A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH
SYNONYMS: RUIN, DEMOLISH, DESTROY

BY

MISS CHULEEPORN RUENROENG

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN
PARTIALFULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
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ENTITLED

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RUIN, DEMOLISH, DESTROY

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ABSTRACT

This corpus-based study aims to investigate three synonymous verbs: *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy*. These words are used differently in terms of grammatical patterns, degrees of formality, collocation, and their distribution in different genres. One hundred concordance lines for each word from COCA, or Corpus of Contemporary American English, was used for data analysis, Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online (2011) was used as the main reference for the data in connotation, example usage, and grammatical information of the synonyms. The present study reveals the following findings. The definitions of the three synonyms are not absolutely the same. Even if they share a core meaning, they each convey different meanings. The grammatical patterns of these three words are not completely identical. They just share some patterns. Furthermore, these words usually collocate with an object noun. In addition, the degrees of formality among these synonyms are not the same. While *ruin* and *destroy* are not often used in formal contexts, the word *demolish* is often used in formal contexts. Although *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* are synonymous, they cannot act as substitutes for each other in all contexts due to the differences in degree of formality, grammatical patterns, and collocations. For this reason, *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* are near-synonyms, but not perfect or absolute synonyms.

**Keywords:** degrees of formality, grammatical patterns, collocations, connotation
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Gass and Selinker (2008) stated that the most important part of English is vocabulary. As English is a lingua Franca, it is necessary for conversation between people around the world. To improve English proficiency, knowing a variety of words is very important. However, English learners have problems about word choice even if they know a lot of vocabulary. In the same way, they may incorrectly use words as they are not aware of the differences between them (Crystal, 2007).

English language has sped around the world for a long time. The main language to have conversations in is English. Many country use English as formal language, second language, and foreign language. In many countries, English has been offered for students in every school as a first foreign language. These classes focus on the 4 skills of language; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum in Thailand, English language must be studied for 12 years in Basic Education and 9 years in Compulsory Education. English is one of the main 5 subjects taught in schools. In 2015, AEC (Asean Economics Community) will begin and students have to learn more English in order to communicate with others. They are going to have chances for a nice job abroad.

Due to the enormous size of the vocabulary, L2 leaners confront difficulties of word choice. It can affect choosing words to be appropriate with context and form. L2 learners may face vocabulary that is different, but has the same meaning, known as synonyms. Synonyms can help avoid repeating the same word in writing. Nevertheless, they have to know that not all synonyms can be used in all contexts. Lee and Liu (2009) stated that "many L2 learners rely on dictionaries to provide denotation meaning without being aware of the subtle implications embedded in contexts" (p. 206).
In high school, there are many course books that we should teach in the class such as My World, The Adventure, Fifty-fifty, Weaving it, and Super Goal. The adventure genre is one of best coursebooks that famous schools use. It can be divided into several parts that relate with another subject such as the topic "WAR" and "DISASTER". The word *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* appear in this lesson. All of these words seem to have different degrees and levels. Students misunderstand these words.

The present study investigated three synonymous verbs: *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* to examine differences between these synonyms according to their grammatical patterns, senses of meaning and formality of context. The concordance lines from COCA will be used in order to see additional information, such as grammatical patterns, apart from what is given in the dictionaries.

**1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1.2.1 How are *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* used differently in terms of grammatical patterns and degrees of formality, and collocation?

1.2.2 How are *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* distributed in different genres?

**1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1.3.1 To examine the differences among *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* in terms of grammatical patterns and degrees of formality, and collocation.

1.3.2 To explore how *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* are distributed in different genres.

**1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The definition of the terms of this study is as follows:

1.4.1 Synonym: A word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning in the same language.

1.4.2 Corpus: A collection of spoken and written English text.
1.4.3 Concordance lines: The results from a corpus program showing a keyword in context which can be used to examine language in a variety of ways.

1.4.4 Collocations: A combination of words in language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance.

1.4.5 Near-synonym: Words having similar but not identical meaning, not fully inter-substitutable, but instead varying in their shades of denotation, connotation, implicative, emphasis, or register.

1.4.6 COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English, the largest corpus of American English.

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study aims to study three synonymous verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy. The concordance lines will used to analyse differences among ruin, demolish, and destroy in terms of grammatical patterns and to explore the degrees of formality and collocations of ruin, demolish, and destroy in singular and plural forms. The data was acquired during the period of March, 2015.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This corpus-based study of three verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy is significant in the following ways:

1.6.1 English learners can see the differences among ruin, demolish, and destroy in terms of grammatical patterns and collocation.

1.6.2 English learner can explore the degrees of formality of ruin, demolish, and destroy.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this corpus-based study of three verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy are as follows:
1.7.1 The study focuses only on the based-forms of the three verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy

1.7.2 Only 100 concordance lines were explored.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This corpus-based study of three verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy that can divided into five chapters.

- The first chapter includes background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.
- The second chapter presents the literature review and related studies.
- The third chapter describes the research methodology about data collection, procedures and data analysis of the research.
- The fourth chapter explains the methodology used for analysis and data collection, and reports the results on similarities and differences in meaning, syntax, and style.
- The last chapter presents a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, discussions of the similarities and differences of the three synonyms ruin, demolish, and destroy, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in three main areas along with a summary: (1) definition of synonyms, (2) criteria for distinguishing synonyms, (3) relevant research, and (4) summary.

2.1 DEFINITION OF SYNONYMS.

Synonymy originates from the Greek word synonymous, which means having the same name. (Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p. 92).

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010, p. 1515) defines synonym as “a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language; big and large are synonyms.”

Today, there are many dictionaries of English synonyms that can serve the English language learners’ needs. However, learners should accept that no vocabulary has exactly the same meaning. It can be said that perfect synonyms do not exist (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2011, p. 196). There are only words that have similar meanings, such as sofa and couch. That is, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) defines sofa as "a long comfortable seat with a back and arms, for two or more people to sit on" (p.1415), whereas couch is defined as 1) "a long comfortable seat for two or more people to sit on" 2) "a long piece of furniture like a bed, especially in a doctor's office" (p. 331). Therefore, those two words are not identical in meaning.

When L2 learners see words having similar meanings, such as make, do, and create. It might cause confusion (Thornbury, 2002, p. 28). These three words are similar in meaning, but have different usages. Thus, L2 learners should be aware of choosing the most appropriate synonym to fit into each context.
2.2 CRITERIA FOR DISTINGUISHING SYNONYMS.

2.2.1 Dialect

Many countries around the world use English to communicate. The most common words used in each country are similar, such as man, woman, fish, sky, tree, day, week, mathematics, green, hot, and smell (Qiu, 2011, p. 26). However, different dialects of the same language usually have different words referring to the same concept.

This paper focuses on the British dialect and American dialect. The table below shows examples of words used for the same concepts in British and American English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British English</th>
<th>American English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lift</td>
<td>elevator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petrol</td>
<td>gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motorway</td>
<td>- freeway (Los Angeles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- thruway (New York)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- parkway (New Jersey)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2003, p. 435)

2.2.2 Formality of the context

People choose appropriate vocabulary when they are speaking or writing. The ability to regard vocabulary as formal and informal is significant for both L1 and L2 learners. Although two words have similar meanings, the sense and formality can be different. Examples of English formal and informal words are as follows:
Table 2. Informal and Formal words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>pulchritude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die</td>
<td>decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter</td>
<td>missive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p. 95)

2.2.3 Collocations

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) defines collocation as “a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance” (p. 279). However, collocations not only occur next to each other, but also occur between them; for example, set and record are collocates. Moreover, two words can be separated as in He set the junior record in 1990 (Thornbury, 2002, p. 7). According to a synonym strategy, some L2 learners thought that a word can be replaced by another word with a similar meaning. It can lead to collocation errors. For example, “I like to watch movies” and "I like to look movies". The first one sounds more collocationally acceptable than the latter.

2.2.4 Grammatical Patterns

Grammatical patterns can refer to a model to describe the syntactic structures of words. For example, say and tell have similar meanings, but these two words have different grammatical patterns (Thornbury, 2002, p. 122):

× say someone something : say me the truth.
√ tell someone something : tell me the truth

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010 p. 1315), say is described as “never has a person as the object”, while tell is explained as “usually has a person as the object and often has two objects”. In addition, the patterns of say are as follows:
• say something : Anna said, "I'm tired."
• say something to someone. : She said nothing to me about it.
• say something about : I want to say something about my family.

2.3 RELEVANT RESEARCH

As regards studies on English synonyms, there are many researchers who have conducted the previous related research.

Cai (2012) studied six near synonymous words awesome, excellent, fabulous, fantastic, terrific and wonderful in terms of similarities and differences. The researcher used COCA corpus to analyze the frequency and collocations. The findings found that the word great always occurs and has a greater frequency than other near synonyms, followed by wonderful and excellent. Moreover, the seven synonymous words are used in different genres. All of them, however, are used mainly in spoken language. In addition, the researcher found that the collocation in each word has a different concept. So, the seven words can show the same meaning, but they cannot perfectly replace each other.

Chung (2011) investigated the differences and similarities of the synonyms: create and produce. The researcher used the Brown Corpus, Frown Corpus, and British National Corpus. The results show that the preposition “for” can be used with these two words, such as to create for a large national purpose and if you are going to produce for home use only. However, the researcher also discovered the use of “out of” with only create and the use of over and upon for only produce. The researcher found the common prepositions used with the words create and produce. This research found the collocations of 300 concordance lines and found that most used three synonymous verbs.
Orna-Montesinos (2008) performed a corpus-based analysis of two near-synonyms, *building* and *construction* by collecting the words from construction and architecture university textbooks. Construction Textbooks Corpus (CTC) was used to determine the differences between these two words. The findings indicated that people prefer to use the word *building* more than *construction*. The semantic sense of each word is different. When people talk about *building*, they will think about edifice, architecture or resident. By contrast, *construction* is usually used in a business context.

Ozaki (2012) examined 178 examples of the adverbs *maybe*, *perhaps*, *possibly*, *probably*, and *likely*. The researcher analyzed from both spoken and written corpora in terms of semantics, stylistics, syntax, and pragmatics. The findings of this research show that the adverb *maybe* is used in a casual context and *may* does not appear in formal writings. Moreover, *maybe* is used when the speaker or writer is not confident about what he/she says. The adverb *maybe* can refer to encouragement, jokes, sarcasm, suggestion, sympathy, hedges, and so forth. *Perhaps* is used when the speaker or writer is not certain of his/her statement. However, the pragmatic functions in spoken language tend to be more significant than the uncertainty. In addition, *perhaps* sounds more formal than *maybe* possibly in referring to an unrelated possible matter under the control of external forces such as a description of some situations. The pragmatic markers were found in *perhaps*, *maybe*, and *probably* more than *possibly* (Ozaki, 2012).

*Probably* shows the uncertainty of the writer or speaker when he/she wants to mention some situation. This word can be used in both spoken and written English. This word is similar to *maybe* and *perhaps*, but it is different in terms of usage in that *probably* usually co-occurs with impersonal preposition (Ozaki, 2012).

* Likely* is also used in spoken and written language, but it is accompanied with good evidence or reasons. When *likely* is used as an adverb, it seems to be restricted (Ozaki, 2012).

analysis of five English synonyms i.e., *ask, beg, plead, request* and *appeal* by using a program named Wordsmith Tools (version 3.0). He found that the in-depth meanings are different when comparing *beg, plead, request, and appeal* with *ask*. *Plead* is very formal and the meaning is stronger than *ask*. *Beg* shows a speaker’s haste. *Request* presents the formality and politeness of the speaker and *appeal* hints that the speaker is serious, urgent, and formal. The finding indicated that there is some difference in grammatical patterns: *appeal* something to somebody. Differences among the synonyms were found across all aspects considered; therefore, it could be concluded that these words, like most synonyms in English, were not fully interchangeable. Moreover, this research presented useful criteria for distinguishing synonyms based on the dialects, style or formality of the context, connotations, grammatical patterns and collocations.

Reiter and Sripada (2004) studied the contextual influences of near-synonym choices. The researchers wanted to study the factors that are more important than semantic differences when choosing the right words in context. The findings of this research show that in choosing lexical choices for writing, semantics does not play a major role. This study is based on a corpus analysis and other empirical studies. In the final result, meaning is not the most important factor in different writing contexts. Moreover, collocation, lexicon repetition, and the position of the phrase in the sentence are more important than semantics.

Salminen (2008) conducted a corpus-based study of English Swedish near-synonyms, which focused on the description and comparison of three synonymous words *environment, circumstance* and *surroundings*. The researcher used Oxford English Dictionary and SvenskaAkademiensOrdbok as the main references. Moreover, the researcher used two English corpora, British National Corpus (BNC) and Microconcord Corpus, and two Swedish corpora, SvenskaDagbladet 2000 and Bonniesromaner II for analysis of the data. The findings revealed that the formality degree of each word is different. So, the three synonymous words *environment, circumstance* and *surrounding* should be viewed as near-synonyms rather perfect synonyms.
Shen (2010) examines Chinese EFL learner's synonymous adjective errors using glad and happy. The researcher found that the frequency of using glad and happy is significantly different between Chinese EFL learners and native speakers from the Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC) and the Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB). Glad appears 169 times in CLEC and seems to be used with the infinitive with to, such as glad to accept, glad to join, glad to tell, and glad to see. Moreover, "so" and "very" are used as modifiers of glad. In FLOB, glad occurs 50 times and Chinese EFL learners may use it more than native speakers. As the keywords in context line (KWIC), the patterns "be glad to “and "be glad (that)..." are frequently used by native speakers. Moreover, "be happy with..." and "be happy to..." are also normally used by them. Nevertheless, this study will find the word for academic book, magazine, and journal. Moreover, this research will find the connotation meaning in context.

Taylor (2002) conducted a study of the pair of synonymous adjectives high and tall by using LOB Corpus. The findings of this research show that tall is used for explaining something such as human beings, trees, plants, and buildings. In contrast, high is not usually used with humans or animals. It is used to modify things such as tower, building, pillars, and sticks. In addition, the researcher found that high appear in English with higher frequency than tall. That means high can be used in a wider range in English.

Webb (2007) studied the effects of using synonyms by investigating vocabulary with and without high-frequency synonyms. The subjects were eighty-four Japanese students from a university in Fukuoka who studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from two first-year classes. They did 10 tests that had five aspects to be measured, i.e. orthography, paradigmatic association, syntagmatic association, meaning and form, and grammatical functions. The findings showed that the subjects get higher scores in learning synonyms for known words than learning vocabulary that they did not know before.
2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter presents the related literature and some previous research of corpus-based studied on English synonyms. The objective of the present study is to explore the similarities and differences of the synonyms. The connotations which can appear in this research and the degree of each word will be analyzed. Moreover, this researcher will observe the collocations in 300 concordance lines in corpus linguistics.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes: (1) the subjects, (2) the materials, (3) the procedures used in the collocation and analysis of the data, and (4) the data analysis.

3.1 CORPUS

In this study, three synonymous verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy, were selected. They were searched by using an online corpus – Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). One hundred concordance lines of each synonymous verb were drawn by COCA.

The data in this study were derived from COCA. This program is considered very convenient to use as it is composed of more than 100 million words from written and spoken English from several sources, such as academic books, newspapers, and famous fiction and provide concordance lines showing keywords in contexts. From the concordance lines, it seems to be easy and fast to observe lexical and structural information about the keyword which can be searched for.

3.2 INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments in this study were:

3.2.1 Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online (2010) as main references for the data because it can provide the connotation, example usage, and grammatical information of the synonyms.

3.2.2 WordNet 3.1 was used to find the sense of the meaning of the synonyms and selected to find what kinds of context were appropriate with each synonym.

3.3 COCA was used for searching for words or phrases by exact word or phrase, and part of speech. It is also possible to search for the collocation and find the frequency of words and phrases.
3.3 PROCEDURES

This section describes the procedure for data collection of the corpus-based study of three English synonyms, *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy*.

3.3.1 Data Collection

The COCA corpus online allows searching for words or phrases by exact word or phrase and part of speech. It is also possible to search for the collocation and find the frequency of words and phrases. In this study, the COCA was utilized in order to retrieve all verb forms of *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy* in the first 100 concordance lines. The results were shown in number of frequencies. The lexical and structural information about the keyword was easy to observe in each concordance line. For this reason, the top 10 collocations that usually co-occur with the word were retrieved from COCA.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

One hundred concordance lines of each synonymous verb were observed by the researcher. In particular, they were analyzed in three main viewpoints.

3.4.1 Grammatical patterns of three synonymous verbs.

3.4.2 The degrees of formality of the three synonymous verbs based on genres.

3.4.3 Collocations of the three synonymous verbs.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The previous chapter discusses the methodology used for analysis and data collection by using two sources, i.e. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This chapter reports on similarities and differences in lexicon, syntax, and style. Moreover, distribution in different genres of the three synonymous words ruin, demolish, and destroy will be presented. This chapter is separated into three parts based on key word study.

4.1 Ruin

4.1.1 Definition from a dictionary

a) To severely damage or spoil something.
b) To cause great and usually irreparable damage or harm to; have a disastrous effect on.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p. 1027)

4.1.2 Grammatical patterns

a) ruin + somebody/something
   - If she loses the court case it will ruin her.
b) V.to be + ruin(ed) + by + someone/something.
   - They were ruined by the highest interest rates this century.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p. 1027)

4.1.3 Corpus-based grammatical patterns

The researcher collected the first 100 concordance lines from COCA to illustrate the grammatical patterns of ruin.

a) ruin + somebody/something (84 tokens)
   LN 12 him, what was he doing? He was going to ruin everything. If Oxford did know of any members of the prohibited
LN 38. But if he’s an enemy, you have to ruin him. That practice still persists. "6942 MORE than

b) ruin + somebody/something + preposition + something (8 tokens)

LN 55. So I’m not about to let that Bajoran simian ruin it by giving all my platinum to that Boslic! As he

LN 61 before, have you? I don’t want to ruin it for people, you know?
Whenever people say it’s

c) ruin + preposition + something (6 tokens)

LN 16 offensive. So it’s been basically like the road to ruin for him. So this is no surprise. And it’s

LN 50 decade, the disease has found no shortage of lives to ruin in the U.S. (Since the late 1970s, AIDS has claimed

d) ruin + something + WH Clause (1 token)

LN 20 great. She really is. I’m probably going to ruin her career when I say that, but she’s --she

e) ruin + something + to infinitive (1 tokens)

LN 64 Julio believes this hurts the wine: “We have to ruin it to make it look nice, “he says with a
4.1.4 Degree of Formality

Figure 1. Distribution of ruin in different genres.

The word *ruin* has been shown in COCA 4,412 times as a noun and a verb from 1990 to 2014.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of how *ruin* is distributed in different genres, which are spoken language, fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic textbook in the first 100 tokens in concordance lines. The word *ruin* appears most frequently in fiction (39%), followed by spoken (30%), magazine (16%), newspaper (14%), and this word is least used in academic texts (1%). Therefore, it may be concluded that *ruin* is not often used in a formal context.
4.1.5 Collocation

*Ruin* is a verb, so this word usually co-occurs with a following noun or noun phrase. The nouns which tend to appear with *ruin* in COCA were investigated.

Table 3. Shows Top 10 Words Which Co-occurred after *ruin*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Type of Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>life</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>career</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>everything</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>reputation</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>happiness</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>road</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>everybody</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>brink</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>lives</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the top 10 words which collocate with *ruin* in the first 100 tokens in the concordance lines. The first rank is *life* which occurs together with *ruin* 9 times in the concordance lines, for example, *I feel sorry for him, she’ll ruin his life* in line 45. It is followed by *career* (8 times), *everything* (6 times), and *reputation* (3 times). The last rank is *day*, which occurs only 1 time. From this table, it might be inferred from the data that all types of words that collocate with *ruin* are nouns.
4.2 Demolish

4.2.1 Definition from dictionary
a) to pull or knock down a building
b) to destroy a theory, etc.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p. 309)

4.2.2 Grammatical pattern
a) V.to be + demolish(ed) + to infinitive
   - The house was demolished to make way for the shopping center.
b) demolish + somebody
   - I looked forward keenly to demolishing my opponent.
c) demolish(ed) + something
   - Arsenal demolished City 3-0.
   - Her article brilliantly demolishes his whole argument.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p. 309)

4.2.3 Corpus-based grammatical patterns
The researcher collected the first 100 concordance lines from COCA to explain the grammatical patterns of demolish.

a) demolish + somebody/something (90 tokens)
   LN 6 flag of illegality. “#” You’re told to demolish a house, because it commands a road and they’ve been
   LN 42 was once so dilapidated that plans were in the works to demolish it. Thanks to the efforts of Newport citizens, in 1974

b) demolish + WH Clause (4 tokens)
   LN 92 the strait pushing ice with its bow. I watched it demolish what was left of the ice; it went right through where
   LN 94 Epoque landmark that Rainier refused to let Aristotle Onassis demolish when the Greek shipping magnate was major investor in Monaco.
c) *demolish* + adverbial (3 tokens)

LN 37 sign on the door that says’ repair, enclose or *demolish* in 30 days, “said Ige, who plans on

LN 38 lease for one year. We have seen the rush to *demolish* in Chicago (including landmark building), only to find the

d) *demolish* + somebody/something + preposition + something (3 tokens)

LN 31 is not out of fear of Attis though Attis could clearly *demolish* him in a fight. It is out of sadness and out

LN 40 establish a good thing in good times than to reduce or *demolish* it in bad times. Recurrent cycles of rescission are rapidly
4.2.4 Degree of Formality

Figure 2. Distribution of *demolish* in different genres.

The word *demolish* has been shown in COCA 422 times from 1990 to 2014.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of how *demolish* is distributed in different genres which are spoken language, fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic textbook in the first 100 tokens in concordance lines. The word *demolish* appears most frequently in newspaper (37%), followed by magazine (21%), academic and fiction (17% each), and this word is least used in spoken (8%). Therefore, it may be concluded that *demolish* is often used in a formal context.
4.2.5 Collocation

Demolish is a verb, so this word usually co-occurs with a following noun or noun phrase. The nouns which tend to appear with demolish by using COCA were investigated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Type of Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>building</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>buildings</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>homes</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>houses</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>boundaries</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>center</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>structures</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>barn</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>position</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the top 10 words which collocate with demolish in the first 100 tokens in the concordance lines. The first rank is building which occurs together with demolish 6 times in the concordance lines, for example, *He would never use them to demolish the building* in line 60. It is followed by buildings (5 times), house (5 times), and homes (5 times). The last rank is position, which occurs only 1 time. From this table, it might be inferred from the data that all types of words that collocate with demolish are nouns.
4.3 *Destroy*

4.3.1 *Definition from dictionary*

a) to damage something so badly that it no longer exists, works, etc.
b) to kill (a sick, savage, or unwanted animal) by humane means.
c) to end the existence of (something) by damaging or attacking it:
d) to ruin (someone) emotionally or spiritually.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p.316)

4.3.2 *Grammatical pattern*

a) V.to be + *destroy*(*ed*) + by something
- The room had been *destroyed* by fire.
b) *destroy* + somebody
- Northants have the batting to *destroy* anyone.

(Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary, 2010, p.316)

4.3.3 *Corpus-based grammatical patterns*

The researcher collected the first 100 concordance lines from COCA to explore the grammatical patterns of *destroy*.

a) *destroy* + something/somebody (98 tokens)

LN 5 : myth, Ajax was an angry god who set out to *destroy* all living thing. When his killing frenzy was successful and

LN 13 day, simply popping out of a coal mine somewhere to *destroy* as many hitters as he could. His windmill delivery and wild-eyed

LN 16 : remains a creature of contradiction. A communist who helped *destroy* communism. A Democrat who opened fire on his own parliament,

LN 17 Orthodox control and drastically curtailed, but did not *destroy* completely, Roman Catholic structures in Lithuanai and Latvia

LN 30 , and turned that over to the bird catcher, “*Destroy* it if you like.”

# The bird catcher took the

LN 91 quintessential arctic wilderness. Handing it over to Big Oil to *destroy* with mile upon mile of roads and pipelines as well as drill
b) *destroy* + clause (1 token)

LN 14 They snared me likewise, sister. For we cannot *destroy* as they do. “Yes, brother. They ruin

(The direct object is omitted in this pattern.)

c) *destroy* + WH clause. (1 token)

LN 90 : the full use of U.N. force and U.S. to *destroy* what remains of the so-called elite forces of Saddam Hussein . I
4.3.4 Degree of Formality

Figure 3. Distribution of *destroy* in different genres.

The word *destroy* has been shown in COCA 10,757 times from 1990 to 2014.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of how *destroy* is distributed in different genres, i.e. spoken language, fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic textbook in the first 100 tokens in concordance lines. The word *destroy* appears most frequently in spoken (25%), followed by magazine (24%), fiction (18%), newspaper (17%), and this word is least used in academic (16%).
4.3.5 Collocation

*Destroy* is a verb, so this word usually co-occurs with a following noun or noun phrase. The nouns which tend to appear with *destroy* in COCA were investigated.

Table 5. Show Top 10 Words Which Tend To Co-occurred after *destroy*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Type of Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>weapons</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>country</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>cells</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>soul</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>character</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>government</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>engine</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>life</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the top 10 words which collocate with *destroy* in the first 100 concordance lines. The first to fifth rank which occurs together with *demolish* 2 times in the concordance lines are *weapons, country, cells, soul* and *character*. The last rank is *structure*, which occurs only 1 time. From this table, it might be inferred that all types of words that follow *destroy* are nouns.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the similarities and differences of the three synonym words *ruin, demolish,* and *destroy* (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section summarizes the similarities and differences of the three synonyms *ruin, demolish,* and *destroy* distinguished by the criteria of synonyms, and their distribution in different genres.

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

This study aimed to examine the differences among *ruin, demolish,* and *destroy* in syntax, lexicon, and style and to investigate how these three synonymous words are distributed in different genres.

5.1.2 Selected Synonyms

The focus of this study is three synonyms *ruin, demolish,* and *destroy.* The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 8th edition (OALD8, 2010) was used for data collection in terms of definitions, grammatical patterns, and degrees of formality. Moreover, concordance lines derived from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were used for data collection to identify possible grammatical patterns, collocations, and degrees of formality. These words were investigated in order to distinguish the similarities and differences.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 The definitions of the three synonyms are not absolutely the same. Even if they share a core meaning, each word they conveys some different meanings.
5.2.2 The grammatical patterns of these three words are not completely identical, they just share some patterns.

5.2.3 These words usually collocate with an object noun.

5.2.4 The degrees of formality among these synonyms are not the same. To be specific, ruin and destroy are not often used in formal context and the word demolish is often used in formal context.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section concerns similarities and differences of the three synonyms; ruin, demolish, and destroy distinguished by criteria of synonyms, and their distribution in different genres.

The study indicated that although these three words are synonyms, they are not interchangeable in every context. This finding was supported by the study of Phoocharoensil (2010) in that, even though synonyms share the same meaning, they cannot be interchangeable in all contexts because of differences in styles of context, grammatical patterns, collocations, connotations, and differences in dialects.

5.3.1 Definition

All of these words have the same core meaning which is to break or attack something. However, the definition of each word is not the same. That is, the word ruin means to severely damage or spoil something, to cause great and usually irreparable damage or harm to, or to have a disastrous effect on. These can show that ruin is usually used with something that cannot be solved. The word demolish has another different meaning that is to destroy a theory. Lastly, the word destroy is usually used in the context of war. Another meaning of destroy is associated with killing (a sick, savage, or unwanted animal) by human means.
5.3.2 Grammatical Patterns

The grammatical patterns of these three synonyms are compared and contrasted below. Some patterns of these words are shared, while some patterns are different as shown in the table below.

Table 6. Shows the Shared Grammatical Patterns of ruin, demolish and destroy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHARED GRAMMATICAL PATTERNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ruin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruin + somebody/something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruin + somebody/something + preposition + something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the grammatical structures that ruin, demolish, and destroy share.

Table 7. Shows Different Grammatical Patterns of ruin, demolish and destroy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFERENT GRAMMATICAL PATTERNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ruin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruin + something + WH Clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruin + preposition + something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruin + something + to infinitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows the grammatical structures which ruin, demolish, and destroy do not share. It might be inferred that these words are not always interchangeable in every context, with respect to grammatical structure.
5.3.3 Collocation
According to the findings of the words collocating with ruin, demolish, and destroy, the types of words that are usually used as a collocation are nouns. The top three ranking collocates of ruin are life, career and everything. Meanwhile, demolish tends to co-occur with building, buildings and house. The top three ranking collocates of destroy are weapons, country and cells.

5.3.4 Degree of formality
With regard to the degree of formality of ruin, demolish, and destroy, the results showed that demolish is the most formal word because it is often used in newspapers. The word ruin is less formal than demolish but more formal than destroy, which is used in spoken language. Although the word ruin occurs in genres in COCA, the word ruin can occur in a verb form. The percentage of the word demolish is higher than that of the other words. The frequency of ruin in academic text is lower. This suggest that the word ruin is not appropriated using in academic texts. According to the findings of the present study and the previous studies, synonyms are used in different genres. So, the three words can show the same meaning, but they cannot perfectly replace each other (Cai, 2012).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS
This study was aimed at investigating the similarities and differences among ruin, demolish, and destroy in aspects of lexicon, syntax, and style by using three main sources of data collection, dictionary and COCA corpus.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 Although ruin, demolish, and destroy are synonymous, they cannot substitute for each other in all contexts due to the differences in degree of formality, grammatical patterns, and collocations.

5.4.2 Ruin, demolish, and destroy are near-synonyms, not perfect or absolute synonyms.
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research studies.

5.5.1 The findings reveal that what should be considered for further research is the comparison between two corpus databases which belong to different countries which have English as the first language, for example, the concordance lines between COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), as a representative of American English, and BNC (British National Corpus), which represents British English, in order to clearly see the similarities and differences of synonyms used in the two Englishes.

5.5.2 An error analysis of using synonyms in texts written by EFL learners should be done to investigate how learners use synonyms incorrectly in some contexts.
REFERENCES


**BIOGRAPHY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Miss Chuleeporn Ruenroeng</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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