Cresswell 1975:13, Ottenhoff 1996:275). And the editors seemed to select only certain judgments of the panel: of the 502 usage notes in the dictionary, fewer than half contained decisions by the panel (Morton 1994:230).

Even with these gap between the usage panel's judgments and the published, proposed usage in the dictionary, the *American Heritage Dictionary* used another means to analyze actual usage, breaking ground with a brand-new, descriptive linguistic tool: the corpus. The Brown Corpus, published in 1964 by Henry Kučera and W. Nelson Francis at Brown University, was the first widely-used textual corpus produced via computer (Francis and Kučera 1979). Within years of the corpus's release, American Heritage approached Kučera to enlist corpus aid for its upcoming dictionary. Kučera signed on. Among the many essays prefacing the 1969 dictionary is one by Kučera explaining the role of computers in lexicography:

> A lexicographer, contemplating the compilation of a new dictionary, is faced with a number of basic initial problems such as how many and which entries to include, which meanings to consider in defining a word, how to organize the definitions, and how to

> illustrate the usage of words. . . . One thing the lexicographer must consider most carefully is the current state of the language he is planning to describe. (Morris 1970:xxxvii)

Kučera went on to explain that citation collecting was not enough to determine the current state of usage—a large body of language data must be used. Unfortunately, Kučera does not go into much detail about how the *American Heritage Dictionary* used the corpus but rather describes lexicographical uses of the corpus in general like determining word frequencies.

Kučera concluded his essay with a plea for balance between human interpretation and computational data in describing language. After noting the importance of not giving up human editors, Kučera wrote, "It would be equally foolhardy for linguists and especially for lexicographers to disregard the potential of computers as research tools. Not only can computers save labor and increase accuracy, but they can also help to bring important new insights into crucial problems of language use" (Morris 1970:xl).

Though the *American Heritage Dictionary* received criticism, it was well-received by the media and successful commercially (Morton 1994:232). For those affronted by the descriptive leanings of *Webster's Third*, the *American Heritage Dictionary* provided a traditional replacement that provided usage judgments while also attempting to more broadly describe language through a usage panel and a corpus. Following the success of the first edition, four more editions were printed in 1980, 1992, 2000, and 2012.

2.5. Usage Guides

From this history of dictionaries, the importance of a standard to scholars and educators of the past is made evident. Another source proclaiming a standard is usage guides that generally cover areas broader than the orthography and vocabulary found in dictionaries.

2.5.1. Brief History of English Language Usage Guides

Like the discussion of standardness in language, usage guides have a history back to the mid-eighteenth century. Garner notes two usage guides printed in 1758: Launcelot Temple's *Sketches: Or Essays on Various Subjects* and John Ward's *Four Essays upon the English Language* (2009:925). Probably most well-known among the early usage and grammar books is Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* published in 1762. Over the previous two centuries, Lowth writes, "The English Language . . . hath been considerably polished and refined; its bounds have been greatly enlarged; its energy, variety, richness, and elegance, have been abundantly proved by numberless trials" (1763:v). But even with these improvements, Lowth adds, "it hath made no advances in Grammatical accuracy" (1763:v). Lowth noticed an absence of quality grammar books in the English language and sought to create a guide book for proper usage. He felt that the syntax of English was so basic that it caused speakers to neglect proper study of the language:

> Were the Language less easy and simple, we should find ourselves under a necessity of studying it with more care and attention. But as it is, we take it for granted, that we have a competent knowledge and skill, and are able to acquit ourselves properly, in our own native tongue: a faculty solely acquired by use, conducted by habit, and tried by the ear, carries us on without reflexion; we meet with no rubs or difficulties in our way, or we do not perceive them; we find ourselves able to go on without rules, and we do not so much as suspect that we stand in need of them. (Lowth 1763:x)

Thus, Lowth set out to compile and solidify rules for standard English. In this philosophy, Lowth presented the necessity of the prescriptivist and the rule maker—roles that many others would follow in the following three centuries.

In the early 1700s, Jonathan Swift wrote a proposal for correcting the English language to the Earl of Oxford. In a similar effort on behalf of American English, Noah Webster wrote a letter to "the governors, instructors and trustees of the universities" of the United States in 1798. Webster called for a consensus of opinion on English usage: "It is of particular importance that the principles and structure of our mother tongue should be clearly defined, and if possible, universally agreed in, by the teachers of our universities, colleges and public schools" (Webster 1798:3). He then discusses specific points of usage in detail. This long letter published in book format is the first book on American English usage (Garner 2009:925). Over 400 usage books have been published in the United States since Webster's letter was published two hundred years ago (Garner 2009:925–935).

2.5.2. Survey of Usage Guides

In this thesis, I use several usage guides ranging in publication date from 1856 to 2012 in order to analyze prescriptive viewpoints on denominal verbs. Unlike the editions of the Webster and American Heritage dictionaries, each individual usage guide has a slightly different stance on their approach to usage rules. All come from a general prescriptivist viewpoint, but they have varying degrees of how dogmatic they are. Below are brief descriptions of the usage theory for each of the usage guides used within this research .

Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence. Walton Burgess's *Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence in Speaking, Pronouncing, and Writing the English Language, Corrected* (1856) was one of the first American usage guides to list usage items entry by entry, instead of describing usage in general terms and in chapter form. True to prescriptivist form, Burgess explains that his book "was prepared to meet the wants of persons, . . . who from deficiency of education, or from carelessness of manner, are in the habit of misusing many of the most common words of the

English language, distorting its grammatical forms, destroying its beauty, and corrupting its purity" (1856). Burgess gathered the most frequent mistakes in speech and writing and listed them one through 500.

Words and Their Uses. One of the most oft-cited American usage guides of the nineteenth century is Richard Grant White's *Words and Their Uses, Past and Present. A Study of the English Language* (1870). In a similar philosophy to Burgess, White writes in his preface that "The purpose of the book is the consideration of the right use and the abuse of words and idioms. . . . It is occupied almost exclusively with the correctness and fitness of verbal expression" (1870: 3). White organizes his ideas on usage into themed chapters like "Style" and "Misused Words" rather than listing individual usage items entry by entry.

The Verbalist. Usage items are listed alphabetically one by one in *The Verbalist* (1887) by Alfred Ayres. Ayres spends little space explaining his stance on usage, and rather points to the book's subtitle as the purpose of the book: "A manual devoted to brief discussions of the right and wrong use of words and to some other matters of interest to those who would speak and write with propriety" (1887). For Ayres—and Burgess and White before him—there is no question that there is a correct way of speaking and writing and that it is his responsibility to clearly explain the proper way of speech.

Helps in the Use of Good English. Alfred Raub's usage guide was published in 1897 and uses illustrative quotations to support his "convenient hand-book for editors, lawyers, teachers, clergymen and others who have occasion to write or speak the English language, and who desire to do so in accordance with approved modern usage" (1897: 3). His guide has chapters covering

punctuation, capital letters, and spelling and has fewer notes than Ayres does on individual usage items.

A desk-book of errors in English. In his usage guide printed in 1908, Vizetelly compiles a "vocabulary of errors," listing usage items alphabetically and entry by entry (1908: ix). Explaining his viewpoint on usage, Vizetelly writes, "The purpose of these pages is . . . to point ou common errors which he may unconsciously commit, and to help him to avoid them and the vulgarisms of the street which have crept into the language, as well as those absurd blunders that have been recorded as the unconscious acts of persons qualified in other respects to rank as masters of English" (1908: ix). Vizetelly continued into the twentieth centry the tradition of prescribing usage to correct what he felt was a fallen form.

Manual of Good English. In a departure from the black-and-white viewpoint of former prescriptivist writers, MacCracken and Sandison write in their 1917 usage guide of the need to balance expression and personality in writing with understanding of proper rules of writing. "The reminders of grammar and good form are too often dismissed in the effort to obtain vigor and freshness of thought," they write (1917:v). But their rules of good form come from a broader survey of usage: "Wherever possible the aim has been to incorporate the best use of great bodies of publications rather than the narrower and more theoretical rules of the makers of dictionaries" (1917: vi).

Words Confused and Misused. Continuing in a less dogmatic fashion, Weseen in his 1932 usage guides explains that "the ability to make the right use of words is not inherited from ancestors or received as a gift from the gods. It is acquired and developed by study" (v). He continues, "Remember that no one has attained perfection in the mastery of words" (Weseen 1932:vi),

implying that mistakes in language are natural and not as abhorrent as previous usage guide writers would suggest.

A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage. Evans and Evans's usage guide, *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*, appeared just before the descriptive *Webster's Third* brought about a maelstrom of criticism from prescriptivists. The 1957 guide asserts a liberal viewpoint more like the coming dictionary than Merriam-Webster's standard-dictating critics. Rather than lay down a permanent set of rules of proper language, Evans and Evans based their usage on the need for speakers to be understood and respected, acknowledging that correct usage changes as quickly as language changes (1957:v). "Since language changes this much, no one can say how a word 'ought' to be used. The best that anyone can do is to say how it *is* being used, and this is what a grammar should tell us," they wrote (Evans and Evans 1957:vi).

Modern American Usage. Almost a decade later, one of the most celebrated American usage guides was published. Follett's 1966 *Modern American Usage* was as conservative and prescriptive in view as Evans and Evans's was liberal and descriptive. Follett writes that the usage rules in his usage guide draw their "authority from the principle that good usage is what the people who think and care about words believe good usage to be" (1966:6). Follett writes that language "remains a subject deserving man's best care," and, therefore, "if we believe it possible to make words serve purposes that are more than momentary, we find the linguistic critique of grammar irrelevant and we recover the right to judge between those forms that are awkward and false and those that are delicate and expressive" (1966:22). For Follett, creating a usage guide was his obligation for the betterment of American English.

Dictionary of Contemporary Usage. This 1975 usage guide and its 1985 second edition created by a team of more than a hundred editors and writers at Harper and Row presented the middle ground to a certain extent. Consensus for each usage point was compiled through a panel of usage specialists—writers, editors, and public speakers. This panel provided for broader interpretation of prescriptive rules. "We make every effort not to be dogmatic and, most assuredly, not dictatorial," the introduction reads. "Even had we been so inclined, the reactions of our panelists and consultants would have convinced us otherwise for, of the many scores of questions put to the panelists, only a very few received unanimous verdicts. . . . This lack of unanimity is proof that language is no static thing to be fixed by the rules" (Morris and Morris 1985:xix–xx).

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. Unlike many other usage guides, *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* analyzes usage both through historical and present-day lenses. The dictionary compiles thoughts on usage from previous usage guides and then, in true Merriam-Webster style, shows current usage through illustrative quotations. Like the *Harper Dictionary*, *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* creates a final judgment on the consensus of actual usage and previous guides.

Garner's Modern American Usage. Garner lists ten principles in his 1998 preface to *Garner's Modern American Usage* for determining his usage rules. For example, following are two of his principles:

1. *Purpose.* Usage guides should help writers and speakers "use the language effectively."
2. *Linguistic Simplicity.* The simpler way is better.

Sitting last on his list is "actual usage." Though Garner places this principle last on the list, he writes, "In the end, the actual usage of educated speakers and writers is the overarching criterion

for correctness. But while actual usage can trump the other factors, it isn't the only consideration" (Garner 1998:xi). Garner recognizes that most linguists argue that "actual usage" should be the only criterion, but explains, "The problem for professional writers and editors is that they can't wait idly to see what direction the language takes" (Garner 1998:xi). Even with Garner's prescriptivist viewpoint, he uses a large body of usage examples to illustrate his prescriptions. Using search capabilities on NEXIS, a news database, and WESTLAW, a database of legal documents, Garner traced items in actual use.

Chapter 3: Method

This thesis compares corpus data for denominal verb usage over the last two hundred years to dictionary and usage guide entries for these same denominal verbs. This research will analyze how in sync dictionaries are in noting when these denominal verbs have achieved established usage—that is, when the denominal verbs have been used at a certain frequency in the corpus data. This methodology section discuss the following topics: (a) choosing research items, (b) determining established usage in corpora, and (c) gathering data.

3.1. Establishing Research Items

The corpus used predominantly in this research is the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA), which covers the time period between 1810 and 2009. It is the "largest structured corpus of historical American English" with 400 million words. In fact, it is about 100–200 times as large as any other structured corpus of historical American English. It contains text from five registers: spoken, fiction, newspapers, popular magazines, and scholarly journals. These registers are balanced across decades so that each decade has similar percentages of each genre, available text permitting. Much of this research is drawn from this corpus to track noun-to-verb conversion over the last two hundred years or so. COHA allows for searching by part of speech, tense, and register, and for collocates. Users can also search by decade or group of decades.

To determine which newly minted denominal verbs to study in this research, a list was created from COHA. The corpus was divided into four 50-year, chronological periods—1810–1859, 1860–1909, 1910–1959, and 1960–2009. From there, a list was formed using two criteria. First, the V-perc, or the percentage of verb usage compared to the total usage of all lexemes with both a noun and a verb form, had to be at least three times higher than in the previous 50 year

period. For example, the verb form of *feature* was used 8 percent of all its usages (both noun and verb) from 1910–1959 and more than tripled its percentage points in its usage from 1960–2009 with 28 percent. The large increase in verb usage percentage notes the likely occurrence of denominal conversion. Second, there had to be at least 20 tokens of noun forms and 20 tokens of verb forms in the later 50-year period. For example, a lexeme increased in verb usage percentage from 3 percent (say, 1 verb usage out of 33 tokens) in one 50-year period to 30 percent (say, 15 verb tokens out of 50) in the next 50-year period. While this scenario fulfills the criterion of a tripled percentage, there are not enough verb-form tokens (only 15) in the second 50-year period to be included in this list. This criterion eliminated lexemes with too little data as well as provided a marker for established usage; if a verb form is not used more than 20 times over the period of 50 years, there is not enough data to suggest that the verb form has indeed become established.

There were hundreds of lexemes produced that both had the required increase in percentage and had more than 20 tokens for both noun and verb forms in a given 50-year period. From these hundreds, I selected the lexemes with the most tokens, but before deciding on the final data set, the directionality of conversion was determined. All the lexemes on the list were predominantly used as nouns with an increase in usage as verbs, but this did not necessarily mean that the verb form had derived from noun-to-verb conversion initially. It may be that for centuries the noun form had been more common than the original verb form, so much so that the verb form never—or at least at the beginning of the 1800s, as this research suggests—achieved recognition as established.

Since this research focuses on noun-to-verb conversion specifically, I tested the lexemes that had the most tokens in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED).*The *OED* compiles quotations

in which the defined term is used throughout history. Part of the objective of the *OED* is to find the first printed usage of each defined term. While it is an impossible claim that the first quotation in the *OED* is the absolute first time that a term was published, the *OED*'s thorough and continuous search for early usage of each term it defines provides a fairly reliable resource for determining the period in which a term began being used. In this research, if the research item has a quotation in the *OED* in which it is used as a verb before it is used as a noun, the word was thrown out. For example, the lexeme "list" may have a stronger affinity to the noun form than the verb form for modern-day English speakers, but the *OED* shows the verb form to actually be the original form, in existence more than 100 hundred years before the noun form; thus, it was not included in the data set. Likewise, if the word appeared to be used concurrently as both a noun and a verb, it was also thrown out. The lexeme "stress" is an example of this. According to the *OED,* the noun form first occurred circa 1300 and the verb form occurred in 1303. The dictionary's sources for these dates come from old documents. Since the first occurrence of both the noun and the verb forms are so close in time and it is impossible to determine that there were no earlier occurrences in an unknown document somewhere or in a document that is no longer extant, the lexeme "stress" and others like it were not included.

Through this process, I selected 25 lexemes for each 50-year period, totaling 75 words in my data set. By selecting 25 lexemes from each period, this research can discuss conversion over a broader spectrum than a mere 50-year period.

Table 3.1. Research terms divided by chronological period.

1860–1909	1910–1959	1960–2009
buck	audition	cascade
catalogue	backpack	censor
complement	bond	daydream
crane	bugle	dial
drone	co-author	earmark
focus	contact	finance
groom	defect	function
harvest	document	highlight
hinge	feature	implement
jack	freak	interview
lapse	fuel	park
loaf	funnel	purse
massage	gesture	ration
mime	lobby	requisition
mop	mandate	safeguard
outline	mastermind	salvage
query	monitor	schedule
raid	orbit	scrap
silhouette	program	shuttle
snipe	spark	slate
subpoena	stockpile	sponsor
supplement	surf	stall
surge	tape	tailor
telephone	target	trek
veto	trigger	upgrade

Though many of the denominal verbs selected for research have examples in the *OED* of verb use centuries before the 1810 to 2009 date range studied in this research, it appears that the verb forms were extremely rare or had not been commonly used for a substantial period of time before sometime in the last two centuries. These denominal verbs may have existed for a long period, but they were not considered established at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this research is to study when these denominal verbs became established, not when they first occurred. Thus, the question arises: When is a denominal verb considered established?

3.1.1. DETERMINING ESTABLISHED USAGE

This question of when a denominal verb is established in the language is integral to this research as its main objective is to determine how well standard-prescribing entities (i.e., dictionaries and usage guides) align with real-world usage. Instead of relying on intuitive beliefs on usage as most usage materials do, this research relies on quantifiable data in a corpus-based approach.

Unfortunately, at the time of this research, there is little literature available on determining established usage through corpora. Using the *Corpus of Contemporary American English,* I tested several denominal verbs that have become common over the last couple of decades. The chosen denominal verbs are new in the language but have also achieved a certain level of acceptability; that is, they would not surprise a reader if found in a newspaper or magazine. I used the query "[verb].[v*]." For example, in the query "[dance].[v*]," the section "[dance]" would search for all forms of *dance* (i.e., *dance, dances, dancing, danced*), and the section "[v*]" would search for the tokens of *dance* tagged as a verb. I used this query to search these new but accepted denominal verbs (see Table 3.1). The queries "[multitask].[v*]" and "[geek].[v*]" both showed a jump in percent of verb usage between the 2000–2004 period and the 2005–2009 period, after which the percent remains relatively steady. Similar jumps in the results occur with the queries "[message].[v*]" and "[trend].[v*]."

Table 3.2. Tokens per 5 million words.

Denominal Verb	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2012
bookmark	0	.1	.15	.45	.60
multitask	.05	.15	.85	2.35	2.5
message	.15	.6	1.75	4.35	4.7
geek	.3	.65	.9	1.35	1.35
trend	.9	1.4	2	2.95	7.3
skateboard	1	3.8	5.2	5.2	2.6
task	1.2	1.25	4.05	7.45	15.1

Using a rough estimate of the ratio of usage for these denominal verbs above, I determined that the ratio of one use of that denominal verb out of every five million words of text in the corpus would be the benchmark for established usage in this research; that is, the decade in the *Corpus of Historical American English* in which a denominal verb was used once per five million words would mark the decade in which the verb form had reached established usage in the corpus. [5] Because there is little research in determining criteria for deciding established usage in the corpora, it was necessary to rely a bit on intuition. For example, "to bookmark" feels fairly commonplace, yet it still has not reached a ratio of one token per five million words in the corpus. "To geek" or "to message," on the other hand, feels more like slang terms than the other words I analyzed. Yet, both terms show a ratio well above one token per five million words. My intuitions did not necessarily agree with the ratios shown in Table 3.1. To select a ratio for this research, I used these intuitions and the data collected of these ratios for the words listed above . Obviously, this criterion is merely an educated guess at determining when corpus data reflects established usage, but at the present time, it is the best available option in using corpus to discuss usage.

3.2. Gathering Data

3.2.1. CORPUS

With this ratio of established usage determined, each denominal verb from the data set was searched within the corpora. The query, using the term "trigger" as an example, "[trigger].[v*]" was used to search all verb forms of the research item within the *Corpus of*

[5] Note that the *Corpus of Historical American English* delineates data in decade-length groupings rather than five-year periods as in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English.*

Historical American English. This query will provide all forms of the lexeme (i.e., *trigger, triggers, triggered, triggering*) when it is being used as a verb (i.e., 'He is *triggering* an explosion' as opposed to 'He pulled the *trigger* on the gun'). Within the corpus, words are tagged for parts of speech by a computer tagging program. While the program is fairly accurate, tagging is not always perfect. With this research in particular, accurate tagging of part of speech is essential. To guard against mislabeled parts of speech, I read every token in context to double-check that the search paradigm (i.e., '[verb].[v*]') was truly producing verb tokens and not noun or adjective tokens.I noted only tokens that were used as verbs in my data collection.

From there, the corpus decade of established usage (CDE) in which the research item was used once per five million words was determined. There were two caveats to the selection of this decade of established usage: (1) the verb must have three separate tokens in the decade in which it is used once per five million words and (2) the verb must be used by at least two different publications in that decade. The first caveat provides multiple uses on which to base established usage rather than a one-time occurrence. The second caveat suggests usage across a broader group of writers; one writer may use a certain denominal verb repetitively, but if no one else uses the verb, then it should not be considered generally established. For example, though the verb "spark" first had a ratio of usage of one per five million words in 1810, there was only one occurrence of the verb form in that decade. Thus, I continued gathering data for subsequent decades to find the decade in which "spark" was used as a verb three different times and in two different publications. This occurs in 1880, when six tokens can be found for a verb form of "spark" from multiple publications. The reverse situation can also be found when three instance of a verb is found in one decade, but the ratio does not quite equal one use per five million words. The CDE for the verb form was checked to meet all three of these conditions.

One final question arose in determining the entrance of denominal verbs into the language. As noted in the literature review, most researchers believe that noun-to-verb conversion is an immediate, one-step process (i.e., a word changes part of speech directly from noun to verb). However, I found several verb-like forms in my research that were not obviously a verb or a noun. For example, a gerund form (i.e., *surfing)* would constitute a form that has both nominal and verb-like qualities to it. Is the gerund form, or any other ambiguous form, the first verb-like form found in the language? Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik discuss this gradiency from deverbal nouns to participles with 14 degrees of gradiency, moving from the example "some painting of Brown's" to "Brown is painting his daughter" (1985:1290–1291). While these steps of gradiency are beneficial in describing noun-to-verb conversion, particularly with forms that end in *–ing*, there is still room for subjective interpretation of when a form is a verb or not. To retain a focus on my main research question, I will decline delineating between the gradient steps and opt for the following distinction in noting a verb form versus a non-verb form for the purposes of this research: generally those *–ing* and *–ed* verb forms occurring as part of finite verb constructions in the corpus data, will be considered as verbs. By "finite" I mean that they have tense or modality. All other forms—be they gerunds, adjectival participles, or participial clauses—will not be considered verbs. Generally, the division between what is counted as a verb and what is not will be between finite and nonfinite verb constructions. Below are examples of verb structures I did and did not include in the token count. An "X" in the first column signifies that the form was counted as a verb in this research.

Table 3.3. Examples of verb constructions.

X	*simple present*	'As he *dials*, he continues talking.'
X	*present progressive*[6]	'Now corn syrup producers *are rationing* their customers.'

[6] I did not include the construction GET + *nonfinite -ing participle* as a verb form in this research since this construction is fairly new and would not have been in use throughout the entire period I am studying (1810–2009).

X	*simple past*	'They *catalogued* everything, even the beneficent order itself, indexing it as a myth.'
X	*past perfect*	'I *had auditioned* for Gower Champion for the original 'Hello, Dolly!' but I couldn't make a triple pirouette,'
X	*passive*[7]	'Syria *is mandated* to France under the League of Nations and Palestine to Britain.'
X	*modal constructions*	'During the fall and early winter the farmers *will harvest* a crop of some three billion bushels.'
X	*infinitive*	'They aimed *to supplement* the action of those poems.'[8]
	adjectival nonfinite –ing participle	'*Cascading* streams also shot by us, carrying light and music.'
	adjectival nonfinite –ed participle	' . . . as an old, worn-out jackass does to a handsome, high spirited, well *groomed* race-horse.'
	nonfinite clause formed with –ing participle	'I have been sight-seeing all the afternoon, *interviewing* cathedrals.'
	nonfinite clause formed with –ed participle	'There must be the contagion of a noble indignation *fueled* with harder wood than abstractions.'
	gerund	'Although he called *lobbying* plunder, and looked upon those features of it which diminished his profits as extortion, still he held it in respect and almost in veneration.'

The forms listed above that I am not considering verb forms in this research may be considered by some to be functioning as verbs. For example, the clausal *–ing* and *–ed* forms can be described as nonfinite verbs with an elided modal verb or a form of *to be* or *to have*. However, in considering these clausal forms, a great deal of ambiguous structures were found in the corpus. For example, would *daydreaming* in the following sentence be a gerund or an example of a clausal *–ing* form: 'They could have long stretches of *daydreaming* without interruption from that vulgar thing, work'? Similar ambiguities occur throughout the corpus data with these clausal forms. There is not an easy way to identify the part of speech in these structures (Quirk et al. 1985:1290–1291; Oaks 2010: 504–506). Again, since this research is

[7] I did not include the construction GET + *passive* as a verb form in this research since this construction is fairly new and would not have been in use throughout the entire period I am studying (1810–2009).
[8] If the infinitive form was used as a nominal, I did not note it as a verb.

trying to explain when a denominal verb form is established in the corpus data, I refrained from trying to hash out and work through each of these ambiguities.

But even with removing the nonfinite clausal forms, there is still ambiguity present, specifically with passive constructions. When the *–ed* participle in passive constructions is preceded by an adverb, it is often hard to distinguish whether the adverb is modifying an *–ed* participle that is acting as a predicate adjective or if the adverb is describing the verb. For example, is the following sentence describing a 'neatly tailored suit' or describing tailoring that was done in a neat fashion: 'The suit was neatly tailored'? Often, these forms are hard to differentiate. I decided to treat these forms as verbs since there are valid arguments for them being considered a verb. However, I noted in the results section when including these forms would have altered the CDE within the footnotes.

3.2.2. Dictionaries and Usage Guides

After the CDE was determined, it was compared to when dictionaries and usage guides first listed the verb form of the words in the data set. In a perfect world, dictionaries and usage guides would be released consistently every decade in order to match the same data grouping found in our corpora. Reality is much more varied than that. For example, while some editions of the dictionaries used in this research do indeed come out about a decade apart, an edition or two have closer to 25 years between their release dates. That said, these editions—even with their gap in release date—are the best we have. For each research item, I consulted the following dictionaries and usage guides:

Table 3.4. Dictionaries used in research.

Edition	Publication Year
American Dictionary of the English Language	1828

American Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.	1841
An American dictionary of the English language, revised and enlarged ed.	1864
Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language	1890
Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.	1900
Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language	1909
Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd ed.	1934
American Heritage Dictionary, 1st ed.	1969
American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd ed.	1980
American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed.	1992
American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed.	2000
American Heritage Dictionary, 5th ed.	2012

Table 3.5. Usage guides used in research.

Edition	Publication Year
Walton Burgess, *Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence in Speaking, Pronouncing, and Writing the English Language, Corrected*	1856
Richard Grant White, *Words and Their Uses, Past and Present*	1870
Alfred Ayres, *The Verbalist*	1887
Albert N. Raub, *Helps in the Use of Good English*	1897
Frank H. Vizetelly, *A Desk-Book of Errors in English*	1908
H. N. MacCracken and Helen E. Sandison, *Manual of Good English*	1917
Maurice H. Weseen, *Words Confused and Misused*	1932

Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans, *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*	1957
Wilson Follett, *Modern American Usage*	1966
William Morris and Mary Morris, *Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage*	1975
William Morris and Mary Morris, *Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage,* 2nd ed.	1985
Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage	1994
Bryan A. Garner, *Garner's Modern American Usage*	1998
Bryan A. Garner, *Garner's Modern American Usage*	2009

Of note is the absence of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* published in 1961. As was noted in section 2.4.4., *Webster's Third* represented a change in lexicographical philosophy for the Merriam-Webster Company. *Webster's Third* is much more descriptive in nature than its preceding editions. Since this research focuses on prescribed forms in usage materials, I decided against using *Webster's Third* because it was more descriptive in nature. Instead of using Merriam-Webster dictionaries from the 1960s to present, I chose to use editions of the *American Heritage Dictionary* because these dictionaries were published in direct response to *Webster's Third* as more traditional dictionaries.

Once I noted which editions of these dictionaries and usage guides listed a verb form for the lexemes in the data set, I determined if they agreed with the corpus data, or the CDE described above. I considered an edition of a dictionary or usage guide to be in agreement with the corpus data if the first appearance of a verb form occurred in an edition published in the same decade as the CDE or in the closest edition following the CDE. For example, the term *finance* has a CDE in the 1900s. *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language,* 2nd ed., was released in 1900 and was the first edition of the dictionary to list *finance* as a verb. Thus, the

CDE and the usage materials are 100 percent in line with each other—the dictionary is considered 100 percent in agreement. Likewise, the term *interview* entered the language, according to the corpus, in 1870. The edition released the soonest after this decade would be *Webster's International Dictionary,* 1st ed., published in 1890. This edition is indeed the first edition to express *interview* as a verb. Even though the first dictionary to note the verb form is not published until two decades after the corpus notes the verb form, it is still considered 100 percent in agreement because it is the nearest publication to the CDE. The previous published edition was in 1864—before the corpus suggests the established arrival of *interview.* Both of these examples show complete concordance between the corpus data and the dictionary data.

For dictionary editions that have more disparity between their first listings of a data item as a verb and the CDE, I determined how many editions a dictionary listing was off by. Yet another example or two: corpus data shows that *function* entered the language as a verb in the 1900s. However, a verb form is listed in the *Webster's International,* 1st ed., in 1890 rather than in the second edition in 1900. Thus, the entry would be marked as one edition too early. The verb form of *veto*, on the other hand, entered the language in 1830 according to the corpus, so it should be listed in the 1841 edition; however, it is not listed as a verb until 1864. This entry would be marked as one edition too late.

While dictionaries do not have many usage notes, there are a few usage terms listed at times with these new verb forms. If a dictionary entry included the note "not in use,""obs." (meaning "obsolete"), "colloq." (meaning "colloquial"), "slang," "little used," "rare" or other similar usage notes, it was not considered to be the first listing of a verb form. This research is focused on whether dictionaries consider a term standard or not. All of these usage notes imply that the verb form is not quite standard. When these terms were noted, I selected the next edition

listing a verb form that did not contain these qualifying notes. At times, multiple definitions were given for a term. If one of the definitions had one of these usage notes, but another definition did not, it was considered the first appearance of a standard form. The definition without a usage note suggests standardness for at least one form of the verb. For example, the first listing of research item *scrap* in a dictionary has among its multiple definitions the following two: (1) "To make into scrap or scraps" and (2) "To fight; quarrel. *Slang*." Even though the second definition includes the usage note "slang," the first definition has no note and, therefore, represents a listing of standard verb usage.

There were other usage notes employed in the dictionaries, but these notes did not describe a nonstandard form. Examples include "recent," "med." (meaning "medical"), "law," etc. For the purposes of this research, these terms only described when the verb first occurred or the fields in which the verb is used, not that the given verb is not standard. For example, the first listing in 1900 of the research item *massage* as a verb includes the definition: "(Med.) To treat by means of massage; to rub or knead; as, to massage a patient with ointment." There is no reason that the note "med." suggests that *massage* is not in standard usage. Thus, the first dictionary edition noting the denominal verb would be the 1900 edition.

3.2.3. Differences of Meanings

When comparing dictionary definitions to the context of the denominal verbs and their meanings as used in the corpus data, there is sometimes disparity between meanings. At times, a dictionary definition may be more literal while the corpus use may be more metaphorical. For example, *earmark* has a more metaphorical meaning in the corpus example than in the dictionary definitions below:

Corpus: ‘A sum of 100,000,000 gold crowns, from an international loan amounting to 253,000,000 gold crowns, was *earmarked* for the purpose of balancing the budget.’

Dictionary: ‘to mark, as sheep by cropping or slitting the ear’

Though the meaning of *earmark* is the corpus is not as literal as the dictionary definition, I still recognized forms (like the corpus example of earmark) that varied from the dictionary definition as representative of the meaning found in the dictionary; I chose to use forms that were broadly polysemous between the dictionary definitions and the corpus meanings. With many examples in the corpus data, it would be difficult to clearly delineate when these denominal verbs represented exactly the same meaning as the dictionary definitions. However, in cases of clear homonymy, I did not cite these as representative of the dictionary definitions.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents results of the analysis of dictionaries and usage guides in comparison to corpus data. Included in this section are (a) a presentation of the result data and (b) an explanation of exceptional cases within the results.

4.1. Dictionary Data

Before presenting the results, a few definitions are necessary. First, as described in the method chapter, CDE stands for the corpus decade of established usage, or the decade in which corpus data for denominal verbs meets the criteria (also outlined in the method chapter) for established use. Second, 1DE stands for the first dictionary edition listing each denominal verb used in this research. For example, the first time *feature* is listed as a verb in the selected dictionaries is in the 1909 *Merriam-Webster New International Dictionary*; this would be the 1DE. Third, the term *CDE-projected edition* refers to the dictionary edition that the CDE suggests would be the first edition a denominal verb is listed. For example, the term *groom* has a CDE in the 1840s, thus the CDE-projected edition would be the 1841 Webster dictionary since it is the first edition occurring in the same decade as the CDE.[9] The CDE-projected edition may also be published in a decade following the CDE as with *lobby,* which has a CDE in the 1870s—the CDE-projected edition is not until the 1890 Webster dictionary because there are no dictionary editions used in this research published from 1870 to 1890. The 1890 dictionary is the first edition published following the CDE.

Data was collected by comparing the 1DE to the CDE-projected edition. For example, as mentioned earlier, *groom* has a CDE in the 1840s, so the CDE-projected edition is the 1841

[9] In a couple of instances, editions of the dictionaries were published in the last year of a decade. In these cases the following criteria will be used: the CDE-projected edition for CDEs in the 1910s will be the 1909 *New International Dictionary,* and the CDE-projected edition for CDEs in the 1970s will be the 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary.*

Webster dictionary. As expected, the 1DE is, in fact, the 1841 Webster dictionary. According to the criteria outlined in the method chapter, the CDE and the 1DE have complete concordance. The term *drone,* on the other hand, has a CDE in the 1850s, but has a verb form listed not just in the 1864 Webster edition—the CDE-projected edition—but also in the 1841 edition and 1828 edition (the 1DE) as well. The 1DE is two editions earlier than the CDE would predict. To tabulate the data for all of the research terms, I used numerical labels to describe these differences between the CDE-projected edition and the 1DE. Terms that had complete concordance between the CDE and the 1DE were labeled with the number "0." Terms that had 1DEs prior to the CDE were given negative numerical values depending on how far off they were from the CDE; *drone* was given a value of "-2" because the 1DE occurred two editions earlier than the edition projected from the CDE. Similarly, a term that occurred in the dictionary five issues earlier than the CDE-projected edition would be given the value "-5." Likewise, terms that had 1DEs later than the CDE-projected edition were given positive numerical values; a term having a 1DE two editions after the CDE-projected edition would be labelled "2." Table 4.1 details the overall results for the 75 different denominal verbs studied in this thesis in this manner.

Table 4.1. Overall results noting difference between the CDE-projected edition and the 1DE.

No. of Editions Different from CDE-Projected Edition	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	**0**	1	2
No. of Terms	3	1	3	6	12	22	**21**	5	2
Percentage of Overall Data	4.0	1.3	4.0	8.0	16.0	29.3	**28.0**	6.7	2.7

Following is a complete list of the research items, their first occurrence in the corpus, their CDEs, 1DEs, CDE-projected editions, and the numerical value assigned to show

relationship between the 1DE and the CDE-projected edition. The terms are organized alphabetically and into the three chronological periods discussed in the method chapter (i.e., 1860–1909, 1910–1959, and 1960–2009).

Table 4.2. Denominal verbs with the CDE, 1DE, and CDE-Projected Edition, divided chronologically.

	Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
1860–1909	buck	1843	1860s	1828	1864	-2
	catalogue	1849	1850s	1828	1864	-2
	complement	1859	1870s	1909	1890	2
	crane	1845	1880s	1890	1890	0
	drone	1820	1820s	1828	1828	0
	focus	1866	1880s	1864	1890	-1
	groom	1844	1840s	1841	1841	0
	harvest	1833	1830s	1828	1841	-1
	hinge	1840	1840s	1828	1841	-1
	jack	1868	1900s	1890	1900	-1
	lapse	1823	1820s	1828	1828	0
	loaf	1844	1860s	1864	1864	0
	massage	1895	1910s[10]	1900	1909	-1
	mime	1883	1960s	1909	1969	-2
	mop	1833	1850s	1828	1864	-2
	outline	1839	1850s	1828	1864	-2
	query	1820	1820s	1828	1828	0
	raid	1870	1870s	1890	1890	0
	silhouette	1882	1900s	1890	1900	-1
	snipe	1892	1930s	1900	1934	-2
	subpoena	1835	1880s	1828	1890	-3

[10] One token for *massage* was an ambiguous passive: "It'll have to be freshly tuned and *massaged*." As noted in chapter 3, ambiguous passive forms were included in the token count as a verb form.

	Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
	supplement	1822	1850s	1841	1864	-1
	surge	1831	1830s	1828	1841	-1
	telephone	1869	1880s	1890	1890	0
	veto	1835	1830s	1864	1841	1
1910–1959	cascade	1891	1920s	1890	1934	-3
	censor	1877	1910s	1909	1909	0
	daydream	1892	1940s	1909	1969	-2
	dial	1904	1930s	1864	1934	-4
	earmark	1911	1920s	1828	1934	-6
	finance	1894	1900s	1900	1900	0
	function	1887	1900s	1890	1900	-1
	highlight	1937	1940s	1969	1969	0
	implement	1884	1930s	1864	1934	-4
	interview	1868	1870s	1890	1890	0
	park	1856	1860s	1828	1864	-2
	purse	1832	1830s	1828	1841	-1
	ration	1830	1920s	1890	1934	-3
	requisition	1864	1890s	1890	1890	0
	safeguard	1861	1890s	1909	1890	2
	salvage	1912	1910s	1909	1909	0
	schedule	1893	1900s	1890	1900	-1
	scrap	1868	1900s	1909	1900	1
	shuttle	1892	1920s	1864	1934	-4
	slate	1823	1890s	1828	1890	-3
	sponsor	1907	1920s	1934	1934	0
	stall	1815	1890s	1828	1890	-3

	Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
	tailor	1836	1920s[11]	1828	1934	-6
	trek	1900	1920s	1900	1934	-2
	upgrade	1941	1940s	1969	1969	0
1960–2009	audition	1940	1950s	1969	1969	0
	backpack	1974	1980s	1980	1980	0
	bond	1833	1850s	1828	1864	-2
	bugle	1872	1950s	1909	1969	-2
	co-author	1894	1970s	1980	1969	1
	contact	1894	1930s	1909	1934	-1
	defect	1816	1950s	1934	1969	-1
	document	1837	1930s	1828	1934	-6
	feature	1840	1900s	1909	1900	1
	freak	1850	1960s	1969	1969	0
	fuel	1876	1940s	1909	1969	-2
	funnel	1918	1940s	1934	1969	-1
	gesture	1852	1910s	1828	1909	-5
	lobby	1867	1870s	1864	1890	-1
	mandate	1920	1970s	1934	1969	-1
	mastermind	1940	1950s[12]	1969	1969	0
	monitor	1879	1940s	1934	1969	-1
	orbit	1876	1950s	1969	1969	0

[11] A few tokens for *tailor* were ambiguous passives: “This type of Elting has to be beautifully designed and beautifully tailored”; “It has all been expertly tailored for John Barrymore's profile, for his bark, his meditative scowl, his glance of an amorous lion, his strides in high, patent-leather boots”; “A piping of one of the colors in the chintz may be used, and should be neatly tailored and come exactly to the edges of the piece of furniture.” As noted in chapter 3, ambiguous passive forms were included in the token count as a verb form.

[12] *Mastermind* almost achieved the qualifications to have a CDE in the 1940s. However, I did not include the following token in my overall token count for the 1940s: “To mastermind the change of command, an old soldier of fortune who had fought through Chicago's rowdiest journalistic wars slipped into town.” *Mastermind* in this sentence behaved similarly to the clausal *–ing* and *–ed* forms discussed in section 3.2.1. and to keep in uniform with these forms, I did not include this token. Had I included it, then the 1940s would have been the first decade in which *mastermind* was used in a frequency of 1 token per 5 million words in the corpus. Because I did not count it, the 1950s is the CDE.

	Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
	program	1930	1950s	1934	1969	-1
	spark	1815	1880s	1864	1890	-1
	stockpile	1942	1950s	1934	1969	-1
	surf	1952	1970s	1934	1969	-1
	tape	1860	1940s	1900	1969	-3
	target	1922	1970s	1980	1969	1
	trigger	1894	1940s	1934	1969	-1

Upon beginning this research, I hypothesized that the 1DEs would be far off timing with the CDE-projected editions. I suspected that in their self-declared role of proclaiming proper English, they would be slower in recognizing denominal verbs than usage in the corpus data would show. Surprisingly, dictionaries were quite aligned with the corpus data in noting new denominal verbs in comparison with the CDE. Of the 75 words tested, 21 words or 28 percent of the research items held complete concordance with the CDE-projected edition. And 48 of the 75 words, a full 64 percent of the research items, were either right on time with the CDE-projected edition or just one edition early or late (see Table 4.3). All but a handful of words from the data set were listed in dictionaries editions with or before the CDE. Thus, the results are counter to my initial hypothesis. The dictionaries are relatively well-aligned with the corpus data.

Table 4.3. Denominal verbs that had 1DEs either in complete concordance with the CDE-projected edition or one edition earlier or later than the CDE-projected edition.

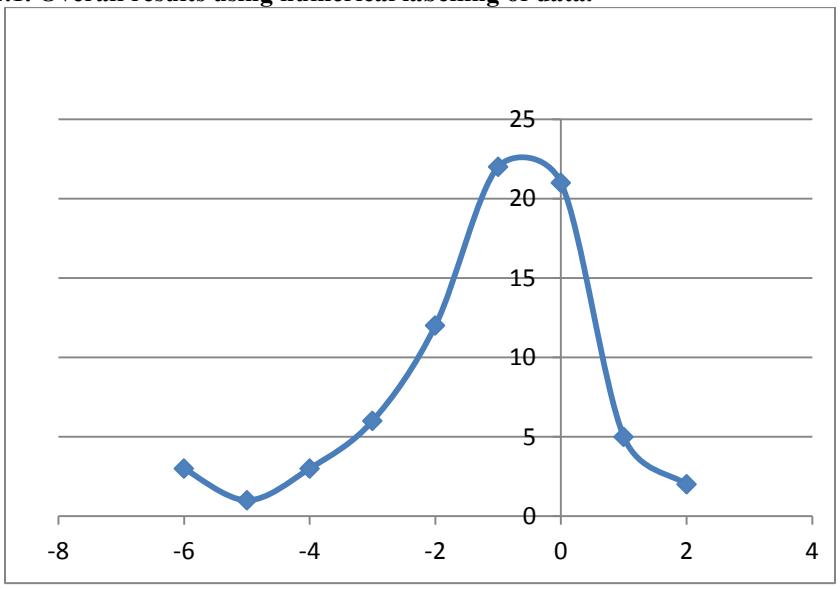
Complete Concordance (0)	One Edition Early (-1)	One Edition Late (1)
audition	contact	co-author
backpack	defect	feature
censor	focus	scrap
crane	function	target
drone	funnel	veto

finance	harvest
freak	hinge
groom	jack
highlight	lobby
interview	massage
lapse	mandate
loaf	monitor
mastermind	program
orbit	purse
query	schedule
raid	silhouette
requisition	spark
salvage	stockpile
sponsor	supplement
telephone	surge
upgrade	surf
	trigger

4.2. Graphs

Below are a series of graphs showing the overall results as well as graphs showing differing chronological periods.

Figure 4.1. Overall results using numerical labelling of data.



When I initially selected the research items, I selected 25 denominal verbs from three different chronological periods: 1860–1909, 1910–1959, and 1960–2009. The data for these three periods can be seen in the following three graphs.

Figure 4.2. Results for 1860–1909.

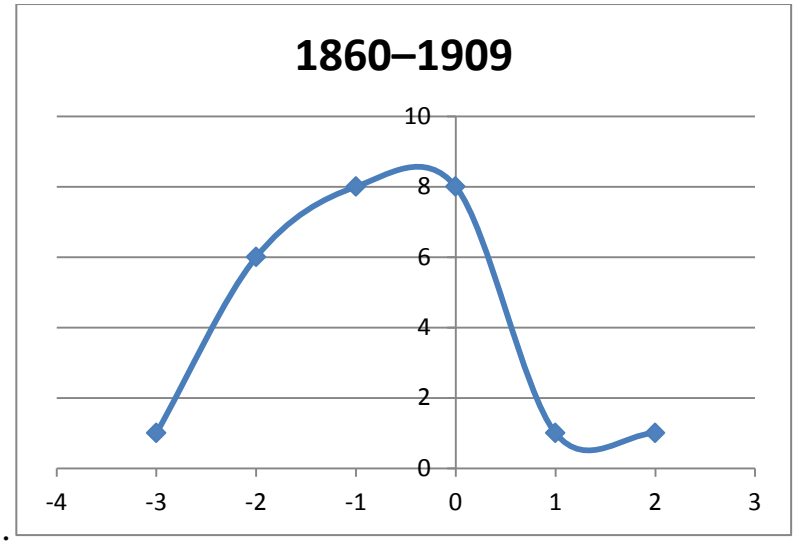


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Figure 4.3. Results for 1910–1959.

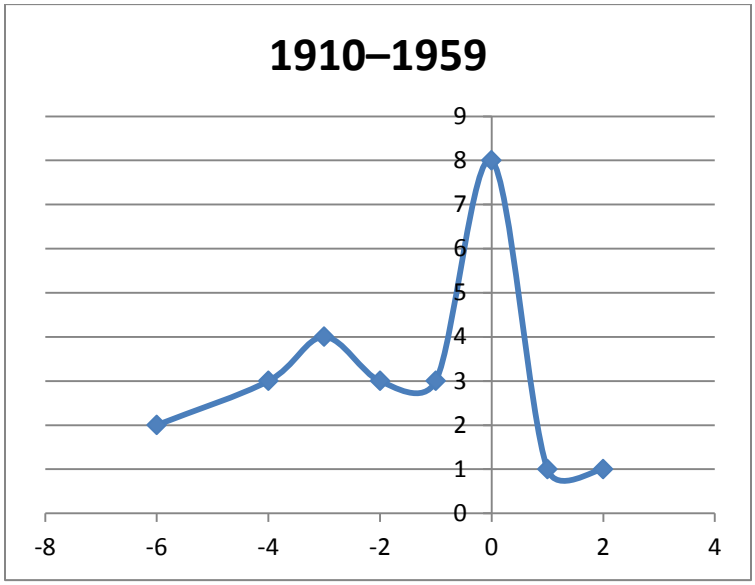
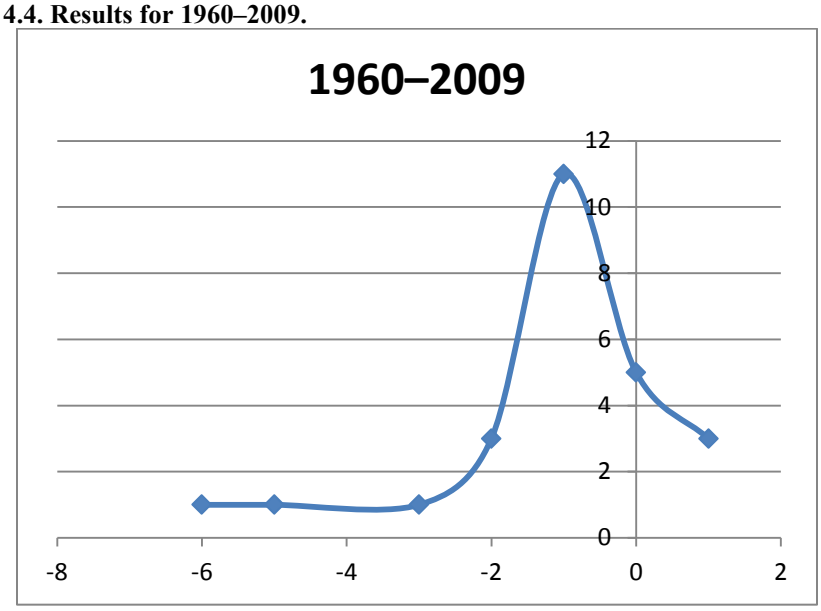


Figure 4.4. Results for 1960–2009.



There is a certain amount of regularity between these three periods. For all three, the majority of the 1DEs aligned with the CDE-projected edition, meaning "0" or complete concordance, or were one or two editions early. The latter two graphs show a greater range left of "0." Because they account for later periods in time, there are more previous dictionary editions in which denominal verbs could be listed; before 1960 there are seven dictionary editions used in this research, whereas before 1860 (the start of the first graph's time period), there are only two editions. This accounts for the larger range on the left side of the x-axis.

Graph 4.3 looks the most different from the other two graphs in that there is a dip at "-1" (or when the 1DE is one issue earlier than the CDE-projected edition). In both graphs 4.2 and 4.4, "-1" is the most common relationship between the 1DE and the CDE-projected edition. There is not a clear reason why there is a disparity between 1910–1959 period and the other two periods. The CDE-projected editions for this group of words spanned throughout the period; thus, it was not that one edition was less consistent than the others. However, unlike most of the researched dictionaries, the dictionaries directly preceding the 1910–1959 period were published in quick succession—editions came out in 1890, 1900, and 1909, less than 20 years apart. In

multiple instances, there were over 20 years difference in publication date between only two editions (e.g., the 1934 and 1969 editions). It is much more likely to be two editions off than only one when dictionary editions are being published every decade. For instance, *cascade* has a CDE in the 1920s. Its CDE-projected edition is the 1934 Webster dictionary, but its 1DE is the 1890 Webster edition, making it three editions early—meaning four issues were published quickly in a 44 year period. On the other hand, the dictionary entry for *mandate* appears to be much more in agreement with corpus data: the CDE is the 1970s, meaning the 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary* would be the CDE-projected edition. Its 1DE is one edition early with a verb definition listed in the 1934 edition, even though there is a 35 year gap between the publication dates. It may be that the "-1" is low on the graph for the 1910–1959 period because with the 1890, 1900, and 1909 editions published so close together it is more likely to be more than one issue off.

Also of note with this period is the fact that all seven of the cases in the overall data in which the 1DE was four to six editions earlier than the CDE-projected edition are denominal verbs from the 1910–1959 period (see table 4.4). The dictionaries directly preceding this period are published close together making it easier for the 1DEs to be further away from the CDE-projected editions. This supports the idea that 1DEs in this period are more likely to be further off from the CDE-projected editions.

Table 4.4. Denominal verbs with large disparity between the CDE and 1DE.[13]

Word	1st CDE Occurrence	CDE-Projected Edition	Dictionary Definition	Number Off

[13] The verbs described in Table 4.4. will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Word	1st CDE Occurrence	CDE-Projected Edition	Dictionary Definition	Number Off
dial	**1930:** "In another second, Chan had the telephone book in his hand, and was *dialing* a number."	**1934**	**1864:** "to measure with a dial"; "(*Mining.*) to survey with a dial"	-4
document	**1930:** "The expression 'tell it to the marines' is used to *document* lack of faith when some one tells an impossible yarn."	**1934**	**1828:** "to furnish with documents; to furnish with instructions and proofs, or with papers necessary to establish facts. A ship should be *documented* according to the direction of law"; "to teach; to instruct; to direct"	-6
earmark	**1922:** "'It's a Ute pony,' he said, after he had looked it over carefully. He knew this because the Indians *earmarked* their mounts." *ALSO* **1925:** "A sum of 100,000,000 gold crowns, from an international loan amounting to 253,000,000 gold crowns, was *earmarked* for the purpose of balancing the budget."	**1934**	**1828:** "to mark, as sheep by cropping or slitting the ear"	-6
gesture	**1912:** "At last he looked back and *gestured* to them. They understood."	**1909**	**1828:** "to accompany with gesture or action"	-5

Word	1st CDE Occurrence	CDE-Projected Edition	Dictionary Definition	Number Off
implement	**1931:** "Stanley Baldwin, leader of the Conservatives, specifically pledged himself that if he returned to power his new government would *implement* the round table proposals by carrying them on to completion in an act of Parliament giving India the desired Constitution."	**1934**	**1864:** "to accomplish [*Rare.*]"; to provide with an implement or implements; to cause to be fulfilled, satisfied, or carried out, by means of an implement or implements"; "(*Scots Laws.*) to fulfill or perform, as a contract or an engagement"	-4
shuttle	**1920:** "'Would you mind telling me what brought you to this part of the country?' countered Peter. 'My husband,' I curtly retorted. And that chilled him perceptibly. But he saw that I was not to be *shuttled* aside."	**1934**	**1864:** "to move like a shuttle"	-4
tailor	**1920:** "He had been *tailored* by the best man's outfitter in New York."	**1934**	**1828:** "to practice of making men's clothes"	-6

4.3. Exceptional Cases

While the majority of the research items could be categorized easily in determining the 1DE, a couple of the denominal verbs had exceptions. The CDE-projected edition for *fuel* was the 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary.* However, the verb form of *fuel* is listed in the 1828 ("to

feed with combustible matter" and "to store with fuel or firing"), 1841 (same definitions as 1828 ed.), and 1864 ("to feed with fuel or combustible matter. (*Obs.*)" and "to store or furnish with fuel or firing") editions of Webster's dictionary. The form can also be found in the 1890 and 1900 editions but with the usage note for "obsolete" used for both definitions: "to feed with fuel (*Obs.*)" and "to store or furnish with fuel or firing (*Obs.*)." As noted in the method chapter, definitions that included usage notes like "obsolete" were not included as a listing of a denominal verb. The verb form of *fuel* is again listed, however, in the 1909 edition without any usage notes: "to feed or furnish with fuel" and "to procure or gather fuel." As is expected, language is a fluid process, and words come in and out of popularity and use. In the case of *fuel,* a decision had to be made between labelling the 1828 edition as the 1DE or the 1909. The overarching idea behind this research is to note in which decade corpus data shows a certain level of accepted use (using the criteria outlined in the method section) with the expectation that this decade marks the beginning of continued use. Matching this expectation of continued use, I selected the 1909 edition as the 1DE because *fuel* is labelled as a verb in all following editions. Also, there was no elegant way of noting this period of time when *fuel* was not listed (without usage notes). It was cleaner to select the 1909 edition as the 1DE.

The term *freak* also has an interesting lexicographical history. *Freak* is first listed as a verb in the 1828 Webster's dictionary ("to variegate; to checker"). It is listed in the next four editions as well. However, in the 1909 edition, *freak* is listed with the following definitions: "to variegate; checker; streak *Rare*; to do freakish acts; to sport; frolic *R*[*are*]." The 1934 also lists the verb with this definition, "to do freakish acts; sport; frolic. *Rare.*" Both of these editions mark the denominal verb's definitions as rare. Like the usage note "obsolete" used with *fuel*, the usage note "rare" suggests that the word and its definitions are not considered fully standard by

the dictionary. It is not until the 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary* that *freak* is listed as verb without usage notes ("to speckle or streak with color"). There are no usage notes in the following editions either. Thus, 1969 would be the 1DE for *freak* rather than the 1828 Webster edition because it is from the 1969 edition on that *freak* is listed without notes about its standardness.

In another example of an exceptional instance, *defect* also has usage notes in some of its editions. *Defect* is first listed in the 1828 Webster edition ("to be deficient. (*Not in use.*)"). Because of the phrase stating that it is not in use, this would not be considered the 1DE. A similar note is found in the 1841 edition. In the 1864 edition, *defect* is defined as "to fail; to become deficient (*Obs.*)" and "to injure; to damage." The second definition is not listed with any restrictive usage notes, meaning that the 1864 would be considered the 1DE. However, the 1890 and 1900 editions define *defect* as "to fail; to become deficient (*Obs.*)" and "to injure; to damage (*R*[*are*])." The 1909 edition does not even list a verb form. Not until the 1934 edition does the term *defect* again have at least one definition without a usage note: "*Obs.* to fail; to become deficient"; "to forsake; desert"; "*Obs.* to injure; damage; discredit"; and "to cause to desert." Like *fuel* and *freak,* the 1DE for *defect* will be the edition in which there are definitions without restrictive usage notes and whose following editions also have definitions without these same restrictive usage notes. For *defect*, then, the 1DE would be the 1934 edition.

Similarly, the CDE-projected edition for *target* was the 1980 *American Heritage Dictionary.* The verb form of *target* was first listed in the 1934 Merriam-Webster dictionary ("Orig., to shield; now, to use as a target," "*Mil.* to determine by experiment the firing data necessary for (a given firearm) to obtain accuracy at all ranges," "*Railroads.* to signal by means of a target"). However, only a noun form was listed in the following 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary.* The American Heritage dictionaries do not include the verb form until the 1980

edition ("to make a target of," "to aim at or for," and "to establish a target or goal"). The switch to the American Heritage dictionaries caused a problem in continuity with this word. Rationale can be made for selecting either the 1934 edition or the 1980 edition as the 1DE. For the purposes of this research, I chose to label the 1980 edition as the 1DE so there would not be a gap in editions when a verb form was not listed.

4.4. Usage Guide Data

At the outset of conducting this research, it was expected that gathering data for usage guides would be similar to gathering data for dictionaries. However, particularly with the phenomenon of noun-to-verb conversion, dictionaries contain much more data than usage guides do. Because dictionaries contain a more general catalogue of language than usage guides do, there were more listings of the denominal verbs studied in this research in the dictionaries than in the usage guides. There were only a few listings of the 75 denominal verbs used in this research within usage guides; thus, there was not conclusive results to present herein. However, discussion of the usage guide listings will follow in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter includes (a) a discussion of what the results suggest about how well dictionaries and usage guides align with corpus data, (b) a presentation of limitations of this experiment in producing results, and (c) a consideration for how this research may be used in the future.

5.1. Dictionaries

After determining which dictionaries had concordance with the corpus data, a few interesting general observations could be found. First, surprisingly, only 9.3 percent of the data set showed instances where dictionaries were late in noting new denominal verbs. Rather data showed that the first listing of denominal verbs in dictionaries (or 1DE) had a strong tendency toward being early—compared to the corpus data. More than 62 percent of the 1DEs were early. Table 5.1 shows a listing of all the denominal verbs whose 1DEs were earlier than the CDE-projected edition, or the dictionary edition that correlates closest with the corpus decade of established usage (CDE). The CDE is the decade in which a denominal verb meets the criteria for established usage in the corpus. In the second column of Table 5.1., the date that a denominal verb first occurred is listed with the number of tokens in that initial decade listed in parentheses.

Table 5.1. Denominal verbs that have 1DEs earlier than the CDE-projected editions.

Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
contact	1894 (1)	1930s	1909	1934	-1
defect	1816 (1)	1950s	1934	1969	-1
focus	1866 (2)	1880s	1864	1890	-1
function	1887 (2)	1900s	1890	1900	-1
funnel	1918 (1)	1940s	1934	1969	-1

Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
harvest	1833 (5)	1830s	1828	1841	-1
hinge	1840 (7)	1840s	1828	1841	-1
jack	1868 (1)	1900s	1890	1900	-1
lobby	1867 (1)	1870s	1864	1890	-1
mandate	1920 (3)	1970s	1934	1969	-1
massage	1895 (1)	1910s	1900	1909	-1
monitor	1879 (1)	1940s	1934	1969	-1
program	1930 (2)	1950s	1934	1969	-1
purse	1832 (3)	1830s	1828	1841	-1
schedule	1893 (4)	1900s	1890	1900	-1
silhouette	1882 (2)	1900s	1890	1900	-1
spark	1815 (1)	1880s	1864	1890	-1
stockpile	1942 (4)	1950s	1934	1969	-1
supplement	1822 (2)	1850s	1841	1864	-1
surf	1952(1)	1970s	1934	1969	-1
surge	1831 (3)	1830s	1828	1841	-1
trigger	1894 (1)	1940s	1934	1969	-1
bond	1833 (1)	1850s	1828	1864	-2
buck	1843 (3)	1860s	1828	1864	-2
bugle	1872 (1)	1950s	1909	1969	-2
catalogue	1849 (1)	1850s	1828	1864	-2
daydream	1892 (1)	1940s	1909	1969	-2
fuel	1876 (1)	1940s	1909	1969	-2
mime	1883 (2)	1960s	1909	1969	-2
mop	1833 (1)	1850s	1828	1864	-2
outline	1839 (1)	1850s	1828	1864	-2
park	1856 (2)	1860s	1828	1864	-2
snipe	1892 (1)	1930s	1900	1934	-2
trek	1900 (3)	1920s	1900	1934	-2

Word	1st Occurrence in Corpus	CDE	1DE	CDE-Projected Edition	Number Off
cascade	1891 (1)	1920s	1890	1934	-3
ration	1830 (1)	1920s	1890	1934	-3
slate	1823 (1)	1890s	1828	1890	-3
stall	1815 (1)	1890s	1828	1890	-3
subpoena	1835 (1)	1880s	1828	1890	-3
tape	1860 (1)	1940s	1900	1969	-3
dial	1904 (3)	1930s	1864	1934	-4
implement	1884 (1)	1930s	1864	1934	-4
shuttle	1892 (2)	1920s	1864	1934	-4
gesture	1852 (2)	1910s	1828	1909	-5
document	1837 (1)	1930s	1828	1934	-6
earmark	1836 (1)	1920s	1828	1934	-6
tailor	1836 (2)	1920s	1828	1934	-6

Why is there a bias toward noting denominal verbs early rather than late compared to corpus data? The most probable cause for dictionaries noting language change before the corpus data may be found in the criteria for the corpus. The criteria was that (a) a denominal verb must have a ratio of at least one token per 5 million words in one decade, (b) the denominal verb must be used by two different publications in that decade, and (c) there must be at least three tokens in that decade. It may be that the criteria was too stringent in determining when established usage of denominal verbs (the CDE) occurred; that is, the benchmark for denominal verbs to have one token per 5 million words in the corpus in one decade may be too high a ratio to determine established usage. As discussed in chapter 3, a combination of intuition and data from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* on new denominal verbs was used to determine this ratio of one token per 5 million words.

As shown in the second column of Table 5.1, there were instances where the denominal verbs occurred in the corpus before the CDE; however, many of these first occurrences represent only one or two tokens in that decade. For example, the verb *trigger* is listed once in the 1890s, not at all in the 1900s and 1910s, once in the 1920s, and then not at all in the 1930s. Then in the 1940s, *trigger* is listed eight times as a verb. This is not an unusual pathway for the verbs studied in this thesis. Many are used once or twice for a few decades, and then they are used quite a bit in one decade. The criteria set up for this research to determine established usage in the corpus attempted to mark the decade in which a denominal verb had achieved broad, established usage (e.g., the 1940s for the verb *trigger*). As discussed in detail in chapter 3, I analyzed several recent denominal verbs in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* to create the criteria for determining the CDE—that was in part that the denominal verb must have one token per 5 million words in the corpus within one decade. The criteria was not perfect, but it was the best option available. Further research on the criteria used to determine the CDE would substantiate or improve this data. But determining criteria for established usage is always going to remain more an art than a science; a point of established usage is always going to have an element of subjectivity to it. That said, more research may help hone in on finding better representative criteria for discussing usage in corpora. For example, we may find that a better criterion for this kind of research may be closer to one token per 4 million words in one decade. If it is true that the criteria for determining the CDEs in this research does not accurately represent established usage of the denominal verbs, then the correlation between the 1DEs and the CDE-expected editions may be closer than the results show. The dictionaries may, in fact, be noting denominal verbs as standard about the same time that the corpus data—derived with the correct criteria—reflects verbs have become established in the language

But if the ratio of one token per five million words reflects accurate representation of established usage in the corpus, the early listings in dictionaries may describe the firmness of dictionaries in describing language change. It may be that in all their propositions to regulate the English language found in the dictionaries' introductions, dictionaries are less dogmatic than they purport. Because 90.6 percent of the time dictionaries note new denominal verbs on time or before the CDE, it suggests that dictionaries are much more open to language change than one would suppose. Instead of holding on to time-held parts of speech for words, dictionaries appear to be much more fluid in moving with language change.

On the other hand, the alignment of the 1DEs with the CDE-projected editions may be less a showing of responsiveness to language change and more a showing of dictionaries' influence on the language. It may be that as dictionaries note language change, they give the green light for general usage among published texts. Generally, editors of published texts are trained to frequently look up words in the dictionary, especially words that are newer additions to the language. Even if a word may be used quite often in speech and in informal writing, editors of most published texts will not use the word if it is not in the dictionary. The data suggests that dictionaries are predictive of real-world usage found in corpora. Nearly46 percent of instances occurred in one or two dictionary editions before the CDE-projected edition. With nearly half of the 1DEs occurring just one or two editions before the CDE-projected edition, it appears that after dictionaries admitted new denominal verbs among their listings of American English words, writers and editors responded, as shown in the corpus data, with using denominal verbs more than before dictionaries noted the new verb forms. This influx in usage found in the corpus

suggests that writers and editors respond just after dictionaries list denominal verbs for the first time and are reacting to the dictionaries rather than the dictionaries reacting to the writers.[14]

Whether dictionaries are more responsive to language change or are predictive of general language change is somewhat of a chicken or egg question. It is clear from reading the introductions to the Webster, Merriam-Webster, and American Heritage dictionaries used in this research that each dictionary set out to define what they deemed to be appropriate American English vocabulary. Thus, the dictionaries must be listing new denominal verbs in response to something—but it does not seem to be in response to published works, as shown through data collected in the Corpus of Historical American English. The majority of the data shows that dictionaries note denominal verbs before the CDE-projected editions. However, the Corpus of Historical American English does not include any unedited text. If dictionaries are noting denominal verbs before the corpus is showing established usage of denominal verbs, then these verbs must have been used in oral or informal communication often enough by educated speakers that the editors of dictionaries felt consensus in the denominal verb having reached some level of standardness. Once in dictionaries, denominal verbs would be considered acceptable by editors and writers and used broadly throughout published text. To the point, oral or informal language impacts dictionaries which in turn impact edited language.

As stated earlier, the bulk of the terms had 1DEs near the CDE-projected editions. However, there were a handful of terms that were quite a few editions off. Below are the seven words that were more than three editions early compared to the CDE-projected editions. I have listed the first occurrence of the denominal verb within the CDE (not the first occurrence in the corpus) because we are discussing the disparity between the 1DE and the CDE-projected edition,

[14] See Owen 2013 for discussion on the role of editors in proliferating prescriptive rules found in usage materials.

but note that it is possible that these denominal verbs may also have occurred in limited amounts before the CDE.

Table 5.2. Denominal verbs with large disparity between 1DE and CDE-projected edition.[15]

Word	1st CDE Occurrence	CDE-Projected Edition	Dictionary Definition	Number Off
dial	**1930:** "In another second, Chan had the telephone book in his hand, and was *dialing* a number."	**1934**	**1864:** "to measure with a dial"; "(*Mining.*) to survey with a dial"	-4
document	**1930:** "The expression 'tell it to the marines' is used to *document* lack of faith when some one tells an impossible yarn."	**1934**	**1828:** "to furnish with documents; to furnish with instructions and proofs, or with papers necessary to establish facts. A ship should be *documented* according to the direction of law"; "to teach; to instruct; to direct"	-6
earmark	**1922:** "'It's a Ute pony,' he said, after he had looked it over carefully. He knew this because the Indians *earmarked* their mounts." *ALSO* **1925:** "A sum of 100,000,000 gold crowns, from an international loan amounting to 253,000,000 gold crowns, was *earmarked* for the purpose of balancing the budget."	**1934**	**1828:** "to mark, as sheep by cropping or slitting the ear"	-6

[15] For a similar listing of all 75 denominal verbs studied in this thesis, see the appendix.

Word	1st CDE Occurrence	CDE-Projected Edition	Dictionary Definition	Number Off
gesture	**1912:** "At last he looked back and *gestured* to them. They understood."	**1909**	**1828:** "to accompany with gesture or action"	-5
implement	**1931:** "Stanley Baldwin, leader of the Conservatives, specifically pledged himself that if he returned to power his new government would *implement* the round table proposals by carrying them on to completion in an act of Parliament giving India the desired Constitution."	**1934**	**1864:** "to accomplish [*Rare.*]"; to provide with an implement or implements; to cause to be fulfilled, satisfied, or carried out, by means of an implement or implements"; "(*Scots Laws.*) to fulfill or perform, as a contract or an engagement"	-4
shuttle	**1920:** "'Would you mind telling me what brought you to this part of the country?' countered Peter. 'My husband,' I curtly retorted. And that chilled him perceptibly. But he saw that I was not to be *shuttled* aside."	**1934**	**1864:** "to move like a shuttle"	-4
tailor	**1920:** "He had been *tailored* by the best man's outfitter in New York."	**1934**	**1828:** "to practice of making men's clothes"	-6

There are a few interesting observations about these instances. First, all of the 1DEs occurred in either the 1828 or 1864 Webster editions, and the CDEs were all within a relatively

short period of time about a century after the 1DEs between the 1910s and the 1930s. There are a few plausible reasons for why denominal verbs that had a large disparity between their 1DEs and their CDE-projected editions had these characteristics. Generally, the editions of the dictionaries used in this research grew rather than diminished in size over time. There is only one instance where a term was listed as a verb in one of Webster's dictionaries and later described as only a noun a later issue;[16] definitions are not readily removed from dictionaries. It may be that some of these words were included in early editions (particularly the 1828 Webster edition) and were retained throughout later editions even though they were not used very often—at least the corpus data suggests that all seven of these words were not used much in the 1800s.

In a couple of instances, it seems that semantic shift played a role in creating the large disparity between with between the 1DE and the CDE-projected edition for the denominal verbs listed in table 4.4. The term *dial* has a fairly technical definition in its 1DE in 1864. The definition describes using dials—a technology reserved for mechanical and industrial settings. The first instance of *dial* in the corpus data describes using a telephone; in fact, nearly all of the corpus tokens in the 1930s referred to someone "dialing a number." With the invention of the dial telephone, many more people have the means "to dial" machinery. It seems that the corpus data did not show this more specific use of the denominal verb *dial* because it was not used generally enough for publications to use the term often.

Earmark also appears to benefit from more general usage. It is noted early on in the 1828 Webster dictionary to note a specific agricultural meaning of marking livestock. While that meaning persists in the first instance *earmark* where is found in the CDE, the majority of the tokens of *earmark* found in the 1920s show a semantic shift with the term. *Earmark* is used to describe marking land, products, and finances. Like *dial,* with this broadened meaning, *earmark*

[16] See discussion of *defect* below.

can be used more generally and is more likely to be used in publications about a variety of fields instead of being confined to the agricultural world. This broadening of definition may explain why dictionaries noted the verb form of *earmark* long before it showed up in the corpus. The dictionaries noted a specialized definition that was too specific to be found in the corpus.

In the case of both *gesture* and *tailor,* verb-like forms that were not counted as verb forms in this research showed up quite frequently in the corpus before the CDE.[17] For example, *gesture* is found in the corpus in 1853 in the following sentence: "At first, he twitched off and replaced his spectacles a dozen times in as many minutes with a nervous motion, *gesturing* meanwhile with frequent pump handle strokes of his right arm." *Gesture* is found in many such instances in small measure throughout the 1800s corpus data. *Tailor* was used similarly to an even greater extent throughout the corpus data as well. Note this usage in 1839: "The regular manual labour in this department of the school is confined to knitting and- *tailoring*." It may be that dictionaries noted these forms as verbs whereas I decided to not include these forms as verbs in collecting my corpus data.

5.2. Usage Guides

When I began this research on usage, it seemed natural to study usage guides. However, when it came to analyzing usage guides for this particular set of data (denominal verbs), usage guides did not elicit much information. Only 11 of the 75 terms studied had listings in the selected usage guides regarding the standardness of these denominal verbs.[18]

The small portion of research items listed in usage guides suggests that the rise of denominal verb use does not attract much attention or criticism from prescriptivists. That said,

[17] See table 3.2 and further discussion on treatment of verb-like forms in this research in section 3.2.1.
[18] A couple dozen research items had listings in the selected usage guides; however, most of these listings regarded spelling, nuances of definitions, and differences between American and British usage rather than the standardness of the denominal verb form. The 11 terms mentioned above are the listings which pertained to the verb-form usage.

there were a few commonalities among the 11 terms that did have listings. The criticism usually pointed to the ideas of precision and over use. The verb *to contact* was deemed at times inappropriate by Follett, Harper, and others because, as Garner notes, the more precise words *to write, to call,* or *to talk to* could be used in its place (2009:194). Likewise, Follett disliked *to trigger* for its replacing of a multitude of other words that could also be used like *to cause, to set off,* or *to produce* (1966:333). In these cases, it is not the verb forms themselves that is rejected but the over use of the terms, and at times the noun form was rejected for the same reason.[19] In fact, none of the denominal verbs that were in the usage guides had listings that proscribed the use of the verb form itself.

At times, it appears that prescriptivists hold on to discussion of usage items, even after discussion of their standardness has ceased to be in debate. For example, the denominal verb form of *contact* has a CDE in the 1930s. In fact, the 1930s saw a quick increase in using *contact* as a verb—the verb form had 7.5 tokens per 5 million words in the 1930s (the previous decade had no denominal verb tokens), and it only continued to increase in use from there, topping out at over 150 tokens per 5 million words in the 2000s. The verb form of *contact* appears to be firmly cemented in American English usage. Yet, usage guides have continued to discuss the appropriateness of the verb form of *contact*. Admittedly, most suggest that the denominal verb *contact* is standard, but the term still warrants an entry should anyone wonder. In 1957, Evans and Evans describe the verb *contact*: "It is certainly accepted in spoken English today and will probably become the usual term in written English as well" (116). By the time Garner releases his first usage guide in 1998, *contact* had become "firmly ensconced as a verb" (161). So even when usage guides have listed denominal verbs, it is often only to discuss past prescriptivist

[19] As is the case with the noun form of *contact* (meaning someone with whom one is in touch) and *feature*.

viewpoints that prohibited the use of a denominal verb rather than discussing any current prohibition.

Table 5.3a. Instances of denominal verbs listed in usage guides published between 1856 and 1932.

Word	Burgess (1856)	White (1870)	Ayres (1887)	Raub (1897)	Vizetelly (1908)	MacCracken and Sandison (1917)	Weseen (1932)
finance	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"Coinages must be adopted as the speaker's observation of the growing language and his good taste direct. Many, though not unrecognized, are still to a greater or less degree on trial--for example, *to gesture, to wire, to wireless, to clerk, to finance, to referee, to motor.*"	n/a
function	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"'The committee declined to function.' This use of function as a verb applied to groups of people or to organizations is incorrect. *Act* or *serve* should be used."
gesture	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"Coinages must be adopted as the speaker's observation of the growing language and his good taste direct. Many, though not unrecognized, are still to a greater or less degree on trial--for example, *to gesture, to wire, to wireless, to clerk, to finance, to referee, to motor.*"	n/a

Word	Burgess (1856)	White (1870)	Ayres (1887)	Raub (1897)	Vizetelly (1908)	MacCracken and Sandison (1917)	Weseen (1932)
scrap	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"A vulgarism for 'fight' or 'quarrel.'"	n/a	n/a
trek	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	"In general sense of travel, both as verb and as noun, *trek* usually suggests affectation. Properly it means to migrate or a migration, especially when many people are concerned."

Table 5.4b. Instances of denominal verbs listed in usage guides published between 1957 and 2009.

Word	Evans and Evans (1957)	Follett (1966)	Harper (1975)	Harper (1985)	Merriam-Webster (1994)	Garner (1998)	Garner (2009)
co-author	n/a	n/a	n/a	"literate people find [it] awkward and unappealing"	"literate people find [it] awkward and unappealing"	*co-author* more acceptable than *author* as a verb	*co-author* more acceptable than *author* as a verb
contact	"It is certainly accepted in spoken English today and will probably become the usual term in written English as well."	"vogue word"; "addicts of contact . . . exploit the word because it sounds brisk and comprehensive," but too popular to stop	"Usage has outlived the scorn of purists and *contact* is deemed acceptable by several dictionaries as a colloquial verb"; 35% of usage panel deemed in appropriate in writing; 63%, in casual speech	"Usage has outlived the scorn of purists and *contact* is deemed acceptable by several dictionaries as a colloquial verb"; 35% of usage panel deemed in appropriate in writing; 63%, in casual speech	"verb *contact* is standard," but "not used in literary contexts nor in the most elevated style"	"Though vehemently objected to in the 1950s, *contact* is now firmly ensconced as a verb"; "It should not be considered stylistically infelicitous even in formal contexts"; however, be specific, if possible	"Though vehemently objected to in the 1950s, *contact* is now firmly ensconced as a verb"; "It should not be considered stylistically infelicitous even in formal contexts"; however, be specific, if possible
feature	"now solidly established in American usage"	n/a	n/a	n/a	"Because it was mentioned in handbooks [in the 1920s], it is still in handbooks, though now chiefly to explain that it is in standard use."	Only discusses noun form being overused.	Only discusses noun form being overused.
function	Some believe *function* should only be used with machinery, "But this is sacrificing expression on the altar of precision and grammatical safety"	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Word	Evans and Evans (1957)	Follett (1966)	Harper (1975)	Harper (1985)	Merriam-Webster (1994)	Garner (1998)	Garner (2009)
implement	can be "ostentatious and overworked," but "usage has made it standard"	"vogue word"	n/a	n/a	may be overused, but "you should feel no uneasiness about using it."	"vogue word beloved by jargonmongers"	word can typify "bureacratese but is sometimes undeniably useful"
stall	"standard and common in America"	n/a	"primarily Informal, but it is accepted in certain phrases for both Informal and Formal writing"	"primarily Informal, but it is accepted in certain phrases for both Informal and Formal writing"	n/a	n/a	n/a
trek	"**trek** is not to be used loosely as a synonym for *travel*"	n/a	n/a	n/a	While some say a more general word like *travel* would do better than *trek,* "trek has distinct connotations of its own which make it a useful and popular word."	note on spelling	note on spelling
trigger	n/a	"an omnibus vogue word for *set off, touch off, produce,* [etc.]"; "become one of the most overworked words of the century"	n/a	n/a	While some say it is overworked, because of its "useful connotations," "we see no need to make a special point of avoiding its use."	n/a	n/a

Another difficulty with analyzing usage guides came in determining when a denominal verb had achieved standard status. With the data collected from the dictionaries, it was easy to assess at what point denominal verbs were standard: the verb was either listed (and thus marked as standard) or it was not (and thus not marked as standard). Since dictionaries provide some usage notes like "rare" or "colloquial" for entries, it suggests that if a word is listed in the dictionary without any notes, then it is considered appropriate to use. Likewise, because of the presence of the usage notes, if a word is not listed in a dictionary at all, it suggests that a word is so obscure that it does not warrant being listed in the dictionary even with a usage note. The same clarity is not present with usage guides. Usage guides presumably work in the opposite fashion to dictionaries. That is, if a word is listed in a usage guide, then there is some discussion about its standardness; if a word is not listed in a usage guide, then there is seemingly no debate about its standardness. It may seem that if denominal verbs did not have listings in usage guides, then the usage guide was tacitly labelling the verb as standard. But this is not necessarily the case.

The absence of any one denominal verb listing in usage guides may be the result of a number of reasons. First, the denominal verb could have been used in a restricted field so that usage guide writers did not feel compelled to include it in a guide on general usage. Such might be the case with *surf, backpack,* or *bugle.* Another reason may be related to the type of usage items that usage guides tend to note. As discussed in the previous few paragraphs, most of the usage guide listings regarding denominal verbs found in this research focused on the overuse and lack of precision of these new denominal verbs rather than criticizing the converted verb form itself. Usage guides did not often note the standardness of a denominal verb purely on whether the verb had been used often enough to be considered standard. But assuredly, there would be a

point where a new denominal verb would sound nonstandard and not established to the usage guide writer's ear. However, usage guide listings do not reflect this. Usage guides do not often note at what point a denominal verb is now appropriate to use or not. Rather the listings tend to note problems with denominal verbs not related to their being neologisms. Lastly, even if the absence of a listing for these denominal verbs *did* tacitly grant them standard status, there would still be no way of knowing when this standardness occurred. That is, would *sponsor,* for example, be considered standard at the time of the Evans and Evans usage guide in 1957 when *sponsor* was not listed or in the 1994 Merriam-Webster usage guide when it was also not listed? If the word was never noted in any usage guide as standard (or nonstandard), then there is not a chronological marker for when a denominal verb was prescribed. The CDE cannot be compared to usage guides for this reason.

For these reasons along with the fact that there was not a representative number of denominal verbs listed in usage guides from the research data set, there is not much conclusive evidence to be found in usage guides regarding denominal verbs.

Once it was evident that usage guides did not seem to have strong opinions on specific denominal verbs, I searched for general terms regarding denominal verbs like *conversion* and *neologism.* None of the usage guides used in this research proscribed conversion or had a general note about conversion. However, though not specifically speaking of conversion itself, a few usage guides—White's *Words and Their Uses* (1870) and *Garner's Modern American Usage* (1998, 2009)—made note of neologisms. White wrote of the necessity for new words in language:

> New words, when they are needed, and are rightly formed, and so clearly discriminated that they have a meaning peculiarly their own, enrich a language ; while the use of one

> word to mean many things, more or less unlike, is the sign of poverty in speech, and the source of ambiguity, the mother of confusion. For these reasons the objection on the part of a writer upon language to a word or a phrase should not be that it is new, but that it is inconsistent with reason, incongruous in itself, or opposed to the genius of the tongue into which it has been introduced. (White 1870:24–25)

Garner was more guarded in his acceptance of new words: "Neologisms, or invented words, are to be used carefully and self-consciously. Usually they demand an explanation or justification, since the English language is already well stocked. New words must fill demonstrable voids to survive, and each year a few good ones get added to the language" (2009:565). He continues to explain the "sobering" state of acceptance of new words in contemporary America; he suggests that historically neologisms were accepted as appropriate language after they had been used for about a century, but that because of electronic media, speakers now accept words quickly (2009:565).

Even with these explanations on neologisms from White and Garner, the majority of the usage guides used in this research do not make note of new forms in the language—and Garner and White speak of neologisms broadly without mention of conversion specifically. Once more, judgments from the set of usage guides in this thesis on denominal verbs and conversion are few even when discussed in a broader sense and are therefore inconclusive.

5.3. Limitations

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to determine established usage with corpus data. At present, little research has been done on quantifying usage rules with corpus data—specifically research involving language change and word-formation processes. For this thesis, I had to start at square one in deciding the criteria for when a word had reached established usage in the

corpus. This criteria involved three characteristics: (a) the denominal verb must have a frequency of at least one token per five million words in a given decade; (b) there must be at least three tokens; and (c) at least two publications must have used the verb in the same decade. I determined the ratio of one token per five million words by analyzing a set of denominal verbs that have recently seemed established in the language. With this data and my own intuitions on these words, I selected the ratio of one token per five million words. Since this is, to my knowledge, the first research project of its kind, this ratio is a first attempt at describing established usage in corpus. It is not a perfect system, but it seemed like the best procedure at the time. With the dictionary data showing a strong leaning toward listing denominal verbs earlier than the corpus data would suggest, it is probable that this ratio is too strict in describing established usage. A more lenient ratio might better describe the language.

Many of the first occurrences of the denominal verbs in the corpus data appear closer to the time of the 1DEs than the CDE-projected editions. It may be that the requirements to have three tokens of the denominal verb from two publications within one decade of corpus data may also be too strict. The first occurrences of each denominal verb in the corpus may align better with the 1DEs. That said, multiple uses of these denominal verbs by multiple authors supports the idea of broad usage rather than idiosyncratic usage; therefore, these first occurrences in the corpus data may or may not show general usage.

The publication dates between dictionaries are not uniform. As noted in table 5.3, the range in date between publications of different dictionary editions can be as small as nine years and as large 35 years. Because of this, it is fairly easy for *funnel,* a denominal verb with a CDE in the 1940s, to have complete concordance with its 1DE (which the CDE would expect to be the *American Heritage Dictionary* that was published over two decades after the CDE in 1969).

Feature, on the other hand, is much more likely to show inconsistency between the CDE and the 1DE—its CDE is the 1900s and there are editions of dictionaries in 1890, 1900, and 1909. For *funnel* to have its 1DE just one issue off from the CDE-projected edition actually means that several decades had lapsed between the CDE and the 1DE.

Table 5.5. Dictionary Publication Dates.

Edition	Year	Years Between Publications
American Dictionary of the English Language	1828	--
American Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.	1841	13
An American dictionary of the English language, revised and enlarged ed.	1864	23
Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language	1890	26
Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.	1900	10
Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language	1909	9
Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd ed.	1934	25
American Heritage Dictionary, 1st ed.	1969	35
American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd ed.	1980	11
American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed.	1992	12
American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed.	2000	8
American Heritage Dictionary, 5th ed.	2012	12

Unfortunately, the publication dates for dictionaries of the past are not something that can be changed. I chose the editions of the dictionaries based on when editions had been entirely re-edited rather than choosing editions that were essentially reprints of earlier editions—editions that would not necessarily show the usage of the publication date but would show the usage of the earlier edition they were based on. Thus, there are gaps in the publication dates.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

For the majority of American history, prescriptivists had some backing for supporting their usage rules based on idiosyncratic beliefs and intuitions about what was standard usage—there was not a viable way to systematically determine usage. But this is no longer a valid reason to support arbitrary usage rules. This is where corpus data can particularly support usage guides. A robust corpus would show the subtle entrance into the language of denominal verbs better than a team of usage guide editors could do on their own. Corpora allow us to quantify established usage by looking to actual usage. Some of the dictionaries and usage guides researched herein use corpora to evaluate their usage claims, but they do it to a limited extent. Garner uses a couple of limited corpora that only represent news and legal writing instead of larger corpora available. The *American Heritage Dictionary* continues to use the small, one-million-word *Brown Corpus*. When Kučera wrote his essay in the 1969 *American Heritage Dictionary,* he wrote of the potential of computers, seemingly aware that the *Brown Corpus* was just the beginning of more and better computational linguistic tools. There is much more to be explored in using corpora.

Prescriptivists can work with corpora to evaluate beliefs and rules on language. This research provides a stepping stone to do this. Lexicographers and usage guide editors need only to create criteria for determining an established level of usage to base their rules on. Does one token per 5 million words in one decade accurately represent established usage in the corpus? Do there need to be multiple decades of this level of usage before it is deemed standard? These are questions that must be answered to take advantage of the underutilized tool of corpora within usage studies.

That said, the results of this research suggest that the perceived division between prescriptive rules and real-world usage may not be as wide as expected. The data collected for

denominal verbs in dictionaries suggest that dictionaries are fairly on time (in comparison to corpus data) with noting the language change of noun-to-verb conversion. When dictionaries were off, they tended to note change earlier than the corpus data, suggesting that dictionaries are quickly responsive to language change. Further research in comparing dictionaries and usage guides to corpus data may further elucidate that these publications are more aligned with actual usage than is widely perceived currently.

Appendix

Following is a table of all 75 denominal verbs analyzed in this thesis with the first occurrence in the CDE and the definition in the 1DE.

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
1860–1909	buck	1865: “Captain Tabb abused him most shamefully, and then had him ‘*bucked*’ for several hours, after which the articles were restored.	1828: “to copulate as bucks and does”
	catalogue	1851: “It would be a hopeless, endless task to *catalogue* all these things.”	1828: “To make a list of”
	complement	1875: “She was a widow and alone. She *complemented* Mr. Belcher, who was also alone.”	1909: “To supply a lack”; “to supplement”
	crane	1881: “He *craned* his neck round the side of the wagon for a sight of her.”	1890: “to cause to rise; to raise or lift, as by a crane; --with up [R.]”; “to stretch, as a crane stretches its neck; as, to crane the neck disdainfully”; “to reach forward with head and neck, in order, to see better; as, a hunter cranes forward before taking a leap”
	drone	1851: “The voice *droned* away and was still.”	1828: “To live in idleness; as a droning king”; “To give a low, heavy, dull sound; as the cymbal's droning sound”
	focus	1881: “he would have laughed anyhow, for there was more than a suggestion of the comic in the shrewd seriousness that seemed to *focus* itself in Daddy Jack's pinched and wrinkled face.”	1864: “To bring to a focus; as, to focus a camera [Recent.]”
	groom	1848: “‘Who *groomed* him?’ asked Carrera, sternly.”	1841: “To take care of horses”

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	harvest	1833: "The illustrious achievements of other days belong to us rather than to them, for we enjoy their full influence and *harvest* their complete fulfilment."	1828: "To reap or gather ripe corn and other fruits for the use of man and beast"
	hinge	1840: "It connects itself in fatal union with all the other exciting partisan questions of the day, every one of which *hinges* more or less directly on the cardinal principle of the State-Rights theory."	1828: "To furnish with hinges"; "to bend [*Little used*]"; "To stand, depend or turn, as on a hinge. The question *hinges* on this single point."
	jack	1900: "One day the Main Works of a Wholesale House was *Jacking* Up the Private Secretary and getting ready to close his desk for the Day, when in blew a Country Customer."	1890: "to hunt game at night by means of a jack"; "to move or lift, as a house, by means of a jack or jacks"
	lapse	1823: "I know not how long -- but it appeared to me, that an incredible time *lapsed*, before I saw another living creature in motion."	1828: "To glide; to pass slowly, silently or by degrees"; "To slide or slip in moral conduct; to fail in duty; to deviate from rectitude; to commit a fault"; "To slip or commit a fault by inadvertency or mistake"; "To fall or pass from one proprietor to another, by the omission or negligence of the patron"; "To fall from a state of innocence, or from truth, faith or perfection"
	loaf	1860: "Now I know it is true, what I guessed at, What I guessed when I *loafed* on the grass."	1864: "To spend time in idleness; to loung; to loiter"; "To pass or spend in idleness; to waste lazily; as, to loaf away time"
	massage	1914: "Rupe held Penrod's head in the crook of an elbow and *massaged* his temples with a hard-pressing knuckle."	1900: "(*Med.)* To treat by means of massage; to rub or knead; as, to *massage* a patient with ointment"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	mime	1940: “His face and then hands *mimed* indecision like a showing-off child.”	1909: “To act out in the manner of a mime”; “To mimic: imitate”
	mop	1851: “Pray tell Dora to bring some towels and *mop* it up!”	1828: “To rub or wipe with a mop”; “To make a wry mouth [*Not used*.]”
	outline	1850: “I would not have let Tommy engage in such a scene, were it not to show up Johnny as he was, and finish the portrait of him which I had *outlined*.”	1828: “To draw the exterior line; to delineate; to sketch”
	query	1820: “Having done, you begin to *query* whether you had not mistaken my meaning.”	1828: “To ask a question or questions”; “To seek; to inquire; as, query the sum or amount; query the motive or the fact”; “To examine by questions”; “To doubt of”
	raid	1870: “‘I'll raid ye passages here an' there,’ said he.”	1890: “"to make a raid upon or into; as, two regiments, *raided* the border counties”
	silhouette	1900: “Above the lowering pines the horizon burned to a deep scarlet, like an inverted brazier at red heat, and one gigantic tree, rising beyond the jagged line of the forest, was *silhouetted* sharply against the enkindled clouds.”	1890: “to represent by a silhouette; to project upon a background, so as to be like a silhouette [*Recent*]”
	snipe	1931: “It relates to an unsuccessful effort of a detachment of Northern soldiers to send a cannon ball into a barn under cover of which a number of Southern sharpshooters were *sniping* the Northerners.”	1900: “To shoot snipe, esp. with a rifle at long range; hence, to shoot at, or pick off, one at a time, as soldiers, from a concealed position at long range”
	subpoena	1883: “Father would have been here, too, but he was *subpoenaed* this very morning to attend court.”	1828: “To serve with a write of subpena; to command attendance in court by a legal writ”

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	supplement	1851: "And from this it is evident, that they avoided the themes of the Iliad and the Odyssey that they aimed to *supplement* the action of those poems that they rested upon them."	1841: "To add something to a writing, &c"
	surge	1831: "And afterwards I saw her in the throng, Forlorn, dishevelled, almost trampled down, By the rough multitude that *surged* along."	1828: "To let go a portion of a rope suddenly. *Surge* the messenger"; "To swell; to rise high and roll; as waves"; "To slip back; as, the cable surges"
	telephone	1882: "I *telephone* the Bishop to that effect."	1890: "to convey or announce by telephone"
	veto	1835: "'If that be the fact, I should not think old Perry would *veto* him,' said Willoughby."	1864: "To withhold assent to, especially to a bill for a law, and thus prevent its enactment"
1910–1959	cascade	1920: "She had gone in spirit to that old, shabby parlour to which Linda and Fred had carried Josephine's crib late every night, and where sheet music had *cascaded* from the upright piano."	1890: "to fall in a cascade. 2. To vomit [*Slang*]"
	censor	1912: "Did you think I would allow you to *censor* my remarks?"	1909: "To subject to the action of a censor, or official examiner; as, to *censor* dispatches or books"
	daydream	1940: "Since such a large proportion of people *daydream*, this outlet must be considered normal."	1909: "To indulge in daydreams or reveries"
	dial	1930: "In another second, Chan had the telephone book in his hand, and was *dialing* a number."	1864: "to measure with a dial"; "(*Mining.*) to survey with a dial"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	earmark	1922: "'It's a Ute pony,' he said, after he had looked it over carefully. He knew this because the Indians *earmarked* their mounts." *ALSO* 1925: "A sum of 100,000,000 gold crowns, from an international loan amounting to 253,000,000 gold crowns, was *earmarked* for the purpose of balancing the budget."	1828: "to mark, as sheep by cropping or slitting the ear"
	finance	1900: "Porter '*financed*' the schemes that Carson concocted and talked into being."	1900: "To conduct he finances of; to provide for, and manage, the capital for; to financier"
	function	1903: "The men she ruled were the same who I socially at the Barracks."	1890: "to execute or perform"
	highlight	1940: "The precarious situation of this small band unsupported in enemy country was *highlighted* with a vividness it had not had before."	1969: "To give prominence to, as with illumination"; "To add highlights to, as in painting"; "to be the highlight of"
	implement	1931: "Stanley Baldwin, leader of the Conservatives, specifically pledged himself that if he returned to power his new government would *implement* the round table proposals by carrying them on to completion in an act of Parliament giving India the desired Constitution."	1864: "to accomplish [*Rare.*]"; to provide with an implement or implements; to cause to be fulfilled, satisfied, or carried out, by means of an implement or implements"; "(*Scots Laws.*) to fulfill or perform, as a contract or an engagement"
	interview	1872: "I think I know enough of the usages of modern society to *interview* him and his companion, though times have changed since I was of your age in that regard."	1890: "to have an interview with; to question or converse with, especially for the purpose of obtaining information for publication. [*Recent*.]"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	park	1864: “Night before last (27th) the wagons were all thrown across the Hiwasse, and *parked*, with but a small guard, under Col. SIEBERT, in the front, the main force, 1,200 in number, remaining on the south side of the stream.”	1828: “to inclose in a park”
	purse	1832: “To prevent the frequent recurrence of this accident, Rip has *pursed* it up with a hat-band of twine.”	1828: “To put in a purse”; “To contract into folds or wrinkles”
	ration	1920: “[They] are *rationed* on the highest scale.”	1890: “to supply with rations, as a regiment”
	requisition	1892: “Now I had a heart given to the Basin, with a simple thought or two, and I *requisitioned* the best of my forces for the ‘Occasion.’”	1890: “to make a requisition on or for; as, to requisition for forage; to *requisition* troops "to present a *requisition* to; to summon or request; as, to *requisition* a person to be a candidate [*Eng*.]”
	safeguard	1891: “I repeat, therefore, that, when a country has great natural wealth to *safeguard* and exploit for her own people, the protective tariff may often be necessary to plant factories.”	1909: “To guard ; protect”
	salvage	1916: “Both dashed in to *salvage* What trucks they could.”	1909: “To aid so as to have claim upon or against for salvage; to salve”
	schedule	1900: “On two roads there is a poultry department, which buys for cash of all farmers along the route, . . . which are *scheduled* for certain stations on certain days, with cash buyers in charge.”	1890: “to form into, or place in, a schedule”
	scrap	1900: “All the men were *Scrapping* to see who would be Next to sit in the Hammock with her.	1909: “To make into scrap or scraps; to discard as refuse; to put on the scrap heap; as, to *scrap* machinery *Cant*.”
	shuttle	1920: “‘Would you mind telling	1864: “to move like a shuttle”

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
		me what brought you to this part of the country?' countered Peter. 'My husband,' I curtly retorted. And that chilled him perceptibly. But he saw that I was not to be *shuttled* aside."	
	slate	1890: "Something's happening which has not been *slated*."	1828: "To cover with slate or plates or stone; as, to slate a roof. [It does not signify to *tile*.]"; "To set a dog loose at anything [*Local*]"
	sponsor	1920: "Harding, on the other hand, might easily lead us into war with Mexico or *sponsor* a high tariff measure."	1934: "To be or stand sponsor for; to accept responsibility for"
	stall	1892: "There was an endless stream of heavily laden trucks destined for these piers, many of which were *stalled* in the gullies between the car tracks."	1828: "To put into a stable; or to keep in a stable; as, to *stall* an ox"; "To install; to place in an office with the customary formalities. [For this, *install* is now used]"; "To set; to fix; to plunge into mire so as not to be able to proceed; as, to *stall* horses or a carriage [This phrase I have heard in Virginia. In New England, *set* is used in a like sense.]"; "To dwell; to inhabit [*Not in use*.]"; "To kennel"; "To be set, as in mire"; "To be tired of eating, as cattle"
	tailor	1920: "He had been *tailored* by the best man's outfitter in New York."	1828: "to practice of making men's clothes"
	trek	1920: "The log stockade which Mrs. Champ Perry was to find when she *trekked* in was built afterward by the soldiers as a defense against the Sioux."	1900: "[*South Africa*] 1. to draw or haul a load, as oxen." "To travel, esp. by ox wagon; to go from place to place; to migrate"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	upgrade	1941: “Many are being ‘upgraded,’ and plants are seeking to make up for their lack of apprentices in the last decade.”	1969: “To raise to a higher grade or standard”; “To improve the quality of (livestock) by selective breeding for desired characteristics”
1960–2009	audition	1950: “Conductor Karl Boehm of the touring Vienna State Opera was hot, tired and in no mood to *audition* the unknown young American bass-baritone who waited for him.”	1969: “To give (someone) an audition”; “To perform or be tested in an audition”
	backpack	1974: “On five successive days we birded the Valley, the Rockport area, Houston, Austin, and finally wound up in Big Bend National Park in far West Texas, where we *backpacked* into the mountains.”	1980: “To hike while carrying a backpack”; “To carry in a backpack”
	bond	1851: “Congress enacted that British traders and capital should be excluded from the American lines, that no British subjects should receive licenses to trade, and that all such persons who went inland in subordinate capacities should be *bonded* for by the American traders who employed them.”	1828: “To give bond for, as for duties or customs at a custom-house; to secure payment of, by giving a bond. On their reshipment and exportation, official clearances were given, in which no mention was made that the cargo consisted of bonded or debentured goods.--War in Disguise. In the United States, it is applied to the goods on which the customs arise, and to the duties secured by bond.”
	bugle	1951: “was it just because you couldnt stand to *bugle*?”	1909: “To give forth or sound by means of or like a bugle; also, to summon by a bugle call”
	co-author	1971: “Stylistically, Bananas is rather a mess in which Allen, who also directed and *co-authored* the script, is spread thin.”	1980: “To be a co-author of”

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	contact	1931: "On one side, the yearning soul, even while protesting it is done only in the spirit of adventure, seeks in revelation its knowledge, longing to *contact* a departed loved one, or seeking information as to the solving of a material harassment."	1909: "To bring into contact; to enter, or be, in contact; to touch"
	defect	1951: "A number of those who have *defected* to the West have stated flatly that living conditions in East Germany and East Berlin, not to mention West Berlin, are far better than in their own 'people's democracies.'"	1934: "*Obs.* To fail; to become deficient"; "To forsake; desert"; "*Obs.* To injure; damage; discredit"; "To cause to desert"
	document	1930: "The repercussion is well *documented* by a drop of $86,000,000 in outlays for building materials in January 1930 as compared with 1929."	1828: "to furnish with documents; to furnish with instructions and proofs, or with papers necessary to establish facts. A ship should be *documented* according to the direction of law"; "to teach; to instruct; to direct"
	feature	1900: "'It will be *featured* in all the morning papers,' coolly continued McNerney."	1909: "To resemble s to features; to favor *Colloq*"; "To affect the countenance of; to be a feature of. *Rare*"; "To delineate or portray the features of"; "To make a feature of; to give especial prominence to; as, a newspaper *features* a story. *Cant*."
	freak	1967: "'No, no,' he girl said. 'It'll *freak* him.' 'Don't *freak* him,' Rheinhardt said, 'he's about to make a statement.'"	1969: "To speckle or streak with color"
	fuel	1943: "He said, 'Allied tanks in Sicily are *fueled* with the blood of Russian soldiers.'"	1909: "To feed or furnish with fuel"; "To procure or gather fuel"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	funnel	1941: "Every time a passenger got off or on, the high wind *funneled* through the narrow car."	1934: "*Obs.* To be like a funnel; to feed through a funnel"; "To move or guide in the direction of a focal point"
	gesture	1912: "At last he looked back and *gestured* to them. They understood."	1828: "to accompany with gesture or action"
	lobby	1870: "its supervision was, however, disagreeable to the railway potentates, and it was, accordingly, *lobbied* out of existence."	1864: "To address or solicit members of a legislative body in the lobby or elsewhere away from the House, with a view to influence their votes. This is practiced by persons not belonging to the legislature. [*U.S.*]"
	mandate	1970: "The contract settlement, the most costly in the authority's history, *mandated* a fare increase, Dr. Ronan said."	1934: "To administer or assign under a mandate, as of the League of Nations; as, *mandated* territory"; "To commit to memory; to memorize *Scot*"
	mastermind	1940: "He *masterminded* a possible Italian tie-up with the Allies, with a thrust at the Russian oil fields at Baku by Weygand's French, British and possibly Turkish Army, from Syria."	1969: "To direct, plan, or supervise (a project or activity)"
	monitor	1941: "The three receivers are due to be manned from 4 a.m. to early afternoon, best time for the area covered, and will be *monitored* at other times when hot news is expected or when reception at the Long Island listening post is bad."	1934: "To admonish"; "To act as a monitor"; "*Radio* To listen to signals by means of receiving apparatus, as a check on the equipment"
	orbit	1951: "My flight will *orbit* point Able at angels Nine."	1969: "To put into or cause to move in an orbit"; "To revolve around (a center of attraction)"; "To revolve or move"

	Word	1st CDE Occurence	1st Dictionary Verb Definition
	program	1956: “Golschmann has tried to *program* at least one 20th-century work every concert.”	1934: “To arrange or furnish a program of or for; to enter in a program; to bill”
	spark	1881: “I couldn't *spark* a fellah athout my father ketchin' me at it.”	1864: “To emit particles of fire; to sparkle. [*Obs.*]”; “To play the spark or lover”
	stockpile	1950: “Food was *stockpiled*; emergency passes and ration cards were printed.”	1934: “*Mining* To heap up; to accumulate in piles; to make (a stock pile)”
	surf	1970: “The boxes appear individually in the curving face of the subsequent wave. We see one hammered on the rocks. It flies apart. Rifles. The last raft, rotating as it *surfs* in.”	1934: “To bathe in the surf; to ride the surf, as on a surfboard”
	tape	1940: “Nebraska’s right ankle was *taped* and bandaged; a heavy cane rested between his knees.”	1900: “to furnish with tape; to fasten , tie, bind, or the like, with tape; specif. (*Elec.*), to cover (a wire) with insulating tape”
	target	1971: “‘In short,’ he said, ‘we do not *target* on American citizens.’”	1980: “To make a target of”; “To aim at or for”; “To establish a target or goal”
	trigger	1942: “The stimulus of saving money on the purchase of a wanted item is often just what is needed to *trigger* the shopper's buying reflex.”	1934: “To release by pressing a trigger; to press a trigger”

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