



A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS:

ACHIEVE, ACCOMPLISH, AND ATTAIN

BY

MISS TINASIRI KIATTHANAKUL

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF

**THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS**

LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2015

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ENTITLED

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at investigating three synonymous verbs focusing on the past-tense and past-participle forms, i.e. *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained*, in terms of the sense of meaning and collocation in order to examine the similarities and differences with regard to using the most proper word in various contexts. The data was collected from two dictionaries first, namely, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014). This was compared with the first randomly-searched three hundred concordance lines of each verb derived from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to obtain more information not specified in the dictionaries. In addition, each synonym was distinguished by tenses and voices in order to determine the particular forms that they frequently tended to occur in. The results showed that the three verbs are near synonyms since they shared some common meanings and collocations; however, there were also some different meanings and collocations. This implies that the three synonyms can substitute for each other in certain contexts. The corpus-based study may benefit English teachers and learners in encouraging their use of corpus-based data as an additional tool for teaching and learning English language, which will in turn enhance learners' English knowledge and skills e.g. syntax, semantics and style.

Keywords: Synonym, Corpora, Corpus-Based Study, COCA, Collocation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(1)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(2)
LIST OF TABLES	(7)
LIST OF FIGURES	(8)
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	(9)
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Questions	2
1.3 Research Objectives	2
1.4 Definition of Terms	2
1.5 Scope of the Study	3
1.6 Limitations of the Study	3
1.7 Significance of the Study	4

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	5
2.1 The Concept of Corpora	5
2.1.1 Definitions of Corpora	5
2.1.2 Corpus-based Studies	6
2.2 The Concept of Synonyms	7
2.2.1 Synonyms	7
2.3 Criteria for Distinguishing Synonyms	9
2.3.1 Senses of Meanings	9
2.3.2 Collocations	10
2.4 Previous Related Studies	10
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
3.1 Corpora	17
3.1.1 Target Words	17
3.1.2 Sampling Technique	17
3.2 Research Instruments	18
3.2.1 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	18
3.2.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English	18
3.3 Data Analysis	19
3.3.1 Senses of Meanings	19
3.3.2 Collocations	19

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	20
4.1 Tenses and Voices	20
4.1.1 Achieved	20
4.1.2 Accomplished	22
4.1.3 Attained	24
4.2 Senses of Meanings	29
4.2.1 Achieve	29
4.2.2 Accomplish	30
4.2.3 Attain	32
4.3 Collocations	34
4.3.1 Achieved	35
4.3.2 Accomplished	38
4.3.3 Attained	42
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	47
5.1 Summary of the Study	47
5.1.1 Objectives of the Study	47
5.1.2 Target Words and Databases	47
5.2 Summary of the Findings	47
5.3 Conclusion	52
5.4 Pedagogical Implications	53
5.5 Recommendations for Further Research	54

REFERENCES

55

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A The Concordance Lines of *Achieved*

59

APPENDIX B The Concordance Lines of *Accomplished*

61

APPENDIX C The Concordance Lines of *Attained*

63

BIOGRAPHY

65



LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
4.1 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Achieved</i>	20
4.2 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Achieved</i>	21
4.3 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Accomplished</i>	22
4.4 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Accomplished</i>	23
4.5 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Attained</i>	24
4.6 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Attained</i>	25
4.7 Collocations of <i>Achieved</i>	35
4.8 Collocations of <i>Accomplished</i>	38
4.9 Collocations of the Word <i>Accomplished</i> as an Adjective	41
4.10 Collocations of <i>Attained</i>	42
5.1 The Occurrences of Tenses and its Frequencies	48
5.2 The Different Meanings of the Three Synonymous Verbs	50
5.3 The Collocations of the Three Verbs	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
4.1 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Achieved</i>	21
4.2 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Achieved</i>	22
4.3 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Accomplished</i>	23
4.4 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Accomplished</i>	24
4.5 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word <i>Attained</i>	25
4.6 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word <i>Attained</i>	26
4.7 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word <i>Achieved</i>	29
4.8 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word <i>Accomplished</i>	31
4.9 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word <i>Accomplished</i> as an Adjective	32
4.10 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word <i>Attained</i>	33

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
ANC	American National Corpus
BNC	British National Corpus
BoE	Bank of English
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
LDOCE	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
OALD	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
sb	somebody
sth	something
V-inf	infinitive verb

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It is undeniable that knowing a large number of words is an important way to communicate better than knowing only grammar (Wilkins, 1972). It is accepted that English language is a global language because it enables people who use different native languages to communicate with one another (Kirkpatrick, 2007). In addition, it is undeniable that a corpus plays a major role in teaching, studying and using English language as native speakers at present since it is empirical material and provides a wider range of data which is naturally occurring texts by native speakers (Lindquist, 2009).

The English vocabulary has a large size since it has borrowed many words from other languages such as Anglo-Saxon, French, Latin and Greek. As a consequence, the English language contains a great number of synonyms; however, the synonyms are not interchangeable in every context (Palmer, 1997). This is the reason why L2 learners may be confused and make mistakes in using the words and their grammatical patterns. To expand vocabulary knowledge, a synonym is a crucial factor contributing to learners' improvement of their English skills since using synonyms can help them to use a variety of words in appropriate contexts (Rozakis, 2011). Therefore, L2 learners have to understand that synonyms have the same meanings but are used in different linguistic aspects, e.g. syntax, lexicon, semantics, and style. Lee and Liu (2009) point out that most L2 learners trust dictionaries, which provide meanings and synonymous words without describing their different usages. Therefore, looking up vocabulary only in a dictionary is insufficient for knowledge of how to use words in terms of syntax, collocations, semantics, and style.

This present research was aimed at investigating three English synonymous verbs, namely, *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain*, to examine the similarities and differences with respect to senses of meanings and collocations by using Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015), Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014), and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as the

instruments of the study. Based on the findings of this research, L2 learners should observe the distinctions of these synonyms in order to use them in appropriate contexts.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the senses of meanings of the three verbs *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* according to the dictionary and corpus-based information?
2. What are the possible collocations of the three verbs *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* according to the dictionary and corpus-based information?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To study the senses of meanings of the three verbs *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* through the dictionary and corpus-based information.
2. To investigate the possible collocations of the three verbs *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* through the dictionary and corpus-based information.

1.4 Definition of Terms

- Corpus:** A systematic collection of authentic texts of both written and spoken language stored electronically on a computer used to obtain information about language in various genres that may not have been noticed through intuition alone
- Corpus-based study:** The study of language in a collection of electronic texts, spoken or written, in terms of both qualitative and quantitative analysis
- COCA:** Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the largest free online database containing more than 450 million words of texts gathered from 1990 to 2015 covering spoken English, fiction, magazines, newspaper articles, and academic writing
- Concordance line:** The results obtained from corpus software showing the use of the searched key word in the middle in various contexts

Synonym:	A word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language
Absolute synonym:	Words that are equivalent in meaning and occur in equal frequency to another one, which are absolute substitutes for each other in all contexts
Near synonym:	Words that have a similar meaning to another one but which cannot be interchangeable in every context
Sense of meaning:	Words that can be defined with more than one meaning and differ in connotation and their characteristic environments of use
Collocation:	Words that have a tendency to co-occur with the headword regularly and occur more often than would happen by chance; however, some collocations are fixed, such as <i>strong tea</i> and <i>powerful car</i>

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was limited to a corpus-based analysis of English synonyms and focused only on three synonymous verbs, namely, *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* in the past-tense and past-participle forms. The data was collected from two dictionaries: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014), both of which are well-known British English dictionaries, including Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the largest corpus of American English text from 1990 to 2015. The collocations of the three verbs in the -ed form used as adjectives are considered a component of noun collocations and thus are beyond the scope of this study. The study seeks to demonstrate key usage differences among these three verbs.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations of this study, as follows:

1.6.1 Concordancing program: The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is based on American English, so what was not discovered in the American corpus data may exist in some other British corpora.

1.6.2 Dictionaries: The two dictionaries (OALD and LDOCE) provide British English information. Thus, the information from American English dictionaries was not examined.

1.6.3 Word form: The study was limited particularly to the past-tense and past-participle forms of the three verb synonyms. Other verb forms of these synonymous verbs, e.g. base form, the form with the present-tense suffix {-es}, and the continuous form {-ing}, were not covered in the present study.

1.6.4 Sample size: Only three hundred concordance lines of each synonymous verb, which were derived from COCA, were examined. This set of corpus data might not illustrate all the possible uses of American English.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research of the three English synonymous verbs is significant in several aspects.

1.7.1 The results of this study will show whether the three synonymous verbs are absolute or near synonyms and present how each word should be used in real contexts.

1.7.2 The findings of the study will enable English teachers and L2 learners to be aware of the semantic and collocational differences of the three synonyms, including the appropriate usage of the words in various contexts.

1.7.3 The study provides a corpus-based analysis of the synonyms *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain*, and shows how English teachers and L2 learners can use corpus software as an additional tool for teaching and learning English, in addition to dictionaries.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Corpora

2.1.1 Definitions of Corpora

The word “*Corpus*” (the plural form is *corpora*) refers to a collection of written or spoken texts. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 9th edition, 2015, p. 334)

Bennett (2010, p. 12) states that “A corpus is a principled collection of authentic texts stored electronically that can be used to discover information about language that may not have been noticed through intuition alone.”

Nesselhauf maintains that “A corpus can be defined as a systematic collection of naturally occurring texts of both written and spoken language” (2011, p. 12). There are many different types of corpora to use for analysis in linguistics. Some examples of corpus types are as follows:

a. *General/reference corpora* aim to represent a variety of language types, both spoken and written language and different text types, for example, British National Corpus (BNC), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and American National Corpus (ANC).

The British National Corpus (BNC) contains 100 million words of contemporary British English, with 90 million words representing written English and the other 10 million from spoken English (of a variety of different text types). (Nesselhauf, 2011, p. 13)

“Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is the largest free online resource containing more than 450 million words of texts with comprehensive and representative data covering spoken English, fiction, magazines, newspaper articles, and academic writing (no L2 data, though). Moreover, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is a user-friendly

search engine, powerful, multifunctional, and contains contemporariness in its data.”

(Liu, 2010, p. 13)

Nesselhauf (2011, p. 15) explains that American National Corpus (ANC) contains 20 million words of written and spoken text types. In addition, Reppen and Ide (2004) express that the American National Corpus was built in 1990 following a similar general framework to the BNC, which compiled a wide range of registers, e.g. formal speeches, informal conversations, newspapers, etc. including electronic texts e.g. e-mail, Web pages, and e-talks from chat rooms such as tweets. The ANC was created from the cooperation with consortium of publishers, organizations, and academic institutions in the United States.

b. *Spoken corpora* aim to represent spoken language, for example, London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English (LLC), which contains 500 thousand words of transcribed spoken language and various text types. (Nesselhauf, 2011, p. 17)

Many English corpora contain a wide range of texts in various contexts such as academics, magazines, newspapers, and fiction. Therefore, they give great knowledge regarding the usage of words in various contexts, as well as for linguistic analysis.

2.1.2 Corpus-based Studies

A quantitative technique is necessary for corpus-based studies to compare the frequency of the occurrence of each word, of collocations co-occurring with each word, and of mutuality of each collocation, with the grammatical structure revealed in the corpus (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 2004). Therefore, corpus-based studies are based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The qualitative analysis method helps to acquire information on the functions of words or phrases and how to use them in various contexts (Conrad, 1999).

The other characteristics of corpus linguistics are quantitative methods and qualitative methods, which are used for analysis in corpus linguistics. Quantitative findings are shown before qualitative findings, but both methods are used extensively (Leech, Hundt, Mair, & Smith, 2012).

“*Corpus linguistics* is the analysis of naturally occurring language on the basis of computerized corpora. Usually,

the analysis is performed with the help of the computer, i.e. with specialized software, and takes into account the frequency of the phenomena investigated. As it can be used for the investigation of many kinds of linguistic questions and as it has been shown to have the potential to yield highly interesting, fundamental, and often surprising new insights about language, it has become one of the most wide-spread methods of linguistic investigation.”

(Nesselhauf, 2011, p. 12)

Bennett (2010, p. 4) takes the view that “Broadly, corpus linguistics helps to see what patterns are associated with lexical and grammatical features.”

2.2 The Concept of Synonyms

2.2.1 Synonyms

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2015, p. 1536) defines a noun *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.”

According to Thornbury (2002, p. 28), “[synonyms] only have similar meaning. When L2 learners see words having similar meanings, it might cause confusion.”

Synonyms are important to expand the knowledge of lexicon in order to use the right words in the right contexts and improve the skills of English to communicate precisely. *Synonyms* are usually classified into two main types: *perfect synonyms* and *near-synonyms*.

Perfect synonyms or *absolute synonyms* are words which are absolutely identical in meaning and completely interchangeable in every context (Chung, 2011). *Perfect synonyms* have the equal frequency of language use occurring in a corpus. This kind of synonym has rarely been found in language use since words are not always interchangeable in every context (Chung, 2011). Likewise Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2003, p. 196) indicate that “[I]t does not appear that two words

have exactly the same meaning.” Paradis (2012) maintains that absolute synonyms in English language have never been found.

In contrast, *near-synonyms* refer to words that have similar meanings to one another; however, they cannot substitute for one another in all contexts (Murphy, 2003). Jackson and Amvela (2000) maintain that the meanings of near synonyms have a great overlap and cannot substitute for each other; for instance, *look, watch, see, view, and observe*. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 9th edition, 2015, p. 893)

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2015, p. 893) gives the meanings, patterns, and collocations of *look, watch, see, view, and observe* as synonyms as follows:

Meaning: These words all mean “to turn your eyes in a particular direction.”

Look means “to turn your eyes in a particular direction: *If you look carefully, you can just see our house from here; or she **looked at** me and smiled.*”

Watch means “to look at sb/sth for a time, paying attention to what happens: *to watch television; watch what I do, then you try.*”

See means “to become aware of sb/sth by using your eyes: She looked for him but couldn’t see him in the crowd; I hate to see you unhappy.”

View (formal) means “to look at sth, especially when you look carefully; to watch television, a film/movie, etc.: *People came from all over the world to view her work.*”

Observe (formal) means “to watch sb/sth carefully, especially to learn more about them or it: *The patients were observed over a period of several months.*”

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2015, p. 893) presents the collocational information of *watch, see, and view*, specifying that you can *see/view a film/movie/programme* but you cannot use the word *see* and *view* in the context of *see/view television*. Moreover, *view* is more formal than *see* and is used especially in business contexts.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2015, p. 893) also shows the grammatical patterns and additional collocations of the three English verbs below:

- a. to *look/watch* **for** sb/sth
- b. to *watch/observe* **what/who/how...**
- c. to *look/watch/view/observe* (sb/sth) **with**
amazement/surprise/disapproval, etc.
- d. to *watch/see/view* a **film/movie/show/programme**
- e. to *watch/see* a **match/game/fight**
- f. to look (at sb/sth)/watch (sb/sth)/observe sb/sth
carefully/closely

L2 learners need to be aware of the differences and the uses of each word so that they are able to choose the most appropriate word for a specific context since most words are only near synonyms, not perfect synonyms. In other words, they are synonyms which cannot be substituted in all contexts.

2.3 Criteria for Distinguishing Synonyms

2.3.1 Senses of Meanings

O’Keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) state that when identifying and defining the meaning of words, the connotations of words and their characteristic environments of use that relate to contrastive contexts must be considered. In addition, Cruse (2010) expresses that the conceptual and communicative similarity of words incline toward expressive meanings, which are evaluated to see the contrast. Moreover, Murphy (2003) states that words can have more than one sense, and the denotation of words is associated with senses that are the one of the conditions. For instance, Tognini-Bonelli (2001) gives examples of the adjectives *flexible* and *fickle*. The two adjectives share a common meaning, which can be changeable depending on some situations. According to the meanings from the dictionary, the adjective *flexible* means “a person, plan, etc that is flexible can change or be changed easily to suit any new situation” and “something that is flexible can bend or be bent easily” (LDOCE, 2014, p. 695). On the other hand, *fickle* means “someone who is fickle is always changing their mind about people or things that they like, so that you cannot depend on them – used to show disapproval” and “something such as weather that is fickle often changes suddenly” (LDOCE, 2014, p. 668). Regarding the meanings of the two

adjectives, *flexible* has a positive meaning; however, *fickle* has a negative meaning (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001).

2.3.2 Collocations

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015, p. 285) defines *collocation* as

1) a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance.

2) two or more words often being used together in a way that happens more frequently than would happen by chance.

Sinclair (1991, p. 170) defines *collocation* as “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text.” Lindquist (2009, p. 57) states that “[C]ollocation is the relation between a word and individual word forms which co-occur frequently with it.” Bennett (2010, p. 8) refers to a *collocation* as “the statistical tendency of words to co-occur. This means that when one word is used, there is a high statistical probability that a certain word or words will occur alongside of it.” From the example of Bennett (2010), the words *big*, *good*, and *great* are possible adjective collocations of the noun *deal*. However, “A *big deal*” is used in an event or situation that has a significant meaning, while “A *good deal*” refers to a bargain, and “A *great deal*” refers to a quantity. In addition, Phoocharoensil (2010, p. 5) gave the instance of the noun *pride*, which collocates with the adjective *immense* rather than the adjective *colossal* with a frequency greater than chance even though these two adjectives have a close meaning. Studying collocations can help learners to understand the meanings of synonyms and choose the correct word to use in different contexts.

2.4 Previous Related Studies

Chung (2011) examined two synonyms in terms of the similarities and differences and the senses of meanings. The target words were a pair of synonymous verbs: *create* and *produce*. The study focused on the verb forms, sense frequencies, and collocations. In terms of all the verb forms of the two words, the data was obtained by using the AntConc concordance in the Brown Corpus and the Freiburg-Brown (Frown) Corpus from ICAME website for 466 instances of *create* and 481

instances of *produce*, with the Frown Corpus designed to match the Brown Corpus to compare with each other. From two American corpora, the data was analyzed manually. The senses of meanings were analyzed from WordNet by adding distributional information from the corpora. The collocations were searched from British National Corpus through the collocation application of the Sketch Engine. The findings indicated that *create* and *produce* are used in the forms of the bare infinitive and the -ed; these two verbs also share two overlapping senses, i.e. 'bring into existence/cause to happen, occur, or exist and create or manufacture a man-made product.' The verb *create* was usually followed by abstract objects that are less in quantity than the verb *produce* and the attributes of the objects are not fixed, which refer to higher creativity. The verb *produce* is often followed by objects produced in a considerable number, including those manufactured by factories, with low creativity. Furthermore, the verb *produce* appeared in the sense of farming. There are many semantic differences, which are better measured on a scale rather than in discrete dichotomies.

Cai (2012) investigated the differences among six near synonymous adjectives of *great* in meaning and use. This study focused on both frequencies and collocations of these synonyms, and description of the differences in meaning based on an investigation of the context and consultation with native English speakers. The target words were *great*, *awesome*, *excellent*, *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *terrific*, and *wonderful*, which were high-frequency synonyms and shared the same meaning of 'very good'. The data was obtained from COCA by Mark Davies (until May, 2012). The findings revealed that the frequency of *great* was the highest, followed by *wonderful* and *excellent*, respectively. The adjectives *awesome*, *fabulous*, and *fantastic* occurred with high frequency across time. Based on the frequencies across genres, *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *great*, *terrific*, and *wonderful* appeared more often in the spoken genre, whereas *awesome* and *excellent* were found more in magazines. In addition, *awesome* was used frequently by teenagers and young adults. Therefore, the seven near synonyms were used mostly in spoken language. In terms of the differences of collocation, these adjectives describe most abstract nouns. This study also found some important differences in the collocational analysis. It could be concluded that *great* is the weakest adjective collocate and most general among the

others, whereas *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *terrific*, and *awesome* in the older sense of ‘inspiring awe’ are extremely positive. Furthermore, *excellent* and *terrific* mainly modified an *action/event/feeling* expected for a referent; *awesome* mainly modified a *thing/event/feeling* unexpected or unusual for a referent, and *fabulous* and *fantastic* share preferences and modified *things/events/feelings*, which are too good to believe. In addition, *fabulous*, *fantastic*, and *wonderful* described more personal emotions than *great* and *excellent* for evaluation of *things*, *events*, or *feelings*. On the other hand, *excellent* was more objective. With regard to the differences of meanings and uses of the seven near synonyms, *great* was more general and weaker than the others in degree. *Fabulous*, *fantastic*, *terrific*, and *awesome* were more positive. Furthermore, *fabulous* and *fantastic* show a sense of being almost unbelievable in connotation.

Kumnerdchart (2013) investigated the similarities and differences among three synonymous verbs, namely, *defend*, *protect*, and *safeguard*, in four aspects: grammatical patterns, sense of meaning, formality of context, and collocations. The target words were three synonymous English verbs: *defend*, *protect*, and *safeguard*. The data of each verb was drawn from the first five hundred concordance lines of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The other research instrument was Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online (2011). The information from the concordance lines was compared with the information from OALD to find some more aspects that were not represented in the dictionary. In addition, Word Net 3.1 was also used to be a research instrument in order to find the sense of meaning of each synonym. The collocations of each verb were analyzed from the top twenty collocations that appeared in the COCA corpus. The findings indicated that the three English verbs were near synonyms since they had differences in grammatical patterns, sense of meaning, style of context, and collocations. The two synonymous verbs *protect* and *safeguard* shared similar grammatical patterns; however, the verb *defend* had a different grammatical pattern: *defend+Wh-noun clause*. The five hundred concordance lines of each word might not represent the grammatical patterns adequately. The verb *defend* occurred in both formal and informal contexts; it often occurred in spoken language and in newspapers. The verb *protect* was also used in formal and informal contexts; it was often used in magazines, spoken language, academic level, and newspapers, except fiction. The last one was the verb *safeguard*,

which was only used formally and mostly appeared in academic texts. In terms of collocations, the words often collocating with *defend* were nouns and pronouns; the words often collocating with *protect* were nouns; the words usually collocating with *safeguard* were only nouns. In addition, the preposition *against* often co-occurred with *safeguard*, and *safeguard against* was used as a phrasal verb. Adverbs were also collocations to modify each verb. The adverb *successfully* most often co-occurred with *defend*, while *necessarily* most often collocated with *protect*, and *adequately* occurs with *safeguard*.

Somrang (2013) examined the synonymous English verbs *give*, *provide*, and *offer* in order to investigate the similarities and differences of three verbs in three aspects: referential meanings, grammatical patterns, and collocations. The three synonymous verbs *give*, *provide*, and *offer* were the focus of this study. The data was obtained from two research instruments: Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 5th edition, 2009 (LDOCE) and British National Corpus (BNC). The LDOCE provides both meanings and grammatical patterns, and the British National Corpus provides both spoken and written text of native speakers. The three hundred concordance lines of each verb were elicited from the BNC so as to examine the similarities and differences among these three synonyms. Furthermore, concordance lines provide additional information that was not contained in the LDOCE. The findings indicated that the verbs *give*, *provide*, and *offer* were near-synonyms since they shared the same core meaning, but they could not be replaced in all contexts because of their additional meanings. In terms of collocation, the verbs *give*, *provide*, and *offer* collocated with abstract nouns from the top ten frequencies. In addition, *advice*, *opportunity* and *support* were the nouns that often collocated with those verbs.

Tharanatham (2013) examined the differences among *remember*, *recall*, and *recollect* in syntax, lexicon, and style, and investigated how these three synonymous words were distributed in different genres. These three synonymous words *remember*, *recall*, and *recollect* were the main focus of the study. The research instruments were Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th edition, 2010 (OALD) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The researcher examined the meanings and grammatical patterns of each verb from the dictionary and compared their results with the data elicited from the first five hundred

concordance lines of the COCA in order to find the similarities and differences of each synonymous verb and investigate how these three verbs were distributed to different genres. The collocations were analyzed from the top twenty collocations that often co-occurred with the words. The findings indicated that *remember*, *recall*, and *recollect* were near-synonyms because of the differences in dialects, degree of formality, grammatical patterns, and collocations. In terms of grammatical patterns, these three verbs were not always interchangeable in all contexts. Nouns and verbs were often used as collocations of these three verbs. Adjectives and adverbs were only used to describe nouns and verbs. The verb *recall* was the most formal word because it usually appeared in academic texts; the verb *recollect* was semi-formal; the verb *remember* was informal, as it almost always appeared in spoken language and was rarely found in academic texts.

Castello (2014) studied the usage and distribution of *strong* and *powerful* in terms of patterns, similarities and differences. This study was an exploratory corpus study. The data of two hundred concordance lines of each synonym were drawn from the spoken components of the Bank of English (BoE), which is a corpus co-owned by the University of Birmingham and HarperCollins Publishers. In addition, any unwanted concordance lines were eliminated. For example, lines that employed *strong* in the sense of indicating the size of a group were omitted from this study. Similarities and differences in usage and function were examined. The results found that there were some definitions that were rather vague due to the semantic overlap between the two words, whereas there were some different meanings. In terms of token frequency, the use of *strong* was preferable to the use of *powerful* in BoE corpus and the two words were used in discourse, both in the context of regional variation and subject matter compared across sub-corpora. The word *powerful* more often occurred than the word *strong* in written British English of the BoE; however, compared across the usacad sub-corpus (the sub-corpus of Bank of English, which contains written American English), the word *powerful* in written American English had greater density per million words. Similarly, the word *strong* more often occurred in the UK's times sub-corpus; however, the word *strong* in written texts had the highest frequency per million words in Australian and American corpora, compared

across oznews (the sub-corpus of Bank of English, which contains written Australian English) and usacad.

In terms of collocations and patterns, from the T-score lists, concrete nouns more often collocated with *powerful* – *cars, computers, countries, and states*. However, abstract nouns and concepts often co-occurred with *strong* – *sense, feeling, disapproval, belief, and reservation*. In addition, from the MI score, *wind* collocated with *strong*, which was used to report a result of weather in the news. Moreover, the words *healthy* and *enough* often collocated with *strong*, which often appeared in the form ‘*be verb strong enough verb infinitive*’; however, the form of ‘*to be powerful enough to do...*’ did not occur frequently. *Powerful* was frequently used with the word *rich* in the form of the phrase *rich and powerful* for using *powerful* to modify concrete nouns.

In terms of lexical patterning, *strong* and *powerful* shared some lexical patterns, i.e. ADV + *strong/powerful*, a *strong/powerful* + N, as *strong/powerful* as + N, *strong* and ADJ, and ADJ and *powerful*. On the other hand, the two words were used in distinct patterns, i.e. BE VERB *strong* enough V-inf, N (as possessor)’s *powerful* N, and ADV *powerful* than. The preceding adverbs of *strong* tended to express the concept that a power or force was overwhelming or sustained. The preceding adverbs of *powerful* were often used in comparative terms (*more* is the most frequently occurring on the left of the node). *Powerful* was often used to express a larger range of degrees of force or effectiveness, or to express the lack of these features. For the patterns of descriptiveness, the form ‘*strong and ADJ*’ and ‘*strong, ADJ*’ tended to be used in descriptive clause more than *strong*, which were located at the end of the list, that is, the form ‘*ADJ and strong*’ or ‘*ADJ, strong*’ including *big enough and strong enough*, and *very tough and strong*; however, the concordance lines did not show any pattern of using *powerful* in the form ‘*powerful and ADJ*’ or ‘*powerful, ADJ*’ and the opposite form (‘*powerful and flexible engines*’ or ‘*powerful, able and talented*’), which was preferred to use. Regarding use in comparative phrases, the form *as powerful as* referred to people or groups of people, whereas the form *as strong as* was used with concrete nouns, e.g. *as strong as IBM, as strong as battery acid*, and relational words, e.g. *as strong as ever* and *as strong as possible*.

Aroonmanakun (2015) studied the similarities and differences between the two synonymous adjectives, *quick* and *fast*, in the aspects of sense of meanings and collocations using corpus-based methodology. This study used the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as research instruments. The data was derived from COCA to investigate the similarities and differences, and the collocations from the list of top one hundred collocates of *quick* and *fast*, which were drawn and ranked by frequency with MI scores of at least three and were restricted to nouns immediately following the two synonyms. In addition, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary was used as the main resource for searching for basic information of the two synonyms. The findings showed that the two adjectives were near synonyms. *Quick* was used more commonly than *fast* to modify the same nouns. Some nouns can collocate with only either *quick* or *fast*. The noun collocates of *quick* in the sense of *quick*, which points to the action being carried out in a short time, or responded back in a short time, were often drawn from a verb, e.g. *answer, calculate, call, drink, etc.*, whereas the noun collocates of *fast* in the sense of *fast*, which shows the manner of movement rather than a short period of time, were also drawn from a verb, e.g. *acceleration, attack, connection, draw, ride, etc.* However, the noun collocates of *fast* to define the quality of that nouns in the sense of fast that emphasizes the high speed of the action were *bike, boat(s), car(s), company, computers, internet, etc.* It can be seen that nouns that collocate with both *quick* and *fast* usually focused on different aspects of meanings. When the two synonyms were used to modify the same noun, *quick* tended to point out the quality or property of an action, whereas *fast* indicated the manner of an action. For instance, *a quick learner* referred to someone who is able to learn something very easily, whereas *a fast learner* referred to someone who learns something in a short time. In contrast, in some contexts, *a quick action* or *a fast action* was defined as an action that is done in a short period of time; therefore, *quick* and *fast* can substitute for each other.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Corpora

3.1.1 Target Words

The target words in this study were three English synonymous verbs: *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain*. The words were chosen from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th edition (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th edition (2014). It can be seen that the verbs *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* often occur in many contexts and are synonyms of each other. Therefore, this research was aimed at investigating the three English verbs, with an emphasis on their similarities and differences in terms of meanings and collocations.

3.1.2 Sampling Technique

In this research, the simple random sampling technique was used to choose the target words by a random sampling method. This technique is related to the research questions, and objectives of the study.

Three hundred concordance lines of each target word, i.e. *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained*, were retrieved from COCA of Brigham Young University through <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>. The past-tense and past-participle forms of the synonyms were put in the search box of "WORD(S)", and the KWIC node is chosen. For the title of "# HITS", the number of "500" was selected from drop down list of the KWIC box to search for the example sentences from concordance lines by clicking the SEARCH tag, and then five hundred concordance lines of the verb were shown on the screen, and the researcher chose three hundred concordance lines in order to analyze the information. That was the end of processes. The analyzed data of each verb was presented in Microsoft Excel worksheet to examine the frequency of the occurrences of the three synonyms.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments were dictionaries and a corpus program. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th edition (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th edition (2014) were the main dictionaries. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) in the form of concordance lines was the main corpus.

3.2.1 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th edition (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th edition (2014)

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014) were the primary resources used for obtaining information on the selected synonymous verbs. The two dictionaries are the largest British English dictionaries from Oxford University Press and Pearson Education Limited that provide definitions, pronunciations, example sentences, and grammatical information. The aim of the two dictionaries is to give the most inclusive and precise information to learners, teachers, and anyone who needs to communicate in English. (OALD, 9th Edition, 2015 and LDOCE, 6th Edition, 2014)

The meanings and collocations were studied from the dictionaries first by observing the definitions and the example sentences of each verb that are given in the dictionaries to investigate the senses of meanings and collocations.

3.2.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

The other data collection instrument was the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which was the main corpus of this study. The concordancing program presented the use of English in the real contexts by native speakers in various genres, i.e. fiction, magazine, newspaper, academic text, and spoken language. The senses of meanings of each verb were observed from the first randomly-searched three hundred concordance lines to examine whether other senses of meanings would be found in COCA for the real contexts, apart from appearing in the dictionaries. In terms of collocation, the data was drawn from the top ten collocations that usually co-occurred with each verb to find common collocations of the three synonyms, and word classes of these collocates.

3.3 Data Analysis

The corpus-based analysis of the three synonymous verbs was manually done after the data is collected from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015), Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014), and the three hundred concordance lines of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

3.3.1 Senses of Meanings

The senses of meanings were investigated from the definitions and the example sentences that are given in the dictionaries to find the similarities and differences in meanings of those verbs. The senses of meanings of each verb were considered to determine whether they shared the same core meaning. If the meaning of each verb was absolutely identical or only similar to the others, these three verbs can be *perfect synonyms* or *near synonyms*, respectively.

3.3.2 Collocations

The collocations of the three synonymous verbs were searched manually for the top ten collocations that often co-occur with each verb. The collocations were observed for the frequencies of occurrences to find the words that co-occurred with the headword regularly and their word classes. It is clear that nouns, adverbs, or prepositions often co-occurred with each particular verb.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports the results of the study of the three synonymous verbs in terms of sense of meaning and collocation, with emphasis on the similarities and differences from two dictionaries and COCA database. The findings are explained in the descriptions.

4.1 Tenses and Voices

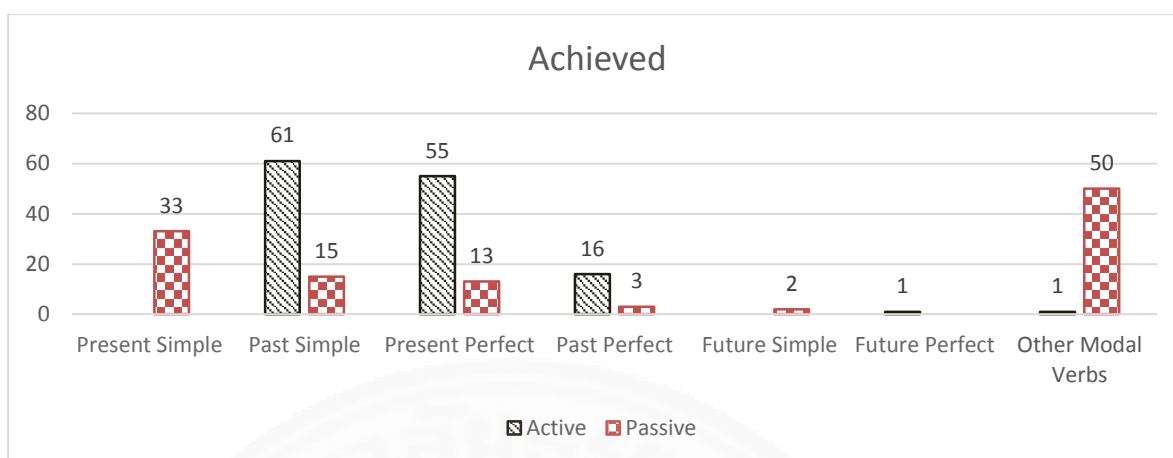
The three synonyms were examined in terms of tenses and voices from the concordance lines of The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which are described below:

4.1.1 Achieved

The frequency of tense and voice and the comparison of the word *achieved* are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.1 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Achieved*

Tenses and Voices	Present Simple	Past Simple	Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Future Simple	Future Perfect	Other Modal Verbs	Total
Active	-	61	55	16	-	1	1	134
Passive	33	15	13	3	2	-	50	116

Figure 4.1 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Achieved*

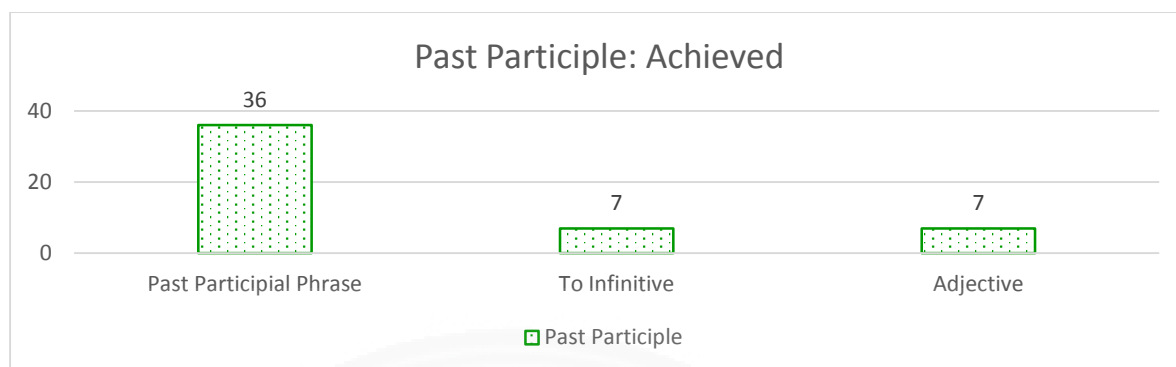
For the active voice, the word *achieved* was shown in the past simple tense (V2) for 61 concordance lines, equal to 20.33%, followed by the present perfect tense (has, have + V3) for 55 concordance lines (18.33%). Finally, the word *achieved* was presented in the past perfect tense (had + V3) for 16 concordance lines, equal to 5.33%.

For the passive voice, the word *achieved* was used with the other modal verbs (can/must/may/might/should/would/could + be + V3) for 50 concordance lines (16.67%), followed by the present simple tense (is, are + V3) for 33 concordance lines (11%). Finally, the word *achieved* was presented in the past simple tense (was, were + V3) for 15 concordance lines (5%).

The frequency of the word *achieved* and the comparison, which occurred in the non-finite forms, are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.2 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Achieved*

Non-finite Forms	Past Participial Phrase	To Infinitive	Adjective	Total
Past Participle (V3)	36	7	7	50

Figure 4.2 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Achieved*

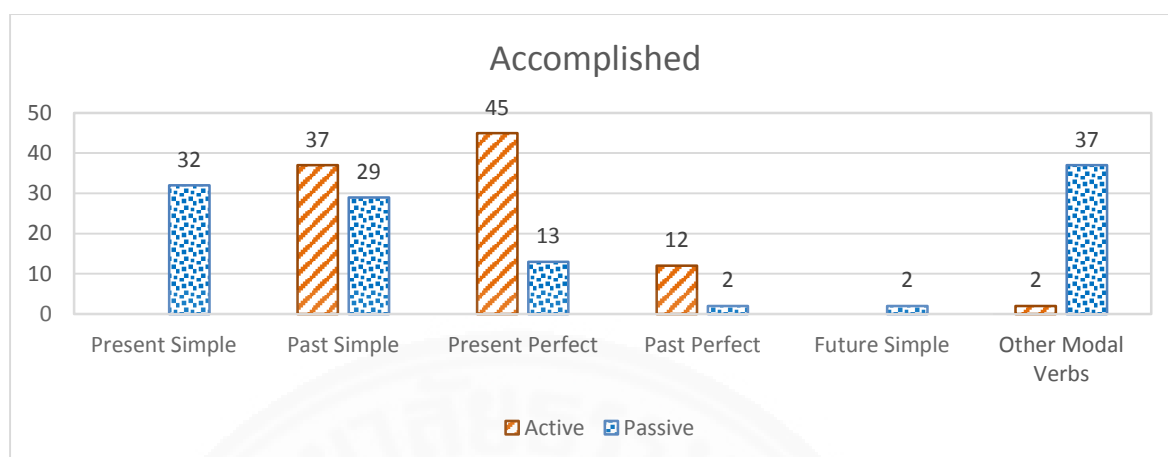
As for the non-finite verb forms, the word *achieved* was used in the past participial phrase for 36 concordance lines, equal to 12%, followed by the to-infinitive form (to have, to be + V3) for 7 concordance lines (2.33%), and the adjective form (achieved + noun) for 7 concordance lines (2.33%).

4.1.2 Accomplished

The frequency of tense and voice and the comparison of the word *accomplished* are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.3 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Accomplished*

Tenses and Voices	Present Simple	Past Simple	Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Future Simple	Other Modal Verbs	Total
Active	-	37	45	12	-	2	96
Passive	32	29	13	2	2	37	115

Figure 4.3 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Accomplished*

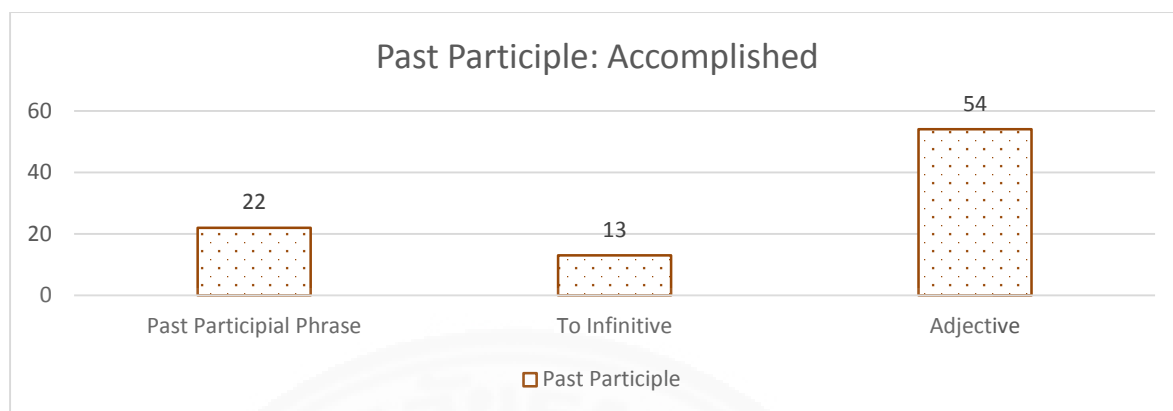
For the active voice, the word *accomplished* was shown in the present perfect tense (has, have + V3) for 45 concordance lines, equal to 15%, followed by the past simple tense (V2) for 37 concordance lines (12.33%). Finally, the word *accomplished* was presented in the past perfect tense (had + V3) for 12 concordance lines (4%).

As regards the passive voice, the word *accomplished* was used with the other modal verbs (*can/must/may/should/could/could have/would have* + be/been + V3) for 37 concordance lines (12.33%), followed by the present simple tense (is, are + V3) for 32 concordance lines (10.67%). Finally, the word *accomplished* was presented in the past simple tense (was, were + V3) for 29 concordance lines (9.67%).

The frequency of the word *accomplished* and the comparison, which occurred in the non-finite forms, are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.4 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Accomplished*

Non-finite Forms	Past Participial Phrase	To Infinitive	Adjective	Total
Past Participle (V3)	22	13	54	89

Figure 4.4 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Accomplished*

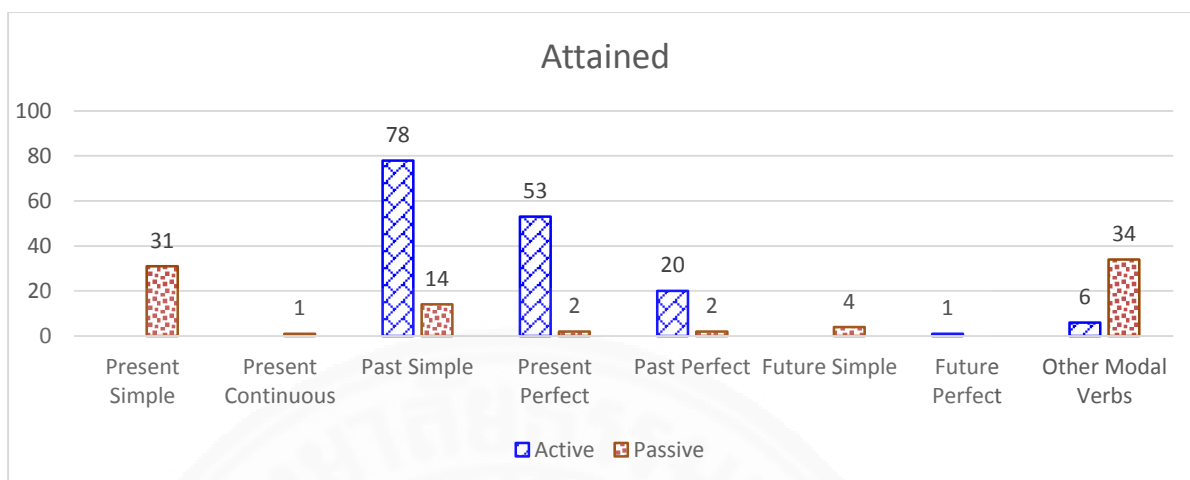
In the non-finite verb forms, the word *accomplished* was used in the past participial phrase for 22 concordance lines (7.33%), followed by the to-infinitive form (to be + V3) for 13 concordance lines (4.33%). Finally, the most frequent occurrence is the adjective form (*accomplished* + noun) for 54 concordance lines (18%).

4.1.3 Attained

The frequency of tense and voice and the comparison of the word *attained* are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.5 The Frequency of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Attained*

Tenses and Voices	Present Simple	Present Continuous	Past Simple	Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Future Simple	Future Perfect	Other Modal Verbs	Total
Active	-	-	78	53	20	-	1	6	158
Passive	31	1	14	2	2	4	-	34	88

Figure 4.5 The Comparison of Tenses and Voices of the Word *Attained*

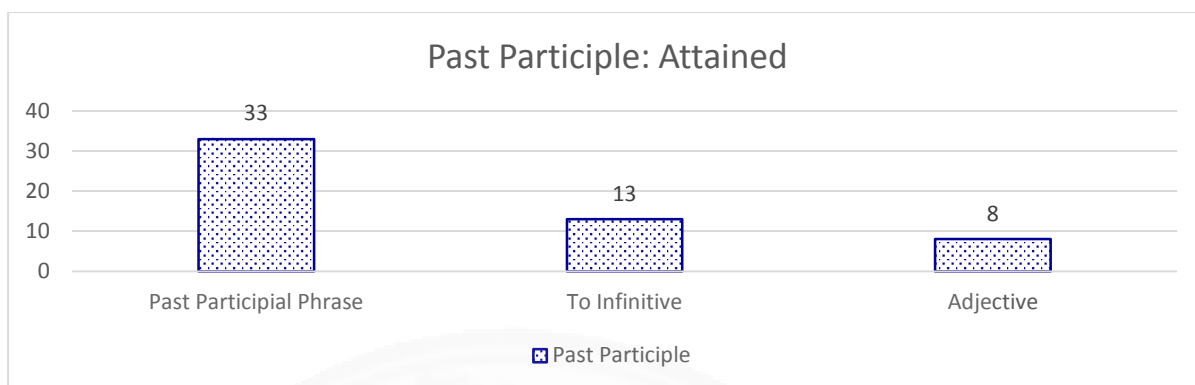
For the active voice, the word *attained* was shown in the past simple tense (V2) for 78 concordance lines (26%), followed by the present perfect tense (has, have + V3) for 53 concordance lines (17.66%). Finally, the word *attained* was presented in the past perfect tense (had + V3) for 20 concordance lines (6.67%).

With regard to the passive voice, the word *attained* was used with the other modal verbs (*can/must/may/might/could/could have* + be/been + V3) for 34 concordance lines (11.33%), followed by the present simple tense (is, are + V3) for 31 concordance lines (10.33%). Finally, the word *attained* was presented in the past simple tense (was, were + V3) for 14 concordance lines (4.67%).

The frequency of the word *attained* and the comparison, which occurred in the non-finite forms, are shown in the following figures:

Table 4.6 The Frequency of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Attained*

Non-finite Forms	Past Participial Phrase	To Infinitive	Adjective	Total
Past Participle (V3)	33	13	8	54

Figure 4.6 The Comparison of the Non-Finite Forms of the Word *Attained*

With respect to the non-finite verb forms, the word *attained* was used in the past participial phrase for 33 concordance lines (11%), followed by the to-infinitive form (to have, to have been, to be + V3) for 13 concordance lines (4.33%). Finally, the word *attained* was used to be an adjective (*attained* + noun) for 8 concordance lines (2.66%).

This study examined the three synonymous verbs in the past simple form (V2) and the past participle form (V3). In the active voice, the results indicated that the words *achieved* and *attained* were often used in the past simple tense, equal to 20.33% and 26%, respectively, followed by the present perfect tense, equal to 18.33% and 17.66%, respectively, and the past perfect tense, equal to 5.33% and 6.67%, respectively. However, the word *accomplished* was used in the present perfect tense (15%), followed by the past simple tense (12.33%), and the past perfect tense (4%) most frequently. It can be noted that the word *attained* occurred with the highest frequency in the past simple tense (26%) and the past perfect tense (6.67%) among the three verbs. In addition, the word *achieved* occurred with the highest frequency in the present perfect tense (18.33%) among the three verbs.

In the passive voice, the words *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained* were used with other modal verbs, equal to 16.67%, 12.33%, and 11.33%, respectively, followed by the present simple tense, equal to 11%, 10.67%, and 10.33%, respectively, and the past simple tense, equal to 5%, 9.67%, and 4.67%, respectively. The word *achieved* had the highest occurrences with the other modal verbs (16.67%) and the present simple tense (11%) among the three verbs.

Furthermore, the word *accomplished* occurred in the past simple tense with the highest frequency (9.67%) among the three verbs.

As for the non-finite forms, the word *achieved* was used in the past participle form with the highest frequency (12%), followed by the word *attained* (11%) and *accomplished* (7.33%), respectively. *Accomplished* and *attained* were equally used in the to-infinitive form (4.33%), which had a higher frequency than *achieved* (2.33%). Finally, *accomplished* was used as an adjective the most frequently (18%), followed by *attained* (2.66%) and *achieved* (2.33%), respectively.

As shown in the results of this study, with respect to the tenses and voices of the three verbs, in the active voice, the three synonymous verbs often occurred in the past simple tense, the present perfect tense, and the past perfect tense; however, *achieved* and *attained* rarely occurred in the future perfect tense (will have + V3), nor did *accomplished* occur in this tense. Regarding the grammatical structure, the verbs in the -ed form express tense in the past form (V2) and the perfect form (V3), which refers to a perfect situation in present time (has/have + V3) and past time (had + V3), and situation that will be completed in the future (will have + V3). Therefore, the three verbs in this study can occur in the future perfect tense in the active voice, which might have occurred more frequently in the present study if more data had been collected. Furthermore, these verbs did not occur in the present simple tense (V1) and the future simple tense (will + V1) since the verbs in the past form and the perfect form cannot occur with the tenses, which use the verbs in the simple form.

As regards the passive voice, these three verbs often occurred in the present simple tense (be + V3), the past simple tense (was/were + V3), and the present perfect tense (has/have been + V3) for *achieved* and *accomplished*; however, the synonymous verbs did not occur in the future perfect tense (will have been + V3), and rarely occurred in the past perfect tense (had been + V3) and the future simple tense (will be + V3), including the present perfect tense (has/have been + V3) for *attained*. Furthermore, *attained* occurred only one time in the present continuous tense (are + being + V3). As for grammatical structure, the verbs in the -ed form not only express the tense of the verbs in the past form (V2), and the perfect form (V3) in the active voice pattern but also are used with all tenses in the passive voice pattern (be + V3). Therefore, the three verbs in those tenses and voices might have occurred more

frequently had there been more data in this study. However, the verbs in the present continuous tense in the active voice (be + V.ing) could not occur in this study because this tense and voice use the progressive verb as regards the grammatical pattern.

In terms of the other modal verbs, the three synonyms rarely occurred in the past participle form in the active voice (*would/should/could/may* + have + V3); however, these verbs occurred in the passive voice, i.e. the modal verbs in both present passive form (*can/must/may/might/could/should/would* + be +V3) and past passive form (*could/would* + have been + V3) with the high frequency, particularly *achieved*, which had the highest frequency, followed by *accomplished* and *attained*, respectively. However, those modal verbs did not occur in the present form in the active voice, which were followed immediately by the simple form of verb (modal verb + V1) in grammatical pattern. Therefore, the three verbs often occurred with the modal verbs in the passive voice and were capable of occurring in the past participle form in the active voice.

In terms of the non-finite forms (past participle), *achieved* and *attained* occurred in the past participial phrases more than in the to-infinitive form and the adjective form, which were the second ranked and third ranked, respectively. *Achieved* occurred the most frequently in the past participial phrase, followed by *attained* and *accomplished*, respectively. In contrast, *accomplished* had the highest frequency when it occurred as an adjective, followed by the past participial phrase and the to-infinitive form, respectively. It is probable that *accomplished* is used as an adjective more than *achieved* and *attained* in general.

It can be seen that these three verbs in the -ed form tended to occur in the passive voice only in the present simple tense and the future simple tense, and occurred in both active voice and passive voice in the past simple tense and the perfect tense, including they were also used with the other modal verbs. Moreover, those verbs often occurred in the past participial phrase, and *accomplished* tended to be used as an adjective with the highest frequency among the three verbs.

4.2 Senses of Meanings

The definitions of the three synonyms were collected from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) (along with COCA database) to find the shared and the different meanings among these three verbs. The information of the meanings of each verb was presented below.

4.2.1 Achieve

The definitions of *achieve* from OALD (2015, p.11) are as follows:

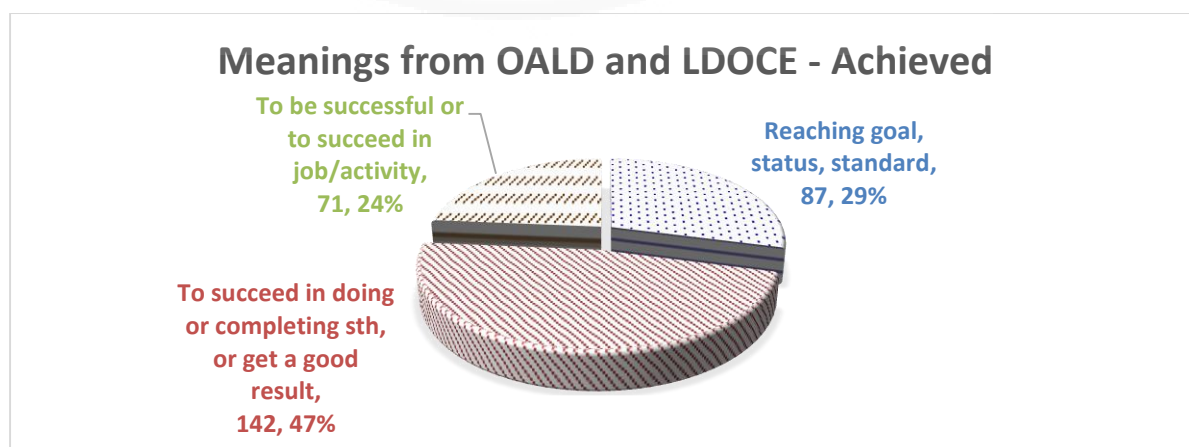
- a) (vt.) sth - to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard, especially by making an effort for a long time
- b) (vt.) sth - to succeed in doing sth or causing sth to happen
- c) (vi.) to be successful

The definitions of *achieve* from LDOCE (2014, p.14) are as follows:

- a) (vt.) to successfully complete something or get a good result, especially by working hard
- b) (vi.) to be successful in a particular kind of job or activity

With regard to the meanings from both dictionaries, it can be seen that the meanings from OALD are similar to the meanings from LDOCE. Therefore, the word *achieve* can have the three senses of meanings as supported by the corpus data below:

Figure 4.7 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word *Achieved*



i) (vt.) to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard, especially by making an effort for a long time, as in (1).

(1) Middle East, and Bangladesh. Walmart also won't provide details about how it achieved its goal, whether suppliers were asked or compelled to share factory.

This meaning was shown in 87 concordance lines (29%).

ii) (vt.) to succeed in doing or completing sth, or get a good result, especially by working hard, or causing sth to happen, as in (2).

(2) regime has continuously believed that the more its nuclear program is expanded and progress is achieved, the less likely the West will demand a halt to the

This meaning was shown in 142 concordance lines (47%).

iii) (vi) to be successful in a particular kind of job or activity, as in (3).

(3) strike. A short-term, financially costly degradation of Iran's nuclear program can be achieved in one wave of attacks, but Israeli defense analysts have estimated

This meaning was found in 71 concordance lines (24%).

4.2.2 Accomplish

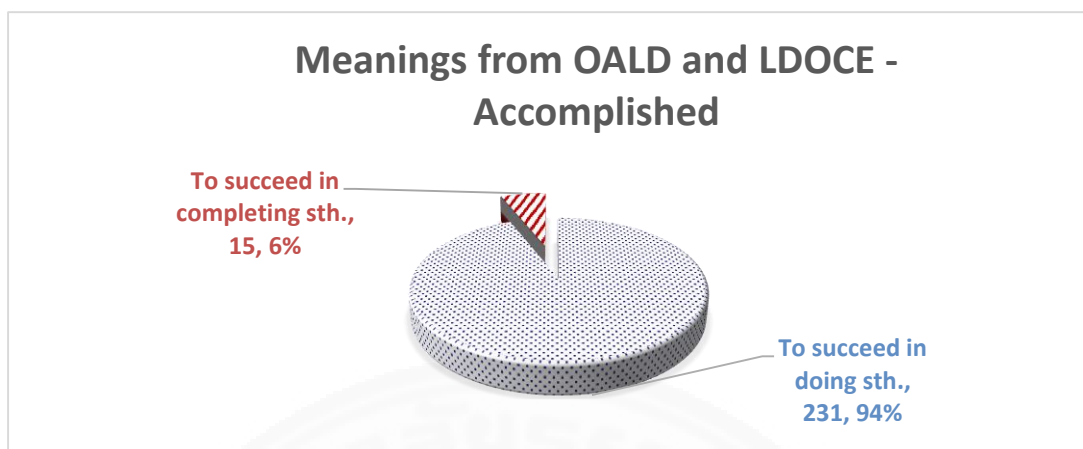
The definition of *accomplish* from OALD (2015, p.9) is as follows:

a) (vt.) sth - to succeed in doing or completing sth.

The definition of *accomplish* from LDOCE (2014, p.11) is as follows:

a) (vt.) to succeed in doing something, especially after trying very hard

With regard to the meanings from both dictionaries, it can be seen that the meaning from OALD is similar to that from LDOCE. Therefore, the word *accomplish* could mean “to succeed in doing or completing sth., especially after trying very hard (vt.)”

Figure 4.8 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word *Accomplished*

i) (vt.) to succeed in doing sth, as in (4).

(4) 84161 The nature of what Bryce Harper has accomplished in his first 41 games for the Washington Nationals makes you wary of hyperbole –

This meaning was shown in 231 concordance lines (94%).

ii) (vt.) to succeed in completing sth, as in (5).

(5) Trust column is about how a strong partnership between technology and the school library is accomplished and is very successful. Use some of their ideas to move your agenda forward

This meaning was shown in 15 concordance lines (6%).

Furthermore, the word *accomplished* in –ed form can be used as an adjective apart from the verb in the past tense form.

The definition of *accomplished* as an adjective from OALD (2015, p.9) is as follows:

a) (adj.) very good at a particular thing; having a lot of skills: an accomplished artist/actor/chef

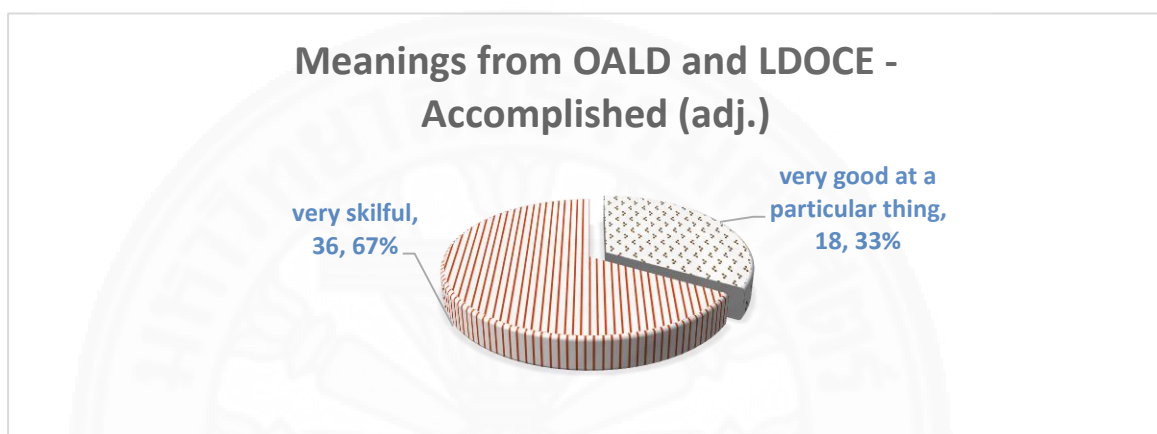
The definitions of *accomplished* as an adjective from LDOCE (2014, p.11) are as follows:

a) (adj.) an accomplished writer, painter, singer etc. is very skilful: highly/very accomplished, highly accomplished designer

b) An accomplished fact (BrE) something that is known to be true and cannot be doubted

With regard to the meanings from both dictionaries, it can be seen that the meaning from OALD was similar to the meanings from LDOCE. Therefore, the word *accomplished* as an adjective could mean “very good at a particular thing; having a lot of skills – very skilful”. However, the meaning in b) was not found in the first three hundred concordance lines of COCA database.

Figure 4.9 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word *Accomplished* as an Adjective



i) (adj.) very good at a particular thing, as in (6).

(6) Baylor president in 2010. # " She is incredibly funny, very wise and extremely accomplished, " says Starr, the independent federal prosecutor who led the Whitewater investigation into

This meaning was shown in 18 concordance lines (33%).

ii) (adj.) having a lot of skills – very skilful, as in (7).

(7) Clark, K., & Walpole, S. (2000). Effective schools and accomplished teacher: Lessons about primary grade reading instruction in low-income schools. The Elementary School

This meaning was shown in 36 concordance lines (67%).

4.2.3 Attain

The definitions of *attain* from OALD (2015, p.81) are as follows:

- a) (vt.) sth – to succeed in getting sth, usually after a lot of effort
- b) (vt.) sth – to reach a particular age, level or condition

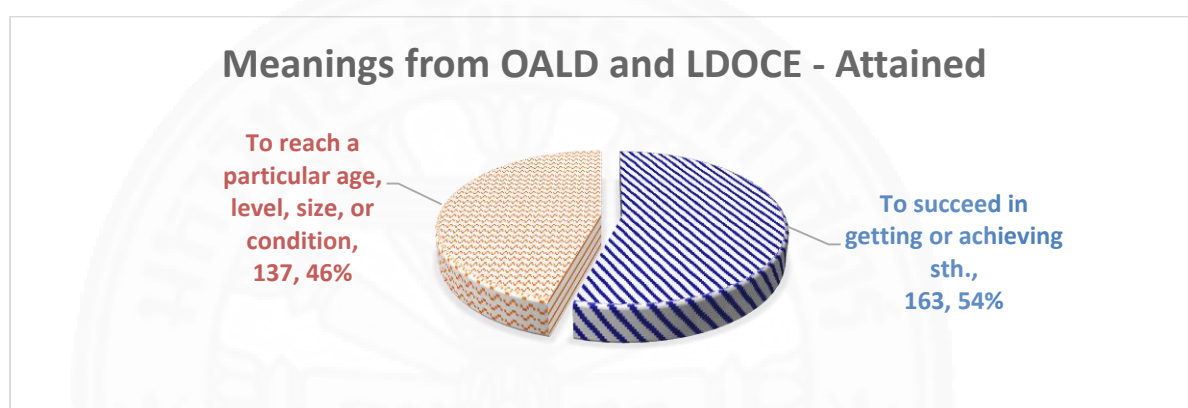
The definitions of *attain* from LDOCE (2014, p.99) are as follows:

a) (vt.) to succeed in achieving something after trying for a long time

b) (vt.) to reach a particular level, age, size etc.

With regard to the meanings from both dictionaries, it can be seen that the meanings from OALD are similar to the meanings from LDOCE. Therefore, the word *attain* could have the two senses of meanings which are shown below.

Figure 4.10 The Frequency of Meanings of the Word *Attained*



i) (vt.) to succeed in getting or achieving sth., usually after a lot of effort, as in (8).

(8) excluded women from the jury as well. Unlike women's suffrage, which was attained nationally in 1920 upon the ratification of the nineteenth amendment, women gained the right

This meaning was shown in 163 concordance lines (54%).

ii) (vt.) to reach a particular age, level, size, or condition, as in (9).

(9) a jolt to learn, as we did Monday, that the Canadian-born Nielsen had attained the age of 84 when he died Sunday in Los Angeles. He not only

This meaning was shown in 137 concordance lines (46%).

Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2003) claim that there are no pairs of words that have exactly the same meaning. It could be noted that *achieve* was used in the sense of “*to succeed in doing, completing something or get a good result, after trying very hard, or causing something to happen*”, including *accomplish* was used in

the sense of “*to succeed in doing or completing something after trying very hard*”, and *attain* was used in the sense of “*to succeed in getting or achieving something, after making a lot of effort.*”

Therefore, the results of the investigation into the three synonymous verbs showed that the three synonyms share the same core meanings in the senses of *to succeed in doing, completing or getting something which achieve or get a good result, after trying very hard or working hard.*

On the other hand, the three verbs also have different senses of meanings. This is supported by the fact that words can have more than one sense, and denotation of words is related to senses that are the one of the conditions (Murphy, 2003). Paradis (2012) observes that perfect synonyms do not really exist in language. Thus, the three synonyms tended to have different meanings. It can be noted that *achieve* was shown in the senses of “*to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard by making an effort for a long time*”, and “*to be successful in a particular kind of job or activity*”. The different senses of meanings of *accomplished* when it was used as an adjective with some specific meanings differed from its meanings as a verb, in the senses of “*very good at a particular thing or having a lot of skills – very skilful*”. In addition, *attain* presented a different meaning in the sense of “*to reach a particular age, level, size or condition.*”

As mentioned above, it can be seen that the three synonyms are the near synonyms since those have some common meanings and some different meanings when used as verbs and adjectives.

4.3 Collocations

This study found two types of collocations, that is, lexical collocations comprised of a noun collocation and an adverb collocation, and grammatical collocations comprised of a preposition collocation. The data is shown as follows:

4.3.1 Achieved

Table 4.7 Collocations of *Achieved*

Rank	Noun Collocation	Frequency	Adverb Collocation	Frequency	Preposition Collocation	Frequency
1	Goal(s)	20	Never	3	By	44
2	Level(s)	20	Already	3	In	15
3	Status	10	Successfully	2	Through	13
4	Success(es)	8	Likely	2	With	7
5	Score(s)	7	Also	2	At	5
6	Outcome(s)	5	Ever	2	Without	4
7	Reduction(s)	5	Still	2	For	3
8	Effect	4	Now	1	From	2
9	Victory(-ies)	4	Easily	1	Between	2
10	Aim(s)	3	Suddenly	1	Under	2

The first five most frequent noun collocates of the word *achieved* were *goal(s)*, *level(s)*, *status*, *success(es)* and *score(s)*, as in (10) - (14), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (10) of some of the world's most powerful men and beautiful women. He has achieved the **goals** that many men set for themselves in adolescence but abandon when they marry
- (11) Such an attitude would be easier to understand in Canada or Norway, which have achieved enviable **levels** of human development. But what have Guatemala or Nicaragua to prize so
- (12) grid that it must rely on solar power. # The Rinpoche, who has achieved the **status** of a " living Buddha," says the idea for the center
- (13) for the same cause. HUGH-MACLEOD: In the last few weeks, FSA units have achieved their greatest **successes**, but also suffered their biggest defeats. Units in Homs were
- (14) consistency, it makes sense that a listener with three- or four-decade-long residence would have achieved a monolingual-like **score** on the test than would anew immigrant who might have acquired English

The first five most frequent adverb collocates of the word *achieved* were *never*, *already*, *successfully*, *likely*, *also*, *ever*, and *still*, as in (15) - (21), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (15) age).1 # * Primary nocturnal enuresis refers to a child who has ***never*** achieved consistent night-time bladder control. # * Secondary nocturnal enuresis is where bedwetting occurs in
- (16) by 2011. From an economic and institutional standpoint, that goal has ***already*** been achieved, at least according to the World Bank. Its most recent monitoring report of
- (17) to pacify the existing Spanish fleet. It wasn't long before he had ***successfully*** achieved victory, for which he received salutary praise - most notably (and resoundingly)
- (18) Kramer et al., 2009) motivated the assumption that this aim would ***likely*** be achieved by strengthening the associations of the TRT with WM capacity and processing speed. These
- (19) at a distance of a few meters. Step and curb detection can ***also*** be achieved via stereo vision.²⁵ Range data can be integrated through time using a technique called simul
- (20) engagements.... My Sour Milk Waffles have a flavor that no bought mix has ***ever*** achieved. Beat the whites of 3 eggs stiff, then tackle their yolks. Sift
- (21) Rights Act put explicit and legalized racism behind us, but we ***still*** haven't achieved the level of racial parity in America that many of us would like, "

The first five most frequent preposition collocates of the word *achieved* were *by*, *in*, *through*, *with*, and *at*, as in (22) - (26), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (22) natural enemy habitat can be planted. At the landscape scale, diversification may be achieved ***by*** integrating multiple production systems, such as mixing agroforestry management with cropping, livestock
- (23) new rule that will be effective in August 2013, we still will not have achieved ***in*** the industry what we've been trying to do for decades, and that

- (24) towards prevention, management and self-care of long term conditions. This will best be achieved **through** good clinical practice and integrated working: between different healthcare professionals; between primary
- (25) or residual vibration that reduces accuracy and distance. # Part of this performance is achieved **with** a taper that delivers the goods at short to medium range without requiring an
- (26) . Many of the new requirements that the commission is currently contemplating have already been achieved **at** the new design in terms of using the latest data on external threats,

From Table 4.7, the first ranked of the collocates of *achieved* was the preposition *by*, which co-occurred with the greatest frequency (44 times). The second ranked were the nouns *goal(s)* and *level(s)* at an equal frequency (20 times). The third ranked was the preposition *in* (15 times), followed by *through* (13 times). In addition, the fifth ranked was the noun *status* (10 times). The adverb collocates rarely co-occurred with *achieved*; however, the results showed that *never* and *already* co-occurred with *achieved*, i.e., only three times for each word. This might imply that preposition and noun collocates are the most-frequent co-occurrences with *achieved*.

4.3.2 Accomplished

Table 4.8 Collocations of *Accomplished*

Rank	Noun Collocation	Frequency	Adverb Collocation	Frequency	Preposition Collocation	Frequency
1	Mission(s)	10	Successfully	4	By	32
2	Thing(s)	9	Most	4	In	22
3	Goal(s)	8	Only	3	Through	17
4	Task(s)	5	Highly	3	With	10
5	Work(s)	5	Easily	3	Via	3
6	Deal	3	A lot	3	On	2
7	Journey	3	Much	3	Without	1
8	Effect	3	More	3	At	1
9	Feat	3	Already	2	For	1
10	Program	2	Largely	2	Within	1

The first five most frequent noun collocates of the word *accomplished* were *mission(s)*, *thing(s)*, *goal(s)*, *task(s)*, and *work(s)*, as in (27) – (31), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (27) what he says is, number one, he really thinks this ***mission*** can be accomplished.
He thinks that the Afghan Security Forces will be able to stabilize Afghanistan,
- (28) commons philosophy has always been guided by my belief that great ***things*** can be accomplished if we keep an open mind. Our mission to be a social, academically
- (29) evaluations in comparison to the goals and assessed the degree to which each ***goal*** was accomplished. # Results The data were analyzed using SPSS Standard Version 17.0 software. A
- (30) the next, in order to make change, but represent ***tasks*** that can be accomplished to a greater or lesser degree " (DiClemente, 2005, p. 1047)

- (31) arts and humanities areas have been undertaken or suggested, one example being the *work accomplished* by Benardou and colleagues for the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities project

The first five most frequent adverb collocates of the word *accomplished* were *successfully, most, only, highly, easily, a lot, much, and more*, as in (32) - (39), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (32) is that we brought the shuttle in on time and *successfully accomplished* a docking. I was the one who had his hand physically
- (33) appears to be natural ability. It quickly becomes clear which papers are the *most accomplished*, which letters the most inviting. Indeed, editors and agents alike enjoy nothing
- (34) substitution) into balance with the demands of rising affluence. This can *only* be *accomplished* with political will and coordination among governments (national and supranational), nongovernmental organizations
- (35) , the Fayum artists produced portraits that historian Euphrosyne Doxiadis calls " sophisticated and *highly accomplished* works of art. " On this page, clockwise from top left: gold
- (36) enhance the musical culture of the United States. None of this will be *easily accomplished*, but I have to believe we are up to the challenge. What might all this
- (37) 83686 The six founders of the Atlanta technology company TripLingo have *accomplished a lot* since they came together a year ago in what could have been a
- (38) scientists from Altair to monitor the development of civilization on your world. You've *accomplished much*, but we want you to stop killing one another. # That would
- (39) come to realize) had the power to transform her into a prettier, *more accomplished*, robust self- she now has access to such truths. # But. #

The first five most frequent preposition collocates of the word *accomplished* were *by*, *in*, *through*, *with*, and *via*, as in (40) - (44), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (40) be simple and intuitive enough to enable the user to draw new tasks to be accomplished **by** the system. The human user should focus on what the system is doing
- (41) eliminated the need for preemergent herbicides, ploughs, and tillers. Weed control was accomplished **in** one fell swoop. # Farmers loved it. Adoption of the new system
- (42) for reconciliation steps toward a good death, " all of which are most successfully accomplished **through** " two-way conversations. " The social workers struggled with providing care to a
- (43) circa 2000, like buying shoes without trying them on first. All this was accomplished **with** software and clever ideas for using the available infrastructure. # We see in
- (44) with the PAX Good Behavior Game reinforces the goals of each program. This is accomplished **via** teacher-led instruction of the PATHS curriculum to facilitate initial exposure to social emotional skills

From Table 4.8, the collocate of *accomplished* that co-occurred with the greatest frequency was the preposition *by* (32 times), followed by *in* (22 times), and *through* (17 times), respectively. The fourth ranked were the preposition *with* (10 times) and the noun *mission(s)* (10 times) at a similar frequency. Finally, the fifth ranked was the noun *thing(s)* (9 times). The adverb collocates rarely co-occurred with *accomplished*. The findings presented that *successfully* and *most* often co-occurred with *accomplished* at four times for each word. This might imply that preposition and noun collocates often co-occur with *accomplished*.

Table 4.9 Collocations of the Word *Accomplished* as an Adjective

Rank	Noun collocation	Frequency
1	Writer	3
2	Woman	3
3	Teacher(s)	2
4	Actor	2
5	Hunter	2
6	Designers	1
7	Superstars	1
8	Mentor	1
9	Poet	1
10	Worker	1

Besides being used as a verb, *accomplished* often appears as an adjective to modify a noun. Therefore, the first five most-frequent noun collocates of *accomplished* were *writer*, *woman*, *teacher(s)*, *actor*, and *hunter*, as in (45) - (49), respectively.

Corpus data:

(45) is best about the book. These missteps wouldn't be forgiven in a less accomplished (and celebrated) *writer*. # Carleton Watkins: The Complete Mammoth Photographs #

(46) lack of self-esteem and confidence. I think we can agree you're a very accomplished *woman*, and this is probably not an issue for you. # " On

(47) schools (Berry, 2008). This information is important because NBCTs are considered accomplished *teachers* in the field, and in some states they receive bonuses (i.e.,

(48) about Jennifer is she has such a depth of talent. She is such an accomplished *actor* that -- that she's more interested in acting than being famous. CHARLIE-ROSE:

(49) them by both his efforts and Kate's. That a woman could be an accomplished zombie *hunter* had at first surprised, then amazed, Will. Together they had

From Table 4.9, the most-frequent noun collocates of *accomplished* as an adjective that conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*very good at a particular thing and very skilful*” were *writer* and *woman* at three times for each word. The second ranked were *teacher(s)*, *actor*, and *hunter*, occurring two times each. The rest of the noun collocates that are shown in the Table 4.9, i.e. *designers*, *superstars*, *mentor*, *poet*, and *worker*, co-occurred with *accomplished* at a low frequency, i.e. only one time for each word.

4.3.3 Attained

Table 4.10 Collocations of *Attained*

Rank	Noun Collocation	Frequency	Adverb Collocation	Frequency	Preposition Collocation	Frequency
1	Level(s)	28	Never	12	By	23
2	Status	22	Best	4	Through	21
3	Goal(s)	11	Yet	4	In	10
4	Age	6	Easily	3	With	9
5	Knowledge	6	Only	3	To	5
6	Skill(s)	6	Ever	2	At	3
7	Score(s)	5	Successively	1	During	3
8	Outcome	5	Fully	1	About	2
9	Condition	4	Apparently	1	For	2
10	Degree	4	Often	1	On	2

The first five most frequent noun collocates of the word *attained* were *level(s)*, *status*, *goal(s)*, *age*, *knowledge*, and *skill(s)*, as in (50) - (55), respectively.

Corpus data:

(50) By the time the Anulas recovered from their gastrointestinal malfunctions, the water should have attained a *level* sufficient to our purpose. So that's what we did, McCubby

- (51) While asserting that geography in both Europe and United States " had not yet attained the *status* of a science, " Greene nevertheless concluded that, " as planner
- (52) for the Primary School Education Turkish Language Program (6th-8th degrees) *goals* to be attained. This makes it necessary for the texts to be included in course books to
- (53) mine, was part of a superstition surrounding older things. Certain objects, having attained a certain *age*, took on a totemic value in Houston that they would not
- (54) ; it is not a " thing " but a disclosure. True *knowledge* is attained through union of love, and without love there is no truth and hence no
- (55) model, the partial R2 was 14.2%. The authors concluded that communication *skills* already attained at 12 months were a much better predictor of 24-month language functioning than were any

The first five most frequent adverb collocates of the word *attained* were *never*, *best*, *yet*, *easily*, and *only*, as in (56) - (60), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (56) in silence in the company of a beautiful woman was a skill I had *never* attained.
" So much water, " I said stupidly. # She did not
- (57) and earnestly looks for the means, by which this necessary object may be *best* attained. And until it shall be accomplished: until the time shall come when we
- (58) In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not *yet* attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence... The Negro... exhibits the natural
- (59) makes for adventure. You set for yourself an objective that can not *easily* be attained -- and one in which failure will bring a great deal of suffering – and
- (60) educators should work on connecting the extramusical learnings with those things that can *only* be attained through the study of music. Here are two examples: The ability to organize

The first five most frequent preposition collocates of the word *attained* were *by*, *through*, *in*, *with*, and *to*, as in (61) - (65), respectively.

Corpus data:

- (61) cannot be commanded. Understanding and insight into alcoholism and alcoholics can best be attained **by** proactive developmental activities by the organizations. Such investments can pay inestimable benefits for
- (62) over in 1949. Mao Zedong's victory over Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces was attained **through** conventional war, not an underground sedition campaign, giving the military a platform
- (63) where is the exposure-response parameter; w5-14, w15-24 and w25+ represent total radon exposure attained **in** the intervals 5 to 14, 15 to 24, and 25 or more
- (64) these studies focuses on the fact that self-sufficiency in food production and security will be attained **with** effective education of women. # Agricultural Education and Production Strategies Studies have shown
- (65) and completely lacking in uniformity. In the olden days the few favored persons who attained **to** great old age undoubtedly did so through the operation of the law of the

From Table 4.10, the first ranked of the collocates of *attained* that often co-occurred with this verb was a noun *level(s)* (28 times). The second ranked was the preposition *by* (23 times). The third ranked was the noun *status* (22 times), followed by the fourth ranked and the fifth ranked, which were a preposition *through* (21 times), and an adverb *never* (12 times), respectively. This might imply that noun and preposition collocates often co-occur with *attained*.

According to Lindquist (2009, p. 57), “[C]ollocation is the relation between a word and individual word forms which co-occur frequently with it.” Regarding the findings above, it can be seen that most of the collocations of the three words are nouns and prepositions which collocate with the three verbs in the most frequency.

The noun collocates which co-occur with each verb might be different in terms of the frequency of occurrence of each collocation. It might be observed that most of the noun collocates of *achieved* conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*to succeed in doing or completing sth that has to try or intend to acquire, or work hard*”, i.e. *goal(s)*, *level(s)*, *success(es)*, *score(s)*, *outcome(s)*, *effect*, *victory(-ies)*, and *aim(s)*.

However, some of the noun collocates of the verb *achieved* conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*to reach a particular goal, status, or standard by making an effort for a long time*”, i.e. *goal(s)*, and *status*, which is the different meaning from the meanings of the word *accomplished* and *attained*.

Although most of the noun collocates of the verb *accomplished* conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*to succeed in target or duty after trying very hard, which have to have the responsibility in doing or completing things*”, i.e. *mission(s)*, *thing(s)*, *goal(s)*, *task(s)*, *work(s)*, *deal*, *journey*, *effect*, *feat*, and *program*, the noun collocates of the adjective *accomplished*, which conveyed different meanings in the senses of “*very good at a particular thing and having a lot of skills*” referring to people, i.e. *writer*, *woman*, *teacher*, *actor*, *hunter*, *designer*, *superstar*, *mentor*, *poet*, and *worker*.

Most of the noun collocates of *attain* conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*to succeed in getting or achieving something, after making a lot of effort.*”, i.e. *status*, *goal(s)*, *knowledge*, *skill(s)*, *score(s)*, *outcome*, and *degree*. However, some of the noun collocates of the verb *attained* conveyed the meaning in the sense of “*to reach a particular age, level, size or condition*”, i.e. *level(s)*, *age*, *condition*, which is the different meaning from the meanings of the word *achieved* and *accomplished*.

The preposition *by* collocated with the three verbs with the highest frequency. The word *by* co-occurred with each verb in the first top three collocations, probably because one of the focuses of the study was the past-participle form, often used in the passive voice. As a result, the use of these three verbs in the passive voice might occur with high frequency. In addition, the second ranked of the preposition collocates of *achieved* and *accomplished* was *in*, followed by *through* for the third ranked. However, the second ranked of the preposition collocates of *attained* was *through*, followed by *in* as the third ranked.

Attained was the only verb with which the adverb collocates co-occurred most frequently, as compared with *achieved* and *accomplished*. *Never* was the most-frequent adverb collocate of *attained* with the highest frequency for twelve times. The adverb collocates rarely co-occurred with these verbs, probably because of the limited data from COCA. Therefore, the frequencies of the co-occurrences of each verb were low.

According to the findings of this study, the collocations usually co-occurred with the head word related to the senses of meanings of each word. Therefore, the collocations of the three verbs co-occurred differently depending on the senses of meanings of the verbs, particularly the noun collocates of each verb.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents (1) the summary of the study, (2) the summary of the findings, (3) the conclusion, and (4) recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study was aimed at investigation the differences among three synonymous verbs, namely, *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain*, in the past form (-ed) using two distinguishing criteria: senses of meanings and collocations.

5.1.2 Target Words and Databases

This study used a corpus-based methodology to investigate the differences of the three synonyms. The information on *achieve*, *accomplish*, and *attain* was derived from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th edition, 2015 and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th edition, 2014. This study considered the three verbs in the past form and the past participle form. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, which provide standard pronunciations, clear definitions, example sentences, and grammatical information, were used as the main resources for the primary definitions, and the Corpus of Contemporary American English was used as the main corpus database for comparison. The meanings and example sentences were gathered from OALD and LDOCE to compare with the meanings from the first three hundred concordance lines drawn from COCA to find more information not mentioned in the dictionaries. The top ten collocations of each verb were examined from the first three hundred concordance lines of COCA. The findings are summarized in the next section.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

Table 5.1 The Occurrences of Tenses and its Frequencies

Verbs	The occurrences of tenses and its frequencies		
	Active Voice	Passive Voice	Non-finite Verb
<i>Achieved</i>	1.Past Simple (61) 2.Present Perfect (55) 3.Past Perfect (16) 4.Future Perfect (1) / Other Modal Verbs (1)	1.Other Modal Verbs (50) 2.Present Simple (33) 3.Past Simple (15) 4.Present Perfect (13)	1.Past Participial Phrase (36) 2.To infinitive (7) 3.Adjective (7) -
<i>Accomplished</i>	1.Present Perfect (45) 2.Past Simple (37) 3.Past Perfect (12) 4.Other Modal Verbs (2)	1.Other Modal Verbs (37) 2.Present Simple (32) 3.Past Simple (29) 4.Present Perfect (13)	1.Adjective (54) 2.Past Participial Phrase (22) 3.To infinitive (13) -
<i>Attained</i>	1.Past Simple (78) 2.Present Perfect (53) 3.Past Perfect (20) 4.Other Modal Verbs (6)	1.Other Modal Verbs (34) 2.Present Simple (31) 3.Past Simple (14) 4.Future Simple (4)	1.Past Participial Phrase (33) 2.To infinitive (13) 3.Adjective (8) -

5.2.1 In the active voice, *achieved* and *attained* often occurred in the past simple tense, followed by the present perfect tense and the past perfect tense, respectively. However, *accomplished* often occurred in the present perfect tense, followed by the past simple tense and the past perfect tense, respectively.

In the passive voice, *achieved* and *accomplished* often occurred with other modal verbs at the highest frequency, followed by the present simple tense, the past simple tense, and the present perfect tense, respectively. However, *attained* occurred with other modal verbs the most frequently, followed by the present simple tense, the past simple tense, and the future simple tense, respectively. In addition,

accomplished differed slightly in terms of frequency among the other modal verbs, the present simple tense, and the past simple tense.

The three verbs in the past form can also be used to be non-finite verbs as past participial phrases, to infinitives, and adjectives. *Achieved* and *attained* were used as the past participial phrases with the highest frequency when compared with the frequencies of the to-infinitive form and the adjective form. In contrast, *accomplished* was used as an adjective the most frequently among the three verbs and the other non-finite verb forms: the past participial phrase form and the to-infinitive form. In addition, the past participial phrase form of *accomplished* occurred at the second-highest frequency, followed by the to-infinitive form.

With regard to the findings of the study, these three verbs in the -ed form tended to occur in the passive voice only in the present tense and the future tense, and occurred in both active and passive voice in the past tense and the perfect tense, including they were also used with the other modal verbs. Moreover, those verbs tended to occur in the past participial phrase and *accomplished* tended to be used as an adjective the most frequently among the three verbs.

5.2.2 *Achieve, accomplish, and attain* have different senses of meaning.

With regard to the senses of meanings of *achieved, accomplished, and attained*, the findings showed that the three synonyms are near synonyms due to the different senses of meanings. Although the three synonymous verbs share the same core meanings in the senses of “*to succeed in doing or completing something*” or “*getting a good result, especially after trying very hard or working hard*”, the different senses of meanings are presented as follows:

Table 5.2 The Different Meanings of the Three Synonymous Verbs

<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Accomplished</i>	<i>Attained</i>
1. to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard, especially by making an effort for a long time 2. to be successful in a particular kind of job or activity	1. (adj.) very good at a particular thing 2. (adj.) having a lot of skills.	1. to reach a particular age, level, size or condition

The word *achieved* was usually used in the sense of *to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard, especially by making an effort for a long time*, and *to be successful in a particular kind of job or activity*. Although the verb *accomplished* shares the common meanings in the senses of *to succeed in doing or completing something after trying very hard*, the adjective *accomplished* has different meanings, as it is used in the senses of *very good at a particular thing*, and *having a lot of skills*. Finally, the word *attain* also has another meaning as it was used in the sense of *to reach a particular age, level, size or condition*. It can be seen that the senses of meanings of each verb are not absolutely the same.

5.2.3 *Achieve, accomplish, and attain* usually collocated with nouns and prepositions.

Table 5.3 The Collocations of the Three Verbs

Rank	Achieved	Collocate	Accomplished	Collocate	Attained	Collocate
1	By	Preposition	By	Preposition	Level(s)	Noun
2	Goal(s)	Noun	In	Preposition	By	Preposition
3	Level(s)	Noun	Through	Preposition	Status	Noun
4	In	Preposition	With	Preposition	Through	Preposition
5	Through	Preposition	Mission(s)	Noun	Never	Adverb
6	Status	Noun	Thing(s)	Noun	Goal(s)	Noun
7	Success(es)	Noun	Goal(s)	Noun	In	Preposition
8	Score(s)	Noun	Task(s)	Noun	With	Preposition
9	With	Preposition	Work(s)	Noun	Age	Noun
10	Outcome(s)	Noun	Successfully	Adverb	Knowledge	Noun

In the top ten list, it is noticeable that the most common types of collocations that collocate with *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained* were nouns implying *a particular target or duty that have to try to acquire, or have the responsibility in doing or completing things*. The most-frequent noun collocates of *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained* were *goal(s)* and *level(s)*, *mission(s)*, and *level(s)* respectively, as in (66) - (69), respectively.

- (66) three fatal cases of self-induced abortion. " # Now, 29 years after she achieved that **goal**, she is preparing to resume the fight amid signs that the Islamist-rooted
- (67) had received a cochlear implant by age 5. The researchers found that the children achieved an average **level** of about 50% speech perception skills through listening alone, although their
- (68) billion had been appropriated for Iraq operations by the time President Bush declared " **Mission Accomplished** " on May 1, 2003, and 172 U.S. servicemen had died.⁴³ Most of
- (69) to reduce suicide risk (Fernquist, 2004), whereas African American men who attained higher **levels** of education were at an increased risk of suicide (Fernquist, 2004)

Another common type of collocations that occurred with *achieved*, *accomplished*, and *attained* was the preposition *by*. It should be noted that this study concerned the past-participle form, which is often used in the passive voice. Therefore, the preposition *by* co-occurred with these verbs frequently, as in (70) - (72), respectively. In contrast, adverb collocates occurred with the least frequency.

(70) Optimal vitamin D3 production (⪚ 1,200 IU/day) is achieved primarily **by** a subset of children in the southern United States during the summer

(71) technical service processes. Simplification of the fund structure was another goal. This was accomplished **by** eliminating numerous individual subject allocations. This also simplified the ordering and tracking of

(72) American long rifle was one of the finest examples of the precision that could be attained **by** craftsmen who worked with hand tools and were armed only with their versatility and

In addition, the three verbs were used as adjectives; however, *accomplished* occurred with the highest frequency, followed by *attained* and *achieved*, respectively. The most common collocations that co-occurred with the adjectives were nouns. In addition, most of the noun collocates of *accomplished* referred to people, which differed from *attained* and *achieved*, as in (73) - (75), respectively.

(73) n't prevented her from garnering the multimillion-dollar endorsements and sponsorships that normally are ticketed for accomplished **superstars** such as Johnson, Stewart and Jeff Gordon. Two weeks ago, Coke

(74) however, the social dimension is marginal. According to the workers, their most attained professional **aim** was enhancing individuals' inner resources, followed by protecting people at risk

(75) child variables. Questionnaires during the first trimester of pregnancy obtained information about the highest achieved **level** of parental education, parental occupation, parental country of origin, parental age

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

5.3.1 *Achieved, accomplished, and attained* tended to be used in the past simple tense, the present perfect tense, and the past perfect tense in the active voice and tended to be used with the other modal verbs, the present simple tense, and the past simple tense in the passive voice. The three verbs were often used as past participial phrases and as adjectives.

5.3.2 Although *achieved, accomplished, and attained* shared the same core meanings, different meanings were also used in particular contexts.

5.3.3 The collocations that usually co-occurred with *achieved, accomplished, and attained* were different.

5.3.4 *Achieved, accomplished, and attained* are near-synonyms, not perfect or absolute synonyms since they cannot substitute for each other in every context as can be seen in the differences of the senses of meanings and collocations.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

This research study can be utilized for L2 English learning and English teaching as follows:

5.4.1 L2 English learners should be aware of the differences and usages of synonyms in order to use the appropriate words in various contexts. Information on vocabulary in dictionaries may be inadequate for describing the differences and the usages of synonyms. Consequently, L2 learners should find more information on synonyms from the corpus database for greater understanding in order to use synonyms correctly.

5.4.2 English teachers should use the corpus database as a tool to provide more information on words for teaching English language apart from the dictionaries. The corpus database is collected from the written and spoken texts of native speakers in real use. Therefore, the information from the corpora contributes to the expansion of learners' knowledge of synonyms, which will improve their English skills.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

As indicated in the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 The present study focused only on the COCA database, which is the current American English database in comparison with the information from British-English dictionaries, i.e. OALD and LDOCE. Further research should collect data from other corpora such as BNC, which is the current British English database, or TIME corpus, which is the sub-corpus of COCA compiling American English used in TIME Magazine, in order to make comparisons with usage in British English or another American corpus.

5.5.2 In future studies, more concordance lines should be collected to enhance the generalizability of the findings on each verb.

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APPENDIX A
THE CONCORDANCE LINES OF *ACHIEVED*

1	2012	ACAD	Communications	moving from physical to simulated to emulated and mixed testbed environments. This transparency is <u>achieved</u> through an abstraction layer that selectively exposes low-level APIs (such as drivers) so
2	2012	ACAD	Communications	with its planned expiration. computation and advancing factorization. If and when quantum computation is <u>achieved</u> , integer factorization in sub-exponential time will render RSA obsolete. However, a more
3	2012	ACAD	CommCollegeR	within this arena has heightened federal interest in ensuring program integrity, which is often <u>achieved</u> through the regulatory process. These efforts are resulting in the formalization of earnings data
4	2012	ACAD	EnvironmentalHealth	daily dose of vitamin D (600 IU/day; Institute of Medicine 2011) is <u>achieved</u> by skin type II children in the northern United States only during the summer and
5	2012	ACAD	EnvironmentalHealth	(Figure 1B). Optimal vitamin D3 production (\approx 1,200 IU/day) is <u>achieved</u> primarily by a subset of children in the southern United States during the summer (
6	2012	ACAD	EnvironmentalHealth	Figure 2B), we estimate that the minimum amount (600 IU/day) is <u>achieved</u> during the summer by

				children with skin types II, III, and IV and
7	2012	ACAD	EnvironmentalHealth	skin type II only, whereas the optimum amount (\approx 1,200 IU/day) is <u>achieved</u> only by children with skin type II during the summer (Figure 2B).
8	2012	ACAD	AmericanSecondary	would certainly agree these are conditions we want for our learners. How is this <u>achieved</u> and what does it have to do with effective teachers? Rogers and Freiberg add
9	2012	ACAD	TechEngineerTeacher	middle and high schools. The metamorphosis is not over. As each goal is <u>achieved</u> , another goal is created. As everyone knows, society is always changing,
10	2012	ACAD	Education	response (positive - negative) to his thoughts and policies. This is simply <u>achieved</u> through observation cards including simple data of the participants like name, specialization, years
11	2012	ACAD	Education	Containment Circle: The Students # The success of positive containment of school students is <u>achieved</u> when the principal accomplishes a satisfactory degree of containment in the previous four circles,
12	2012	NEWS	Atlanta	step because he has operated the business on very little debt, which he's <u>achieved</u> by slowly adding locations as his budget has allowed. # But Chan, like

APPENDIX B
THE CONCORDANCE LINES OF ACCOMPLISHED

1	2012	NEWS	Denver	? Do they need better coaching for that to happen? If nothing else is <u>accomplished</u> this season, those questions must be answered. # The hard part is playing
2	2012	ACAD	TechEngineerTeacher	of AR is to enhance an individual's physical and visual environments. This is <u>accomplished</u> by superimposing a three-dimensional (3-D) virtual image onto a real-world object or environment
3	2012	ACAD	TeachingExceptional	at a face-to-face meeting or send it by mail. Regardless of how this is <u>accomplished</u> , it is critical that the SOP process involve the student. # The Importance
4	2012	ACAD	LanguageSpeech	intended to significantly improve the reading performance of the nation's children, which is <u>accomplished</u> through multiple avenues: identifying early reading difficulties, resetting the learning trajectories of children
5	2012	ACAD	LanguageSpeech	new vocabulary. Although some vocabulary learning is gained through formal teaching, most is <u>accomplished</u> through context by means of incidental encounters with words (e.g., Anglin, 1993
6	2012	ACAD	TechEngineerTeacher	to ensure the vision and dimensions of the framework are understood and initial implementation is <u>accomplished</u> . Actions can and are being undertaken by preservice teacher educators, publishers and curriculum
7	2012	ACAD	TechEngineerTeacher	hazardous materials, medical testing and procedures, and a host of other activities are

				accomplished in service and manufacturing sectors through the use of robots and robotic devices. It
8	2012	ACAD	Education	it promotes positive interdependence, social skills and individual and group accountability and is best accomplished when students are placed in groups of three to five (Kagan, 1994;
9	2012	ACAD	ExceptionalChildren	more intensive secondary prevention in a timely manner. Screening in primary prevention is typically accomplished by administering a brief test to all students (i.e., a universal screen)
10	2012	ACAD	MechanicalEng	without lubrication, sometimes through holes in gem stones. In some cases lubrication is accomplished by plating the base with another, even more ductile, metal. # Plating
11	2012	SPOK	Fox_Hannity	husband's performance, just ignorant and uneducated about all the amazing things he is accomplished. We just don't get it. More from that interview that has everyone
12	2012	SPOK	NPR_TellMore	There's a lot of talking, but there's nothing very much that is accomplished. However, truth be said, I mean, I was very surprised at
13	2011	ACAD	TeachLibrar	Trust column is about how a strong partnership between technology and the school library is accomplished and is very successful. Use some of their ideas to move your agenda forward
14	2011	ACAD	TechEngineerTeacher	, adds other potential benefits for the test. She states that the test is accomplished by obtaining a simple blood sample. Therefore, it allows those patients who have

APPENDIX C
THE CONCORDANCE LINES OF *ATTAINED*

1	2012	ACAD	JSpeechLanguage	6 years of age, if not earlier, whereas adult-like categorical precision performance is <u>attained</u> only at the beginning of adolescence (see introduction; Hoonhorst et al., in
2	2012	ACAD	JSpeechLanguage	listening situations than those who achieved fluency later in life. Because fluency is best <u>attained</u> through experience (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977)
3	2011	ACAD	InstrPsych	tests is the ultimate goal. Little attention is given to how this performance is <u>attained</u> . In fact, as Popham (2006) notes, standardized tests currently in
4	2011	ACAD	InstrPsych	emotions moderate and acceptance of both a positive racial identity and each other, is <u>attained</u> . For counselors, having multicultural awareness necessitates knowing that both they and their clients
5	2011	ACAD	GeographRev	. # Developing successful strategies to forge a new identity in transitional times is best <u>attained</u> with a focus on visible and memorable images. Jacques Hymans commented on these themes
6	2011	ACAD	JournalEcumenical	is, further, the completely free subject. In Zen, this freedom is <u>attained</u> through seeing into one's True Nature. The very " seeing into one's

7	2010	MAG	Backpacker	not an exaggeration - the next horizontal nine feet forward is as likely as not <u>attained</u> first by dropping down 16 feet vertically. The method of getting there is varied
8	2010	MAG	USCatholic	at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. How money is spent, <u>attained</u> , and invested is directly tied to the spender's spirit and faith, he
9	2010	MAG	ChristCentury	an enterprise of justice " (see Isa. 32:7), which is " never <u>attained</u> once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly. " Hence,
10	2010	ACAD	LawPublicPol	amendment is proposed, each state knows exactly when the critical portion of states is <u>attained</u> . (n263) Thus, the participating states know the legal consequences of their decisions
11	2009	MAG	ChristCentury	disciples, pointedly contrasting how greatness is measured in the world with how it is <u>attained</u> in the Christian life, and directly addressing the human desire to distinguish ourselves through
12	2009	ACAD	Writer	reduce your workload to a reasonable level while maintaining a high income is more easily <u>attained</u> when you have some passive income. # Passive income is money you earn from
13	2009	ACAD	LawPublicPol	" a sign of strength, wisdom, favour or riches by which it is <u>attained</u> . " (n220) All of these qualities are honorable because they are possessed

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