



**A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS:
*GENERAL, COMMON, AND TYPICAL***

BY

PIMPATIPARN FAEMTHAISONG

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2021**

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ENTITLED

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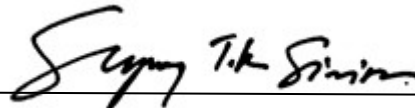
(Assistant Professor Upsorn Tawilapakul, Ph.D.)

Member and Advisor



(Assistant Professor Attapol Khamkhien, Ph.D.)

Director



(Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the three English synonyms: general, common, and typical, emphasizing their meaning, grammatical patterns, noun collocation, and degree of formality. Three hundred concordance lines were used to compare the dictionary (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition) (OALD)) to the corpus-based data (the Corpus of Contemporary American English) in order to examine the similarities and differences between the synonyms. Despite having the same basic meaning, the study found that these three adjectives are not interchangeable in all situations. They differ in terms of meaning, grammatical patterns, noun collocation, and stylistic information. Additionally, corpora offers linguistic data like grammatical patterns, collocations, stylistic information, etc. that are not present in the dictionaries.

Keywords: Synonyms, Adjective, Corpus, Corpora, Corpus-based data, Learners' dictionaries.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
Adj.	Adjective
Adv.	Adverb
BNC	British National Corpus
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
KWIC	Keyword in context
L2	Second Language
Linking V.	Linking Verb
N.	Noun
OALD	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
S.	Subject
Sb	Somebody
Sth	Something
V.inf	Verb infinitive

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, teaching English synonyms, and relevant problems. This chapter also provides the research objectives, research questions, definitions of relevant terms, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Most Thai learners tend to learn just the surface meanings of words by using dictionaries to find the brief definition (Mongkolchai, 2008). However, Bromberg & Gale (1998) state that even though a group of synonyms usually share the same surface meaning, they are different when thoroughly examined, and they are not interchangeably used since they do not share the same grammatical pattern and formality. For example, Taylor (2001) studied two synonyms: *tall* and *high*, and it was found that these two words are different in the sense of meaning. *Tall* is used to indicate vertical extent only, while *high* is used to indicate non-spatial domains that are both vertical extent and vertical position, such as:

- (a) high number
- (b) high temperature
- (c) a tall building
- (d) a high building
- (e) *tall number

As shown above, even if two synonymous words have the same meaning, they still differ at some point, such as a semantic, syntactic, or pragmatic aspect (Taylor, 2001). Hence, there is no exact synonym in terms of semantic and pragmatic meaning. The differences need to be investigated. This example reflects some problems and errors, particularly when it comes to language usage.

Moreover, according to Phoocharoensil (2011), despite having a number of words in the second language (L2), learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are not entirely capable of putting words together in the same manner that native speakers

do. In other words, EFL students lack the necessary competence in L2 learning. Phoocharoensil (2011) also suggested and highlighted the problem that Thai students, like other EFL students, employ several deviant English collocations in their writing, and the common strategies such as synonym and overgeneralization appear to be generally shared by EFL learners when learning, which leads to certain erroneous combinations in L2 English.

Synonyms and collocations, in short, are underlying issues in language learning, which enables students to utilize them in as incomplete a manner as feasible. This is indeed a problem that should be prioritized.

1.1.1 Teaching English Synonyms, Collocations, and Relevant Problems

Most of the curricula in Thailand focus on core language skills, consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teaching synonyms is still far from our concern in the language classroom. Synonyms are one of the crucial parts of English language learning and usage, which are split into two types: strict synonyms and loose synonyms (Palmer, 1997). Most synonyms can be used in interchangeable contexts, but some synonyms cannot be used in the same semantic ways. Hence, if learners cannot define the real meaning of counterpart words, it can lead to a misconception of the context.

Using synonyms is one part of *compensation strategies*, which Oxford (1990) defines as one of three direct language learning strategies (i.e., the language learning strategies directly involve the target language, requiring the mental processing of the language). Compensation strategies mean the behaviors that the language learners use to compensate for the language and which helps them to employ it. Using synonyms and paraphrasing are parts of this strategy. As a result, studying synonyms is another technique that aids in the acquisition of a second language, which is a part of promoting the thinking process and learning a second language.

In addition to synonyms, collocations are another issue in language use that can enhance the ability of English speakers to use English in a more native-like way. The most frequent conception, according to Schmitt (2014), is vocabulary depth, which is defined as the degree to which L2 words are linked to similar terms in the mental

lexicon, or L2 speakers' ability to link and differentiate an L2 word from related words. As a result, L2 speakers' associative behaviors, particularly the degree of nativelikeness in word association tasks, are commonly used to assess vocabulary depth. Zhang (1993) states that the use of collocations, which are partly related to synonyms, is also one of the problems even among skilled L2 learners. Aside from the problem of collocation, another related problem of L2 learners is the application of loose synonyms, especially their collocations. Loose synonyms referring to words that have a similar meaning, but cannot be used exactly in the same contexts (Altenburg and Granger, 2001). Moreover, according to Jafarpour, Hashemian, and Alipour (2013), collocations abound in the English language, and there is increasing importance in L2 teaching and learning. However, the collocations have not yet been integrated into L2 teaching materials, so it leads to a low level of consideration in English classrooms.

At this juncture, teaching synonyms and collocations being applied in the classroom are both disregarded in the teaching context, especially in the classroom in Thailand (Supasiraprapa, 2019). This study hopes to help resolve this problem, and thus it takes the importance of synonyms into account. It is hoped that the study will be able to, at least, give readers the potential benefits of a clearer picture of the problem of teaching synonyms and the realization of the importance of a greater focus on synonyms and collocations.

1.1.2 The Application Corpus in Studying English

Corpus (plural corpora) linguistics has been closely related to the boundary of English language pedagogy and research. Brazil (1995) defined a corpus as 'a collection of used language' which means the words naturally occurring under the wide range of circumstances used by the speakers of those languages. A corpus is considered to be a highly rich resource and reference source in the fields of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). It can be utilized for specific useful purposes to represent a language in the same critical section, including in academic contexts (Bennett, 2010.) A corpus is a linguistic tool that ESL/EFL teachers should be familiar with so as to firmly embed it as the standard part of an English language teacher's instrument, to enhance the teaching standard to be even higher and more

competent and sufficient, and perhaps more importantly, to provide the pedagogic contributions.

The usage of corpora allows academics to learn a number of things about language. These are necessary for the study of words, including collocation. Petcharat (2017) states that the study of vocabulary focuses on word combinations as well as single words. The meaning of a word is just as essential as how it collocates with other words. Intuition alone is not adequate to spot word collocations. As a result, corpora can make it simpler to find lists of word collocates, and corpus data may also be used as proof of a significant statistical preference for word collocates. When searching for collocations, any corpus software determines if certain word combinations occur in the predicted pattern with statistical significance.

Vannestal and Lindquist (2007) raised the importance of employing a corpus in language learning. Using corpora with learners necessitates a significant amount of preparation and assistance. Some students enjoy working with corpora, whereas others find it difficult or dull. While some students did not find corpora to be particularly useful for learning grammatical rules, they recognized the value of using corpora when writing English texts.

According to previous research, a corpus is a highly effective instrument for language acquisition. Learning vocabulary, including synonyms, is very important. When it comes to using the corpus to analyze synonyms in terms of collocation, grammatical patterns, and other elements, they should be examined in more depth in order to enhance awareness and the benefits of utilizing a corpus, especially in the popular and well-known collection of synonyms.

The aforementioned background and problems led to my interest in this study. This present study aims to study the similarities and differences between these three synonyms: general, common, and typical, which are common in many different sources. The chosen words are ones that many people understand as completely identical, and I will study the differences in actual usage in order to increase awareness of synonyms in many situations, including language learning.

The researcher bears in mind that the benefits of this study using a corpus-based approach could improve the quality of teaching and language learning and be a powerful tool to change teachers' perspectives on language teaching, particularly a better

understanding of the meaning and use of synonymous words in context. Aside from the benefit of academic writing, with the power of corpus linguistics, the study could provide new aspects of creating instructional materials focusing on synonyms and collocation lessons, suggesting how better instructional materials should be designed to enhance the EFL or ESL student's ability to use adjectives grammatically correctly and appropriately. Moreover, regarding the EFL classroom and the teaching of synonym adjective usage, the implications hopefully contribute to the strong evidence for teachers that EFL/ESL learners should not be only introduced to the lists of interchangeable broad classifications of synonymous words, which can lead to their cursory and misleading usage (Field & Yip, 1992).

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To identify differences and similarities in terms of meanings of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'.
- 2) To identify differences and similarities in terms of collocation of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'.
- 3) To identify differences and similarities in terms of grammatical patterns of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'.
- 4) To identify differences and similarities in terms of the degree of formality of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) What are the differences and similarities in terms of the meaning of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'?
- 2) What are the differences and similarities in terms of collocations of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'?
- 3) What are the differences and similarities in terms of grammatical patterns of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'?
- 4) What are the differences and similarities in terms of the degree of formality of the synonymous adjectives 'common', 'typical', and 'general'?

1.4. Definitions of Key Terms

The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

1.4.1. *Corpus (or plural Corpora)*

A corpus is defined as "a collection of used language" (Brazil, 1995) or "a collection of text on which some general linguistic analysis can be conducted" (Meyer & Charles, 2002), occurring in a natural context in the form of small units (isolated words) or sentences and consisting of either spoken or written texts.

1.4.2 *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

COCA stands for Corpus of Contemporary American English, the largest corpus of English containing more than a million words of text from various eight genres which are blog, websites, TV or movie subtitles, spoken language, fictions, popular magazines, newspaper, and academic contexts.

1.4.3. *Synonym*

The word "synonym" originated from the Greek word (*sunonumori*), which means "having the same meaning". A synonym is a general term used to describe a relationship of 'sameness of meaning' that any word can have a similar meaning or almost the same meaning (Jackson, 2000). It should be noted that any word can have its own synonyms, and most words can also have multiple synonyms.

1.4.4. *Collocations*

Collocation means the patterns of two or more words having a tendency to co-occur rather than by chance. They are likely to have meaning together as the sum of their parts (Dickinson, 2008). Another meaning of collocation is defined by Poulsen (2005): "the tendency for lexical items to co-occur in a text, or in a text corpus, whether or not they form a syntactic pattern". The term *collocation* also means the relationship of word combinations into a group with some grammatical patterns. The key concepts for collocation which are frequently used and should be noted are 'co-occur' and 'frequent'.

1.4.5. Concordance lines

Concordance lines, concordancing, as well as concordance are one of the basic techniques that can be used in a corpus and standard software. One of the most famous definitions is from O’Keeffe, McCathy, and Carter (2007), they define concordance/concordancing as the simple core tools in corpus linguistic study used to find every occurrence of searched words or phrases in corpus software. Concordance lines normally appears in the middle of the computer screen while searching for the target words or phrases, together with the words that appear before and after them. The concordance line can be scanned vertically at first glance.

1.4.6. Node Words

Node words refer to search words or phrases that are usually represented in concordance lines in the center of the line with approximately seven or eight environmental words that come before and after the 'node' presented on either side. While searching in corpus software, concordance lines appear with nodes, and those are known as Key-Word-In-Context (or KWIC Concordances). (O’Keeffe, McCathy, and Carter, 2007)

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study mainly focuses upon the analysis of only three adjectives: "common," "typical," and "general." In order to explore the similarities and differences between these three adjectives, the data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed from concordance lines, which derive from the data. 300 lines of concordance were collected for each target word; *general*, *common*, and *typical*; this volume of information would be an appropriate number for examining and analyzing the data derived to show the results of the study in a limited time. Based on the research questions of this study, the collected words from concordance lines were investigated, counted manually to see the frequency, and divided into different groups depending on their different usages as well as characteristics. Moreover, the focus of this study is also on their collocations to provide the finding of grammatical patterns and possibly to see the differences and similarities.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The corpus-based study of the targeted three adjectives: *common*, *typical*, and *general* is significant for the following reasons:

1) In terms of meanings, degrees of formality, collocations, and grammatical patterns, the study offers a deeper understanding of three synonyms. As a result, it is important to increase awareness that synonyms cannot be used interchangeably in all settings. English language learners will gain the ability to differentiate between different synonyms and utilize them appropriately in various settings.

2) The study clearly demonstrates a modern method for researching synonyms. The degrees of formality, collocations, and grammatical patterns of each word can be determined by using corpora in synonym studies. Teachers can use this technique to teach synonyms in the classroom, which is beneficial.

3) The study can be used as a guide and an example for language learners who want to use corpus data to look at various collections of synonyms.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One includes the background of the study; research questions, objectives of the study; definitions of key terms; the scope of the study; the significance of the study; and the organization of the study. This chapter aims to introduce what the study is about and to inform the readers of the main problems that are being solved and need to be answered. Chapter Two consists of a literature review related to the theories of synonyms and other relevant theories, corpus-based theories, and previous related studies. The purpose of the review of relevant studies is to give some background knowledge about related theories.

Chapter Three consists of the research methodology used to investigate the concordance lines of three adjectives: *common*, *typical*, and *general*. It provides the data processing procedures and statistical treatment of data, data gathering procedures, and a description of how instruments were administered. Chapter Four explains the results of the study, which are the result of grammatical patterns of nodes and concordance lines in the Corpus of Contemporary English (COCA) and the analysis of differences and similarities regarding lexical, syntactic, and stylistic information.

Chapter Five provides the summary of findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further research, which should be directly based on the significance of the study and its pedagogical implications.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter One, the background of problems, statement of problems, purpose, objectives, and research questions were mentioned and described in detail. The purpose of the literature review chapter is to provide the readers with a general review of synonyms, their concepts, and corpus-based studies and to review relevant literature and research. This chapter is divided into seven main parts: corpora, concepts of word meanings, concepts of synonyms and teaching synonyms, concepts of collocations and their grammatical patterns, the degree of formality; and relevant previous studies.

2.1 Corpora or Corpus

A corpus is defined as a linguistic methodology' which is the approach using the electronic collections of naturally occurring text (Granger, 1998.), be it written or spoken, stored on a computer (O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007) and available for qualitative and quantitative analysis. The considerably beneficial aspect of corpus-based research is that studies with more extensive corpora can be used to identify similarities and differences between the distinctive registers of languages, such as academic writing and verbal communication (Conrad, 1999). Brazil (1995) defined a corpus as "a collection of used language", which means the words naturally occurring under the wide range of circumstances used by the speakers of those languages. With the deep roots of language acquisition and corpus linguistics, corpus research is considered to use the principles and methods of corpus linguistics to be a core part of language learning.

A corpus can be used to investigate language properties both qualitatively and statistically. The frequency that a word appears in a context is statistically evaluated to discover if a certain word appears in a context more frequently than others. A qualitative investigation, on the other hand, concentrates on how a word or phrase is used in context across a corpus. Exploring concordance lines to discover qualitative patterns of use might help with this.

According to Ma & Wang (2016), it is impossible to collect all types of information and answer all research queries with only one resource. As a result, before investigating any material from any source, it is important to employ the corpus selection criterion to investigate the learner corpora. Several criteria should be set regarding corpus design such that the features in terms of the aspect of language include medium, technicality, genre, topic, and task settings. For example, to examine and contrast the usage of language in two different sample sources, English and non-English, Granger (2008) established *the International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE), a 2.5 million word corpus that includes learners from 11 different mother tongue backgrounds, and the *Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Learner Corpus*, a 25 million word corpus that only contains data from Chinese English learners, to be the clear example to consider the differences between the two groups, highlighting English users as the first language and the foreign-language among Chinese students learning English.

In the field of education, Hunston (2002) argues that since corpora may give evidence on how a language operates, they can be used in language teaching in order to replace native speakers' intuitions, which are not always reliable. Even when native speakers have had a lot of experience with the language, they may not be able to recall it when they need it. Therefore, L2 learner corpora are important in second language research and education because they allow for a systematic examination of how a learner of a second language acquires the new language on a lexical and syntactic level, as well as how their native language influences this acquisition.

O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter (2007) note that corpora also play a crucial role as the evidence for intuitions of language. Still, they could become unreliable when it comes to issues such as grammar and semantics. Likewise, the use of applications, including the use of corpus software, Computer Assisted Language Learning. (CALL) is the approach that learners can learn from corpus-based evidence such as concordance lines. (Johns, 1991). This approach depends on the ability to distinguish the forming patterns and target language to form generalizations of language usage. It is the process called "data-driven learning" (DDL) that can facilitate the development of learners' language lexical acquisition.

To recap the statement above, a corpus is a collection of written and spoken texts that are methodically composed and stored on computer software. Corpora are able to provide data that demonstrates the interrelationship of words and contexts, and they can demonstrate typical situations in which words appear. Hence, a corpus is regarded as a beneficial tool for a number of aspects, including the study of synonyms and their collocations, as it can be used to investigate words in detail.

2.2 Word Meanings

According to Gauker (2003), the central function of language is to mediate linguistic communication, which can enable the speaker and hearer to understand each other's thoughts and intentions. The words that speakers choose to communicate would usually be in the expectation that the basis of the circumstances of the utterance, together with the spoken words in communication, is in order to infer the intended thoughts to the hearer. Hence, to learn any language, the word and its meaning are important issues to be highlighted. O'Keffee, McCathy, and Carter (2007) also mention the importance of the environments of words, the characteristic environments, and their context. To find out what each word means, numerous factors must be examined in order to enhance the understanding in light of the context. For example, as in the comparison of two synonymous nouns, *alternative* and *option*, Sukman (2019) reveals that those two synonymous words share the same core meaning, i.e., a choice or something to choose, but they differ in terms of collocation, meaning, as well as some grammatical patterns. This is explained by the word preposition collocated with two words; *to* is the greatest frequency as for *alternative* when *for* is most frequently used as for *option*.

2.3 Concept of Synonyms and Teaching Synonyms

2.3.1. Synonyms

Synonyms are defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) as "a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language". Palmer (1977) gives a definition of synonyms as a set of words that share the same core meaning or it is used to mean 'sameness of meaning'. Moreover,

Palmer (1977) also states the importance of synonyms for the dictionary-maker, that the synonymous words are grouped due to the same meaning, but dictionaries also add more descriptive details to imply the sameness and differences.

When it comes to the fields of English as a Foreign Language Learning (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), synonyms play a crucial role in both fields of language learning. Jafarpour, Hashemian, and Alipour (2013) and Partington (1998) also suggest that L2 learners should differentiate synonymous words to discriminate between semantically similar words.

In this regard, there are two types of synonyms according to the proposal of Palmer (1997), which are strict synonyms and loose synonyms. ‘Absolute synonym’, ‘true synonym’, or ‘strict synonym’ means words that are identical in meaning and interchangeably used in every context and environment. However, there are some arguments from linguists (Kreidler, 1998; Harley, 2006) that absolute synonyms do not actually exist. When speaking of possible synonyms, Palmer (1997) proposes five criteria to find the differences: (1) different dialects of language, (2) different styles or registers, (3) emotive meaning of evaluative meaning, (4) collocational restriction, and (5) overlapping meaning, which is a loose sense of synonymy. Even though synonyms are classified by using various criteria, the word *synonym* usually means a loose synonym or relative synonym, as Phoocharoensil (2010) states that loose synonyms cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts, even if they have overlapping meanings.

For example, Liu and Espino (2012) studied a set of five four synonyms’ semantic structures *actually*, *genuinely*, *really*, and *truly* by employing a corpus-based behavioral profile (BP) approach to examine their functional usage and syntactic patterns. When used as an intensifier/emphasizer of adjectives and verbs, *actually* is employed with emotion/attitude/desire/cognition adjectives and verbs. Similarly, we are aware to point out that *really* is most commonly employed with evaluative adjectives as an adjective intensifier/emphasizer. Furthermore, when *genuinely* and *truly* are used as adjective intensifiers/emphasizers, they are seldom employed with verbs in this function, and they are usually utilized with adjectives and verbs of emotion/attitude/desire/cognition when they are used as adjectives and verb intensifiers/emphasizers.

To sum up, although near-synonyms have comparable meanings, they may behave differently in terms of collocation and semantic prosody. It is believed that any synonym words sharing the same meaning cannot be properly utilized only by choosing or deciding from the use of another in the same set of synonyms (Margolis,1978).

2.3.2. Teaching English Synonyms

Learning vocabulary has been considered a basic and significant fundamental for ages, and it is otherwise known that acquiring vocabulary and lexical knowledge is the primary aspect of learning the language. (Burns & Silva, 2001). In accordance with teaching vocabulary, there is no best way or approach to be well-established in teaching English vocabulary. Many researchers consider many explicit approaches in order to increase the quality of teaching and incidental approaches to teaching vocabulary. Burns and Silva (2001) suggest the applicable ideas for teaching vocabulary in an incidental approach, which consists of introducing a related learner's dictionary and techniques to use, encouraging the use of materials from multiple sources such as email, films, and pen-pals, raising the topic to discuss with the class, setting outside class activities focusing on learning vocabulary in contexts, and using various techniques and strategies to integrate new words with old ones.

Furthermore, Sokman (1997) provides a useful principle for an explicit focus on vocabulary teaching i.e., providing many encounters with words, facilitating imagination, making connections between new words and reality in a student's world in various ways, and encouraging independent learning strategies.

Regarding the number of words and vocabulary to learn, McCarten (2007) states two useful procedures to teach vocabulary; (1) it is important to identify the most frequent 2,000–5,000 words of vocabulary to be prioritized to be taught; and (2) students should be encouraged to become self-sufficient learners due to the large number of necessary words as they are unlikely to cover all of them inside the class. Moreover, acquiring synonyms is one of several aspects of vocabulary acquisition and teaching that should be prioritized. However, teaching a group of synonyms is challenging, but whatever the case may be, it is an excellent opportunity to encounter sophisticated knowledge. There are electronic technologies that can be employed in the learning process, such as the use of a corpus. McCarten(2007) also emphasizes the

importance of encouraging teachers to help students with *how* to learn vocabulary together with *what* to learn, and corpora is one suggestion. Due to the various available subcorpora of different varieties, the decision of which corpora to use should be highlighted as well. Hence, the choice of the corpus may affect the selected words included in the materials and which meanings of words will be introduced, particularly if the teaching purposes and objectives are specific.

The corpus tools can be utilized in class to analyze the data in a corpus that might consist of millions of words. Furthermore, it can provide statistical information (a quantitative analysis) about which words and expressions are used the most frequently in a given context. Besides, a corpus also gives qualitative information; the millions of texts in order to observe and analyze how language is actually used. The differences in speaking and writing, contexts of use, collocation, grammatical patterns, and strategic use of vocabulary could be generated from observing corpus data.

However, the corpus cannot be used to be the single criteria which should be taught or a sole approach to teach. Teachers should also point the learners to the different possible ways of using the language that might help them enhance their English skills, particularly their wording choices. McCarten (2007) quotes that a corpus is just *a tool*, but it is not *only a tool*.

2.3.2.1 Problems Occurring in Teaching and Learning English Synonyms

According to Hill (2000), L2 students have some major problems in writing, especially in combining words to form the correct and appropriate language because they do not know the common and suitable collocations of the selected words. These are necessary for improving their writing. Nation (2001), cited in Jafarpour, Hashemian, and Alipour (2013), emphasizes that collocation is considered the important aspect to differentiate the usage of language between native and non-native speakers. The studies of Youmei and Yun (2005) reveal that even advanced L2 learners also face difficulty in producing collocations. Laufer (1990) explains two ways synonyms can lower proficiency in learning vocabulary. The first reason is learners might have some problems with the interchangeability of synonyms in some contexts. He shows the problematic example of the use of synonyms *powerful* and *strong* which share similar meanings but are

interchangeably used in just some contexts. Another reason is the problem of learning new overlapping words that have the exact same meaning as known ones.

However, few studies on the importance of synonyms, language teaching and learning, as well as collocations, in terms of the effect of synonyms, have been conducted. Tinkham (1993) studied the effect of semantic clusters on learning words, and he indicates that learning a group of words that share a semantic relation is more than learning the words that are not related to each other and linked in meaning. Moreover, Tinkham (1997) also studied the effect of clustering words, which are able to enhance the productivity of vocabulary learning. The result shows that semantic clustering words are harmful to L2 learning when thematic clustering is cognitively considered to facilitate learning.

Webb (2007) examined the effects of synonyms on word knowledge among 84 Japanese students who are learning English, and the study shows that the participants have higher scores of productive knowledges, which indicates that learning synonyms for known words is easier than learning those that do not have known synonyms.

After reviewing the previous study regarding teaching and learning synonyms, the application of corpus or corpora might be a useful instrument to facilitate teaching synonyms, which can be a precious source of word information. In terms of collocations, frequency of use, and grammatical patterns, the data can be derived from corpora to help teachers choose the proper words to teach. Most importantly, the teachers should employ corpora in class in order to encourage students to enhance their experiences of long-term self-learning in every aspect of learning the language.

2.4 Concept of Collocations and their Grammatical Patterns

2.4.1 Collocations

Many linguists and researchers have given the definition and classification of collocation. According to Firth (1935), for example, a word is as much a function of how it interacts with other words in context (i.e., its collocation) as it is of the meaning it has in isolation. Firth (1957) further clarifies the notion of collocation, stating that a word can collocate with idiomatic components, fixed expressions, grammatical bounds,

proper nouns, and other words, and this view is known as the “frequency-based approach” (AlGhazali, 2006).

OALD (2005) defines word *collocation* as “a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance.” Meanwhile, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English or LDOCE (2009) describes a synonym as “the way in which some words are often used together”.

In addition, Timmis (2015) gives the definition of *collocation* and more explanation of this term as “a combination of two lexical (as opposed to grammatical) words often found together or in close proximity,” and three further factors should be mentioned in respect to this definition:

- (a) Even if the pair of words is separated by an article, as *in having a party*, this is still considered a collocation by the definition.
- (b) Phrasal verbs such as *carry out an experiment* may be treated as a single word and counted as a collocation in this definition.
- (c) Some academics refer to the type of collocation that is defined and demonstrated above specifically as a lexical collocation.

In the language teaching and linguistic field, Nesselhauf (2005) defines collocation as the words that co-occur in the same environment more frequently than could be expected when the targeted words are used randomly in language, while Woolard (2000) identifies “the co-occurrence of words which are statistically much more together than random chances suggest”. Meanwhile, O’Keffee, McCathy, and Carter (2007) state that collocations are probabilistic occurrences that arise from repeated combinations utilized and encountered by speakers of any language. They are not absolute nor deterministic. The study of Carter (2007) shows the usage of *bitter disappointed* and *sourly disappointed* explaining that *bitterly disappointed* is said though rather than *sourly disappointed*. However, this is not an absolute prohibition, as there is still a poet using this uncommon collocation *sourly disappointed*; tea is usually *strong*, but cars are *powerful*, and so on. However, it is the collocations of commonplace phrases that are difficult to detect by intuition alone and that computers have become quite effective at detecting.

In addition, when it comes to the awkward questions from students in class after they are taught ‘that is the language we say’ based on corpus data, such as the question

'why' something is expressed in that way, the significant statistical preference is the explanation that can be convincingly proved using corpus data (O’Keffee, McCathy, and Carter, 2007). The researchers still emphasize that collocation still shows "how we say it," and significant confidence can be gained when presenting something to students, such as a widespread and frequent collocation rather than a one-off occurrence in just one focused specific word.

To conclude, collocation knowledge not only enables learners to improve accuracy but is also related to language fluency and aids learners in becoming aware of language chunks used by native speakers in writing and speaking. Furthermore, the usage of collocations is linked to English users’ competence, and there is also a strong link between collocation knowledge and overall language proficiency.

2.4.2 *Grammatical Patterns in Collocations*

Normally, a dictionary is a collection of words from the lexicon of one or more languages, organized alphabetically and containing information on definitions, usage, etymologies, pronunciation, grammatical patterns, translation, and other topics for each word,

For example,

Believe = (*transitive v.*) *feel certain*, to feel certain that something is true or that somebody is telling you the truth

= (*intransitive, transitive verb*) *think possible*, to think that something is true or possible, although you are not completely certain.

1. believe + somebody

e.g. - The man claimed to be a social worker and the old woman *believed him*.

2. believe + something

e.g. - Do not *believe a word of it*(= do not believe any part of what somebody is saying)

3. believe +(that)+ ...

e.g. - He refused to *believe (that) his son was involved in drugs*.

(Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 10th edition, 2010)

A dictionary's primary purpose is to define words, but it may also offer details on a word's grammatical functions and forms. A dictionary may also offer examples that explain how a word is used. These examples may be dated to demonstrate the world's earliest known occurrences in the context.

According to Phoocharoensil (2010), synonymous words in English are mostly loose synonyms, and they cannot be used interchangeably in all usages due to various factors: different denotative meanings, level of formality of context, collocation, grammatical patterns, and dialect. Moreover, a grammatical pattern is one of the criteria for making a distinction between a set of synonymous items. For example, even though *ask* and *beg* have the same meaning, Phoocharoensil (2010) notes that there are differences in the patterns of use that each should be put in, where the other is less likely to occur. In order to highlight the distinctions, distinguish them, and increase students' awareness, he further suggests that those factors be introduced while teaching synonyms in ESL/EFL classes.

The term *ask* cannot be used in the beginning of any of these fixed lexical phrases because doing so could produce a strange and awkward combination that is uncommon among native English speakers, as shown below.

- (a) I beg your pardon : this is used to ask somebody to say what they have said before again.
- (b) * I ask your pardon

For L2 learners, knowing grammatical patterns, language use, and collocation are important aspects that can enhance their language learning and acquisition. Students should be taught to examine data from learners' dictionaries and corpus data for further information in order to offer perspectives on learning a second language and cultivate language-learning skills. Phoocharoensil (2010) also suggests the importance of a corpus as its concept that corpora may be an effective language teaching tool to show the distinctions between words in the collection of synonyms in many aspects, including grammatical patterns, and that students should be taught to examine data from learners.

2.4.3 Sources of Collocation in English Language Teaching

Even though collocations are problematic for language learners, they are still indispensable and should be one of the important parts of EFL and ESL since they could be the language components to make the language more natural and idiomatic or more similar to the language used by native speakers.

For L2 learners, grammatical competence, communicative competence, and collocational competence are important components of L2 competencies, but collocational competence is usually left behind in the field of ESL and EFL teaching and learning. Bahns & Eldaw (1993) also stated that L2 learners do not need to apply collocations in all speech or writing, but knowing the basics of collocation, how to apply them appropriately, the right collocation, and the right way to use the words/vocabulary are more important. Hence, in order to speak English idiomatically, L2 learners should know many collocations.

To access the electronic sources of collocation, corpora or corpus play an important role in providing information about how a language actually works and is used in terms analyzing language (Craw & Csomay, 2016). In the classroom, teachers do not focus on just the accuracy of grammatical usage and the fluency of teaching for communication; systemic language accuracy is also given attention. In this way, a corpus is an alternative tool to integrate with language teaching when teaching unfamiliar words or synonyms; the corpus software should be employed to investigate the frequency and differences of language (Hunston, 2000).

Obviously, there are plenty of collocations, and teachers are too overwhelmed to teach all of them. So, ESL/EFL teachers should be responsible for the focus of the needs of building learners' consciousness about collocations and how important it is when words co-occur together and word selection. After that, students will be able to continue developing their collocational skills and apply them properly outside the class (Mongkolchai, 2008). Wei (1999) states that teachers should show the useful and accessible sources of collocations and use the attractive and effective techniques, activities, and exercises in class to guide students through some commonly used words, such as peer correction and making students write down sentences by using some

collocations, which will be comprehensible and beneficial for on-going skill improvement and vocabulary learning.

Hill (2000) also asserts that other English skills: pronunciation, intonation, stress, grammar, reading, and listening cannot be neglected when teaching collocation as they can give them more chances to practice and notice collocation too. The stage of noticing collocation is a necessary basis to improve the skill and raise students' awareness.

According to Conzett (as cited in Boonyasaquan, 2005), if an ESL textbook does not emphasize the importance of collocation, teachers should be responsible for adapting meaningful materials, adding some ideas and exercises, as well as teaching collocation in a comprehensible context to reinforce the awareness and recognition of the variety of lexical words.

O'Dell and McCarthy (2008) state that collocations will help learners expand the range of English vocabulary. It can help to pick words that are more suitable in context or match the situation and have a more specific meaning. This is especially helpful in taking English written tests and when learners want to create a strong first impression on the examiners.

Hence, as evidenced by previous research, enough and appropriate sources of collocation may enhance the learner's understanding of collocation, and it can also help learners strengthen other aspects of their language skills. Moreover, teachers should assist students in learning not only single words but also chunks of language or prepackaged patterns, which may limit the frequency of improper collocation pairs used. Teachers can additionally emphasize the value of collocation usage in production skills, particularly in writing, to students. Offering good and helpful collocational sources for students' learning is another area that teachers should pay attention to, in addition to presenting features of significance, correctness, and appropriateness of collocation usage, since reliable sources of information also have an impact on students' learning.

2.5 The Degrees of Formality

The tone or formality of the circumstances is one of the strong influences on the choice of words to be used. In turn, this tone or formality in which synonyms are used

might help distinguish them from one another. One of two synonyms may be acceptable to use in formal circumstances while the other is not; another possibility is that one of the words is slang or a word that is used in spoken English while the other is a general term (Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p. 95).

Jackson and Amvele (2000) state that the style of formality of the context in which synonyms are used can be used to differentiate them. One of a set of synonyms may be accepted for formal circumstances while the other is not; alternatively, one word may be a slang term or a phrase used in spoken English while the other is a broad term.

For serious purposes or in formal writings, formal language is almost always written and used in public, according to Leech and Svartvick (2003). Contrarily, informal language, which is the language of private communication, is the first type of language an infant learns to speak. Informal language is considerably simpler to understand than formal language. Because of this, everyday language is increasingly employed in newspapers and commercials and in public discourse.

According to Leech and Svartvick (2003), formal and informal languages differ from one another. They suggest that the following characteristics are present in formal language:

1) French, Latin, and Greek are the ancestors of many formal words. These formal words are frequently interchangeable with colloquial Anglo-Saxon ones. The phrase "The meeting will begin at 4 p.m.", for instance, could be changed to "The meeting will start at 4 o'clock."

2) Phrasal or prepositional verbs are not used in formal language. Instead, it makes use of precise vocabulary that has analogues in phrasal or prepositional verbs.

3) In contrast to informal vocabulary, which has more general meanings, formal vocabulary is more specific. Job is an illustration of this. This term has taken the role of more explicit and defined terms like employment, vocation, and profession and does not have a formal equivalent.

4) The tone of formal language is impersonal. In other words, the speakers refrain from using the pronouns *I*, *you*, and *us* and refrain from addressing the listeners or themselves personally. The following are common characteristics of impersonal language: passives, sentences that start with the word "it," and abstract nouns.

5) The use of *who* and *whom*, as well as the placement of a preposition at the start of a clause, are all grammatical conventions unique to formal language.

According to Bailey (2003), informal language has the following characteristics as opposed to formal language:

1) Informal language frequently lacks precision. The use of imprecise terms such as *a lot of*, *a long time*, *things*, etc., or similar expressions is common in this sort of language.

2) Idioms or colloquial words like *"dad"* or *"guys"* are common in informal speech.

3) Informal language is frequently subjective. It is clear when personal pronouns like *I think* or *they say* are being used.

4) Contracted verb tenses including *don't*, *doesn't*, *aren't*, and *can't* are used in informal language.

5) Two-word verbs like *go on*, *come on*, *bring up*, and *look forward to* are common in informal English.

6) Question forms can be found in informal language.

Since formality of linguistic expressions is introduced and considered to be the most important dimension of diversity between styles or registers, it is crucial to take this into account when communicating. In order to highlight the differences between the studied words and increase awareness of the formality of contexts, this research focuses on examining the formality of languages.

2.6 Relevant Previous Studies

Synonym corpus studies have been conducted by a number of researchers. They observed how synonyms compare and contrast in terms of meanings, styles and formality, grammatical patterns, and collocations. In addition, they compared and contrasted data from the dictionary and corpus databases.

Phoocharoensil (2021) investigated the two synonymous verbs *persist* and *persevere* which have cognitively comparable meanings, with a focus on their distribution across genres and collocational behavior in connection to semantic choice and prosody. The data was drawn from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th Edition

(LDOCE), for the data regarding the definitions, sentence examples, and usage notes of the target synonyms. The result showed that while the word *persist* tends to be associated with words or phrases that have negative connotations, the lexical components that surround *persevere* suggest strong resolve and tremendous effort in accomplishing a tough task. Furthermore, despite the fact that a learner dictionary states that *persist* is exclusively employed as an intransitive verb, corpus data shows that it may also be used transitively.

Lin and Chung (2021) studied two near-synonyms: *propose* and *suggest* in the respects of frequency patterns, subject animacy, and grammatical features. The researcher aims to examine the syntactic and semantic environments of targeted words. The source data was provided from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and analyzed by employing hierarchical configural frequency analysis (HCFA), and the results illustrated that the preferred patterns of two verbs were identical, but the distributions of their frequent animate/inanimate subjects and the syntactic properties of the top patterns were not.

Li and Kim (2018) examined the collocational behaviors of loose synonymous adjectives: *wide* and *broad* by employing a corpus analysis in the aspects of general use patterns, semantic preferences, semantic prosodies, and nominal collocates. The study found that the target words shared many identical collocates, yet their collocational patterns were different. This data suggests that, despite their apparent similarity and interchangeability, *broad* appears to have a more diversified semantic meaning than *wide*. The term *wide* was utilized more frequently throughout the corpus and in all genres, and the term *wide* was most commonly used in the magazine genre, whereas *broad* was chosen in the academic genre. Hence, *broad* had more variable semantic preferences than *wide* in terms of semantic preference and semantic prosody. This means that teachers should work with pupils to assist them to understand the distinctions in the usage and meaning of synonyms and how to differentiate them.

Great and its close synonyms, *awesome*, *excellent*, *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *terrific*, and *wonderful* were studied by Cai (2012). The seven almost synonyms must be differentiated in the investigation. In order to look for frequency, collocation, and descriptions of deep meaning, Cai pointed out and examined the connotations and usage in collocation in both spoken and written data that encompass different genres. The

seven near-synonyms are primarily utilized in spoken language, according to the data. *Great* is used the most frequently among the near-synonyms in terms of the total frequency. It was also discovered that the spoken genre tends to use the words *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *great*, *terrific*, and *wonderful* more frequently. At the same time, magazines frequently use the words *awesome* and *excellent*. Regarding collocation analysis, *wonderful* is most usually used to modify abstract nouns to express concepts or ideas, whereas *excellent* is more frequently used to depict movement or events. The collocation adverbs and the nouns those adjectives modify still significantly overlap. For instance, the noun "job" is most frequently seen with the words "excellent," "fabulous," "fantastic," and "terrific." Additionally, distinctions in the meanings of the words are shown, with *excellent* being more neutral than the others and *fabulous*, *fantastic*, *terrific*, and *awesome* being extremely positive. *Fantastic* in particular has the sense of being nearly unbelievable. It is noteworthy that this study did not suggest consulting a dictionary in place of native English speakers. However, the study's conclusion asserted that "lexical items tend not to be completely interchangeable" and that "there are typically differences in the meanings and usage of apparent synonyms."

Li (2016) studied two synonyms: *traditional* and *convention*. The researcher employed a corpus-based strategy to investigate the differences between two English terms by examining the collocation and semantic prosody of these two words using qualitative and quantitative analysis. It was found that *tradition* is more commonly used in subjects related to religion and culture and is more widely used in written English, especially in literary or academic works, whereas *convention* is more commonly used in subjects related to politics and social life and is more widely used in spoken English, but they all have neutral semantic prosody.

AI Amaro (2019) examines in detail the six English words: *babble*, *blather*, *gibber*, *jabber*, *prattle*, and *chatter*, which are likely to have similar meanings. S/he explored the lexical category of the term and how it might alter its meaning, as well as the semantic usage and distinct senses of the connotation that these six words had. The semantic description's framework was built by comparing the definitions of these terms from many major dictionaries. The online corpus collection Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was used to enhance this approach. From the results, it could be summed up that the six terms chosen all had a basic definition of oral

communication. They were most common in fiction and newspapers, then magazines. Among the target synonyms, *chatter* and *babble* were the most popular. *Chatter* and *babble* were more commonly used than *gibber*, *jabber*, and *prattle*.

Considering the reviewed literature, this line of research should be redone with a different set of synonyms to evaluate if the results of the research all pointed in the same direction in order to compare or illustrate how the sets of synonyms differ or are similar based on various criteria. It also revealed a gap in the previous studies, particularly the criteria employed to distinguish synonymous words, which are simply collocation and meaning. Another issue to consider is that the majority of the data used in the study came from a single source, corpora. Hence, in order to fill the gap, ensure the feasibility of the current study, and gain a complete grasp of how synonyms in a certain set differ, the present study will examine four criteria for differentiating synonyms: meanings, degrees of formality, collocations, and grammatical patterns. In addition, data from the dictionary and a corpus will be included in this study. The data from both sources will be examined to find similarities and differences.

2.7 Summary

This chapter mainly presents the previous related studies, principles, and literature regarding corpus-based studies of English synonyms, the theoretical perspectives on corpus or corpora studies, and the methods that are applied to analyze similarities and differences between synonyms in the fields of qualitative and quantitative studies. The next chapter is about the method employed in this study, beginning with an overview of the subjects and sample size, as well as the instruments used, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to describe the research procedure in detail. It contains information on the research methods employed as well as a justification for that approach's usage. The chapter also presents the various stages of the study, including participant selection, research instruments and procedures, and analytical principles. These methods will lead to answers to the research questions as follows:

1. What are the differences and similarities in terms of the meaning of the synonymous adjectives ‘common’, ‘typical’, and ‘general’?
2. What are the differences and similarities in terms of collocations of the synonymous adjectives ‘common’, ‘typical’, and ‘general’?
3. What are the differences and similarities in terms of grammatical patterns of the synonymous adjectives ‘common’, ‘typical’, and ‘general’?
4. What are the differences and similarities in terms of the degree of formality of the synonymous adjectives ‘common’, ‘typical’, and ‘general’?

3.1 Words to be Studied

As the present study aims to delve into the information of three synonyms, the study began with looking up the wordlist in COCA, a corpus reference used in this study. When referring to statistical data in COCA word toplist, the three selected adjectives in this study are chosen based on their frequency. Among 5,000 words, the adjectives *common*, *typical*, and *general* are ranked in 745, 2110, and 661, respectively according to COCA word toplist. These are words that can be found in a number of contexts and from a range of sources, with the meanings of these chosen terms.

The three adjective words have similar meanings, i.e., *common*, *typical* and *general* as these words can be defined as ‘normal or usual’ according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary International Student’s Edition (10th edition) as described below in detail:

Common (*adjective*) = ordinary; not unusual or special

e.g. - Shakespear's work was popular among the *common* people in his day.

- In most people's eyes, she was nothing more than a *common* criminal.

Typical (*adjective*) = happening in the usual way; showing what something is usually like (syn: normal)

e.g. - A *typical* working day for me begins at 7.30

- On a *typical* day, we receive about 50 letters.
- *Typical* interview questions are 'Why do you want to study law?' or 'Why did you choose this college?'

General (*adjective*) = affecting all or most people, places, or things
= normal; usual

e.g. - This is one exception to this *general* principle.

- This opinion is common among the *general* population (=ordinary people).

The study's target terms, three English synonyms for adjectives, were chosen for analysis. This is because a variety of contexts and use lists from well-known COCA word toplist contain these words. *General*, one of the three words, has a high frequency. It's possible that *common* and *typical* are used less frequently than *general*. However, while looking up "*general*" in online dictionaries, the words "*common*" and "*typical*" came up as alternatives. Therefore, it can be assumed that their meanings overlap. Due to this, 300 concordance lines from each of the synonyms *general*, *common*, and *typical* were used.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments in this study included two sources: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition) (OALD), together with the concordance lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and the software program AntConc.

In order to ascertain and give the researcher the background knowledge of the meaning of the selected words, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition) (OALD) was the first advanced English learner's dictionary. The dictionary was published for the first time in 1948. It is Oxford University Press's largest English-language dictionary aimed at non-native learners. Users that are more interested in linguistics and require etymologies or a large number of references will be excluded. It was adopted because it is a convenient and reliable instrument. It includes a wealth of information, containing different senses, precise definitions, and sample sentences.

COCA was chosen in addition to the dictionary. COCA stands for Corpus of Contemporary American English, the largest corpus of English containing more than a million words of text from eight various genres which are blogs, websites, TV or movie subtitles, spoken language, fiction, popular magazines, newspaper, and academic contexts. The corpus also consists of more than one billion words of updated text collected from 1990-to 2019. It is also the largest free accessible corpus by using its web interface and genre-balanced corpus. The COCA corpus also relates to many other English corpora, and the corpus is constantly being updated and growing in terms of words with a variety of genres. The COCA also includes a number of functions that may be used to help language study, including frequency, exact words, phrases, wildcards, lemma, part of speech (POS), keywords in context (KWIC), and any combination of these. COCA offers users a variety of search options, including those based on words, sentences, lemmas, or other more complex structures. Furthermore, the COCA is regarded as the most updated information source, and it includes the most recent information with the latest data updated in 2019. This corpus is focused on American English and includes texts taken from American media. Users can view the frequency of words or phrases in the registers by looking at the list of all matching strings that COCA displays. Users can use this to investigate the frequency and distribution of synonyms and learn which terms are more common in a given genre. In order to thoroughly examine word meanings, users can also find collocates and common strings of the target words or phrases. Hence, with these characteristics of the corpus and its description, COCA was chosen as the instrument used in this study.

AntConc is a program that allows users to do corpus linguistic research. The

software includes the following seven essential corpus analysis tools:

- 1) Concordance tool, which is used to observe how words and phrases are used in different texts
- 2) Concordance The Plot tool is used to find where search results appear in target texts
- 3) Collocates which displays the target words' collocates.
- 4) Word list, which is used to count words and organize them into an ordered list
- 5) Clusters/ N-Grams, which display words in groups
- 6) File View Tool, which is used to examine the outcomes of other tools in greater depth
- 7) Keyword List is used to display frequent and infrequent terms in comparison to those found in a reference corpus. (Anthony,2014)

Taking this into consideration, Antconc was employed in this study to show words' concordance lines and grammatical patterns, extract lists, and rank words by frequency, with the search confined to nouns immediately following synonyms.

3.3 Research Procedures

3.3.1 Research Design

The current study is a corpus-based study that attempts to investigate data of three synonyms *common*, *typical*, and *general* from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The data of the words *general*, *common*, and *typical* was collected and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Corpora have assisted linguists and researchers in uncovering the findings of their studies by providing additional features and adaptations that allow them to narrow their searches to specific areas such as specific languages, the formality of specific word varieties, genres, and themes. In order to analyze data and discover results, corpora provides large and updated senses of words, phrases, and grammatical patterns, as well as collocations via concordance lines, and statistical information. For all of the reasons stated, the corpus data is considered an important aspect of the study's findings.

3.3.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The datasets for this study were obtained for the research using the following steps:

Firstly, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition) was utilized to compare and give the fundamental definition of each targeted word: *general*, *common*, and *typical*. For comparison, the similarities and differences in fundamental information and collocations of language in each word were acquired. The dictionary not only provides word meanings in a variety of situations but also certain noun and adverb collocates and key grammatical patterns.

Secondly, once the data of these synonyms from the dictionary had been obtained, the research data was collected from the COCA corpus source to reveal collocational and grammatical information about the terms examined. The concordance lines of the words to be analyzed came from a total of 300 sources of data in COCA. It is interesting to note that each concordance line could be derived from a duplicate source. Based on the research objectives, the researcher decided to focus on three criteria to distinguish synonyms, namely, collocations, grammatical patterns, and formality.

Thirdly, COCA data was entered into AntConc to determine the frequency of terms and their collocations for each word. The computer automatically separated the words in context to make analysis easier in order to find the answers to the research questions. The search was limited to nouns immediately following the synonyms.

Lastly, the grammatical patterns and formality of each targeted term were examined using concordance lines and context together with the information from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition). Furthermore, the information gathered from the dictionary was compared and contrasted with each synonym's concordance lines.

3.4 Analytical Procedures

This study analyzed three synonymous adjectives: *common*, *typical*, and *general* in four aspects:

3.4.1 Definitions of Synonyms

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: The International Student's Edition (10th edition) was used to determine the definitions of three synonymous adjectives. Their definitions were then examined and compared. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition was chosen since it is a practical and trustworthy instrument. It also includes a wealth of information, containing different senses, precise definitions, and sample sentences.

3.4.2. The Grammatical Patterns

One of the criteria for identifying synonyms is the degree of formality, since one term in a group of synonyms may be used in formal contexts while the others cannot (Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p. 95). According to Cai's (2012) research, terms in a collection of synonyms are dispersed throughout different text genres, with certain words occurring more frequently in some genres than others. The grammatical patterns of the three synonymous adjectives were compared and contrasted in order to analyze the similarities and differences in the existing corpus-based information shown in the COCA corpus.

3.4.3 Collocations

In order to find out the collocational clues of *common*, *typical*, and *general*, the study was conducted by looking at the words that came after them in the same collection of concordance lines. The study focused on adjective + noun collocations since these synonyms function as words from one of the primary form classes that are used as a modifier of a noun to denote a quality of the thing called, to indicate its number or extent, or to designate a noun as distinct. Nonetheless, only the noun collocations that followed each adjective were displayed because a noun is generally considered an adjective collocation. Then, for each synonymous adjective, the noun collocations were examined and contrasted.

The statistical analysis was also employed to examine the most frequent items that co-occur with the selected words in the real use shown in the COCA corpus. However, in the presentation of the findings, the researcher will report only the top-ten most frequent items in order to save space in the study.

3.4.4 Style or Formality of the Context

The style or formality of the context is the criterion to consider when distinguishing synonyms. In a pair of synonyms, one is likely being used in a more formal context than the other. According to Phoocharoensil (2010), the terms comprehend and intoxicated, for example, are considerably more formal than understanding and drunk, respectively (LDOCE, 2009). Palmer (1977) also states that changing vocabulary items in one conversation is normally able to change a style and achieve different effects. Jackson and Amvela (2000) also suggest that the style or formality of the context in which synonyms are used can be used to differentiate them. One of two synonyms may be acceptable for formal circumstances while the other is not; alternatively, one word may be a slang term or a phrase used in spoken English while the other is a general term. In order to identify the degree of formality of these three synonymous adjectives, *common*, *typical* and *general*, the styles of the three terms were analyzed based on the criteria from Leech and Svartvick (2003) and (Bailey, 2003). Language contexts in concordance lines are taken into account for corpus-based data analysis. The following criteria are used to distinguish between formal and informal contexts in order to confirm and sort out the information.

The degree of formality was determined using data from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and COCA concordance lines. Language contexts in concordance lines were taken into account for corpus-based data analysis. The following characteristics were used to distinguish between formal and informal contexts:

(1) Formal language: Leech and Svartvick (2003) state that it includes the following qualities.

- Many terms borrowed from French, Latin, and Greek are included.
- Avoiding direct references to the authors or readers, as well as the pronouns *I*, *you*, and *us*
- It has its own grammatical features, such as the use of *whom* to refer to the objects, the use of prepositions at the start of clauses, passive sentences that begin with an introduction *it*, and the usage of abstract nouns often.

- When compared to informal language, formal language is more precise.

(2) **Informal language:** it includes the following qualities (Bailey, 2003)

- Being imprecise and blatant in the usage of imprecise language such as *a lot of things, a long time, etc.*
- Including idioms or colloquial terms, contracted verb forms, two-word verbs, and questions.
- Being personal and clear in the usage of personal expressions, for example, *I believe, I think, they say, etc.*

In conclusion, this chapter aims to explore the explanation of synonyms and the instrument used in this study, the method of conducting the data, and the method of data analysis. The findings of this chapter are reported in the next chapter.

Figure 1

Example of searching for 'general' as an adjective from COCA

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The search bar contains the query 'general.[j*]' and the part of speech is set to 'adj_ALL'. The search is performed using Keyword in Context (KWIC). The results show 100 hits and 500 KWICs. The interface includes navigation tabs for SEARCH, FREQUENCY, CONTEXT, and HELP. A help panel on the right explains the search options and provides instructions on how to use the part of speech tags.

SEARCH **FREQUENCY** **CONTEXT** **HELP**

List Chart Word Browse Collocates Compare **KWIC** -

general.[j*] adj_ALL >_pos

L - - - 1 2 3 R *

Keyword in Context (KWIC) Reset

Sections Texts/Virtual Sort/Limit **Options**

HITS 100

KWIC 500

GROUP BY WORDS

DISPLAY RAW FREQ

SAVE LISTS NO

(HIDE HELP)

Use the dropdown list to the left (POS or _pos) to input tags for "parts of speech" (PoS, e.g. nouns or verbs) into your search string.

By default, it will add the PoS as a "full word", as in the searches *strong NOUN* or *ADJ eyes*.

You can also have the PoS added as a "tag" on the end of a word, to limit the word to that PoS, as in the searches *strike_n* or *FIND_v*.

To make it insert PoS tags after words, click on **_pos**. To change it back to PoS as a "word", click on **POS**.

OTHER OPTIONS

HITS is the number of results.

KWIC is the number of results for a KWIC (concordances) search.

GROUP BY determines whether words are grouped by word form (e.g. *decide* and *decided* separately), lemma (e.g. all forms of *decide* together), and whether you see the part of speech for word (e.g. *beat* as a noun and verb displayed separately).

DISPLAY shows raw frequency, occurrences per million words, or a combination of these.

SAVE LISTS allows you to create a wordlist from the results and then re-use it later in your searches.

Figure 2

Presentation through Antconc, searching 'general' as an adjective that collocates immediately with nouns

The screenshot displays the AntConc software interface. The main window shows a list of collocates for the word 'general'. The interface includes a menu bar at the top with options like KWIC, Plot, File, Cluster, N-Gram, Collocate, Word, and Keyword. Below the menu, there are statistics for the target corpus: Name: my_target_corpus, Files: 3, Tokens: 24002. The main table lists 21 collocates with columns for Rank, FreqLR, FreqL, FreqR, Range, Likelihood, and Effect. The search query is 'general', and the results are sorted by Frequency(R). The search parameters are set to 'Words', 'Case', 'Regex', 'Window Span', 'From 0L', 'To 1R', 'Min. Freq 1', and 'Min. Range 1'. The search button is labeled 'Start' and 'Adv Search'. The progress bar is at the bottom left, and the time taken for creating collocates is 0.0377 sec.

	Collocate	Rank	FreqLR	FreqL	FreqR	Range	Likelihood	Effect
1	public	1	19	0	19	1	127.972	5.614
2	population	2	15	0	15	1	113.993	5.961
3	election	2	15	0	15	1	107.771	5.809
4	manager	4	14	0	14	1	114.094	6.125
5	assembly	5	13	0	13	1	112.702	6.224
6	motors	6	5	0	5	1	43.222	6.224
7	education	7	4	0	4	1	15.868	4.055
8	rule	7	4	0	4	1	20.331	4.765
9	counsel	9	3	0	3	1	25.914	6.224
10	overview	9	3	0	3	1	25.914	6.224
11	understanding	9	3	0	3	1	15.463	4.809
12	electric	9	3	0	3	1	25.914	6.224
13	elections	13	2	0	2	1	17.270	6.224
14	culture	13	2	0	2	1	13.478	5.639
15	linear	13	2	0	2	1	13.478	5.639
16	quarters	13	2	0	2	1	13.478	5.639
17	framework	13	2	0	2	1	13.478	5.639
18	lexical	13	2	0	2	1	17.270	6.224
19	comment	13	2	0	2	1	13.478	5.639
20	mills	13	2	0	2	1	17.270	6.224
21	karpasic	13	2	0	2	1	17.270	6.224

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the information was analyzed in accordance with the research questions of the present study, the findings of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. The findings revealed similarities and differences in the targeted words between the dictionary and the COCA database. The presentation in this chapter is separated into four sections as follows.

- 1) The definitions of the three adjective synonyms come from the dictionary as well as the corpus database.
- 2) The grammatical patterns of each adjective synonym.
- 3) The top five noun collocations of each adjective synonym.
- 4) The formality degree of each adjective synonym.

4.1 Meanings from Dictionary

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary was used to explore and understand the meaning of each word: *general*, *common*, and *typical*. This approach was used to gain a general overview and concept of the semantic and pragmatic information of the targeted words before examining the meaning of the words in context.

In regards to meanings, three synonyms were acquired from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (10th edition). Each adjective's information is provided below.

4.1.1 General

The definitions of *general* from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) are as follows:

- a) affecting all or most people, places, or things
e.g. The general opinion is that the conference was a success.
- b) usual
e.g. The opinion is common among the general population(=ordinary people).

c) including the most important aspects of something; not exact or detailed.

e.g. I know how it works in general terms.

d) the general direction/area approximately, but not exactly, the direction/area mentioned

e.g. They fired in the general direction of the enemy.

e) not limited to a particular subject, use, or activity

e.g. a general hospital

e.g. We shall keep the discussion fairly general.

f) not limited to one part or aspect of a person or thing

e.g. a general anesthetic

e.g. The building was in a general state of disrepair.

g) highest in rank; chief

e.g. the general manager

e.g. the Inspector General of Police

4.1.2 Common

The definitions of *common* from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) are as follows:

a) happening often; existing in large numbers or in many places.

e.g. Jackson is a common English name.

b) shared by or belonging to two or more people or by the people in a group

e.g. They share a common interest in photography.

c) ordinary; not unusual or special

e.g. In most people's eyes, she was nothing more than a common criminal.

d) found or living in a quite large number; not rare

e.g. The swordfish is not common in European waters.

e) typical of somebody from a low social class and not having good manners

e.g. She thought he was very common and uneducated.

4.1.3 Typical

The definitions of *typical* from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) are as follows:

a) having the usual qualities or features of a particular type of person, thing, or group

e.g. This is a typical example of Roman pottery.

b) happening in the usual way; showing that something is usually like

e.g. A typical working day for me begins at 7.30.

c) behaving in the way that you expect

e.g. The characters do not react to their situation in a typical horror movie fashion.

Focusing on the meaning of the adjectives "general," "common," and "typical", the finding reveals that they share the same core meaning as "usual," *affecting all or most people, places, or things, existing in large numbers, and happening often in the usual way; showing that something is usually like* " After all of these words were thoroughly investigated, there was not only a significant overlap in meaning, but also certain occurrences where they could not be replaced. As a result, they might be considered a loose synonym. For example, from COCA, *"I think that being in good general health is the first step, and the second is trying to avoid contact with.."*

As stated earlier, the result from the dictionary showed that "general" is commonly used in the meaning of *"every member of a class, sort, or group involving, connected to, or relevant to,"* while generally, the meaning of "common" is that *"belonging to or shared by two or more people or objects, or by the entire group. Typical is commonly used to mean "combining or showing a group's key traits or characteristics"*. Another distinction is that the term *general* is used in a broader context than the other two terms and does not offer any further details, or it involves considering or engaging with overall characteristics, universal features, or significant factors, especially without considering all specifics or specific aspects.

In conclusion, the three synonyms have some shared meanings and some distinct meanings. Concentrating on the differences between the three words *common*, *typical*, and *general* in terms of meaning, the results show that *general* is used to state something contrary to specific. When discussing certain subjects without providing

concrete examples, the phrase "*in a general way*" is used (or generally speaking, or your speaking is overly generalized). The definition of *common* is used with something that is frequently seen, heard, or presented in large quantities. When used as adjectives, the distinction between *typical* and *common* is that *typical* captures an object's general features and characteristically represents it by its form, group, idea, or type whereas "*common*" is shared by many people.

4.2 Grammatical Patterns

Apart from the definitions of each term given previously, the dictionary and concordance lines were used to find probable grammatical patterns. According to OALD and the corpus data, each term was discovered to be shown in the following patterns.

4.2.1 General

As shown in the entries (or examples) provided in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and concordance lines from COCA, the following show the grammatical patterns of *general*:

Table 1: Grammatical structures of '*general*' from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition)

Grammatical patterns	Examples
general + noun	The building was in a <u>general</u> state of disrepair.
linking v. + general	The weather has been fairly <u>general.</u>
noun + general	We shall keep the discussion fairly <u>general.</u>

Note. v.inf.=verb in the infinitive form

In addition to the meaning from the Oxford dictionary, 300 concordance lines of the corpus data were analyzed, and the result shows grammatical patterns as illustrated in the following table:

Table 2: Grammatical Patterns of *general* from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of contemporary American English (COCA)

Rank	Grammatical patterns	Frequency (Times)	Examples
1	general + noun	282	Miles Ornette Cecil - Jazz Beyond Jazz (Routledge, 2008). I was general editor of the Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz and Blues (Flame Tree 2005/Billboard Books 2006
2	linking v. + general	13	of colors covering the spectrum, takes advantage of opponent processes (which are more general than color vision), while reducing chromatic aberration given our particular eye design
3	conj. + general	2	is a rigid class system like that of nineteenth-century England: little upward mobility specific but general good . Some young men will be siphoned off to fight in wars;
4	v + obj + general	1	the opinions and suggestions of the teacher candidates to teach the geographic phenomena and concepts local, regional and general . What are the advantages and
5	as + general	1	Those who meet SIPS criteria for risk are about 30 times as likely as general to develop a diagnosable psychotic disorder. SIPS allows for the careful scoring of
6	general	1	up. Back and to the left! Back and to the left! - General! - Get to your home! And go home fast. L can not

Note. v = verb, v.inf. = verb in the infinitive form, sth = something, obj = object

As Table 2 shows, based on the 300 concordance lines from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), 6 grammatical patterns of *general* can be identified. The structure *general* + *noun* was found to occur with the highest frequency (282 times), followed by *linking v.* + *general* (13 times), and *conj.* + *general* (3 times). There are also 3 more structures found one time, as follows: *v* + *obj* + *general*, *as* + *general*, and *general*.

Interestingly, when these two results from the analysis were compared, some differences in terms of the grammatical patterns related to the word "general" can be shown in the following table:

Table 3: Grammatical Patterns of 'general' from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Data sources	Grammatical Patterns
the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary(10th edition)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. general + noun 2. linking v. + general 3. noun + general
The Corpus of Contemporary American English(COCA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. general + noun 2. linking v. + general 3. conj. + general 4. v + obj + general 5. as + general 6. general
Shared grammatical patterns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. general + noun 2. linking v. + general 3. noun + general

Note. v = verb, v.inf. = verb in the infinitive form, sth = something, obj = object, conj = conjunction, s. = subject, adj = adjective, linking v= linking verb, sb= somebody

As can be seen from Table 3, the 300 concordance lines from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) clearly provide many more grammatical patterns than those from the dictionary. The corpus reveals six grammatical patterns in *general*, while the dictionary shows three grammatical patterns.

4.2.2 Common

As shown in the examples provided in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and concordance lines from COCA, the following show the grammatical patterns in *common*:

Table 4: Grammatical Structures of '*common*' from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition)

Grammatical patterns	Examples
common + noun	Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women in this country.
linking v. + common	Allergies to milk are quite common in childhood.

Note. *linking v. = linking verb

In addition to the dictionary, 300 concordance lines of the corpus data were analyzed, and the result shows grammatical patterns as illustrated in the following table:

Table 5: Grammatical Patterns of '*common*' from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of contemporary American English (COCA)

Rank	Grammatical patterns	Frequency (Times)	Examples
1	common + noun	240	about, until you came along with your free patents and affordable inventions for the common man. Luckily, I found fellow inventors, gifted yet unappreciated, who shared
2	linking v. + common	41	. # Now obviously that particular effect isn't necessary (although it is very common). But the general point is that the choice to vote has both outcome-dependent

3	linking v. + common + for + sb.	7	content is the only way to reach your goals. # TIP! It's common for some people to text talk online, but don't use them as substitutes
4	as + common	2	which the emphasis is on celebration rather than mourning. Though it's not as common to hold a celebration at the exact moment of transition, as Basil does,
5	linking v. + common + to + v.inf	2	old and realize they don't have many friends in life. It's very common to hear men who don't have anybody that honors them enough just to listen
6	How + common	2	DUBNER: You can hardly blame Colleen Stan for feeling this way. But how common are these really bad hitchhiking outcomes? Again, we really don't know.
7	linking v. + common + for + sb + to + v.inf	1	content is the only way to reach your goals. # TIP! It's common for some people to text talk online, but don't use them as substitutes
8	linking v. + common + to + sb.	1	and those goals she set because of her coach's expectations. This dilemma is common to many athletes and is a possible limitation in this and most intervention studies
9	linking v. + common + to + sth	1	was run by a close-knit network of kith and kin, a feature that was common to the most successful of the transatlantic merchant houses. # In the late 1760s
10	obj + s. + v. + common	1	professions will particularly appropriate the topics they think considered common . according to a report last month by Denver
11	noun + common	1	aspects. Based on this finding, it seems that the Oklahoma

			professionals exhibited behavior common all across the United States; in other words, there does not seem to
12	conj. + common	1	were repeatedly abused, some by multiple perpetrators. # Neglect is subtle, yet common . Children can be neglected in many ways, including failure to protect. Neglect

Note. v = verb, v.inf. = verb in the infinitive form, sth = something, obj = object, conj = conjunction, s. = subject, adj = adjective, linking v = linking verb, sb = somebody

As Table 5 clearly illustrates, 12 grammatical structures of *common* which were derived from COCA can be identified. Obviously, the structure *common* + *noun* was found to occur with the highest frequency (240), accounting for 80% of the occurrences. The structures that come with the second-highest frequency (41 times) is *linking v. + common*, followed by *linking v. + common + for + sb.* (7 times), followed by *as + common*, *linking v. + common + to + v.inf.*, and *How + common* (2 times each) and *linking v. + common + for + sb + to + v.inf.*, *linking v. + common + to + sb.*, *linking v. + common + to + sth*, *obj + s. + v. + common*, *noun + common*, and *conj. + common* (1 time each). It suggests that these structures have only been observed once which might imply that they are not sufficiently useful because this number cannot be generalized.

When comparing the findings from these two sources, the total grammatical patterns of *common* from both sources of data are demonstrated in the following table:

Table 6: Grammatical Patterns of ‘*general*’ from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (10th edition) and from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Data sources	Grammatical Patterns
the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary(10 th edition)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. common + noun 2. linking v. + common
the Corpus of contemporary American English(COCA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. common + noun 2. linking v. + common 3. linking v. + common + for + sb. 4. as + common 5. linking v. + common + to + v.inf 6. How + common 7. linking v. + common + for + sb + to + v.inf 8. linking v. + common + to + sb. 9. linking v. + common + to + sth 10. obj + s. + v. + common 11. noun + common 12. conj. + common
Shared grammatical patterns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. common + noun 2. linking v. + common

As can be seen from Table 6, similar to the word ‘*general*’, the 300 concordance lines from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) clearly provide many more grammatical patterns than those from the dictionary. This might be because some of the most well-known and frequently used examples are provided by the dictionary. This is due to the fact that the dictionary's examples are based on widely used practical applications that can only be used in a small number of examples, allowing them to display only the most widely used examples of a given term's usage. It is derived from the source's use of the word in distinct sentences. Besides, the popular

usage in daily life could be limited. COCA may provide random data that is not determined by popularity benchmarks. It is found that there are only two grammatical patterns that are shared: *common + noun* and *linking v. + common*. The shared grammatical patterns are the 2 highest patterns found in the COCA, and it implies that these two patterns are patterns that immediately come to mind when they encounter this term.

4.2.3 Typical

As shown in the entries (or examples) provided in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and concordance lines from COCA, the following show the grammatical patterns of *typical*:

Table 7: Grammatical structures of '*typical*' from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition)

Grammatical patterns	Examples
typical + noun	This is a typical example of Roman pottery.
linking v. + typical + of	This meal is typical of local cookery.
linking v. + typical	The weather at the moment is not typical for July.
linking v. + typical + of +noun + to + v.inf	It was typical of her to forget.
typical	She's late again -typical!

Note. linking v. = linking verb, sb = somebody, sth = something, v.inf = verb in the infinitive form, s. = subject, v. = verb, obj. = object, conj. = conjunction

In addition to the dictionary, 300 concordance lines of the corpus data were analyzed, and the result shows grammatical patterns, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 8: Grammatical Patterns of 'typical' from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Rank	Grammatical patterns	Frequency (Times)	Examples
1	typical + noun	242	very voters the steel tariff is designed to appeal to. He found that the typical blue-collar Pennsylvanian identifies with Republicans on cultural issues like guns, abortion and gay marriage
2	typical + of , linking v. + typical + of	24	more complex. Instruction for these students should go beyond the rote learning which is typical of traditional spelling instruction. Some word activities which would engage students in high level
3	linking v. + typical	23	apparently too small for a guitar! This is so typical . This is so typical. You're constantly doing something for you and then saying that it's for
4	typical	4	She was very taken with the weapons they had on display.' # ' Typical ,' Nick answered.' No, this isn't a social call.
5	linking v. + typical + for + sb.	2	.. # I think most of you will agree that exaggeration of facts is typical for the AGW alarmists. # Therefore I rather put my trust one of the
6	linking v. + typical + that	1	them. # Saw this on Drudge, the response of the captain is sadly typical that they have the authority to simply tell people what to
7	noun + typical	1	worked to apply American management models to Coupang, attempting to eschew the insular culture typical . Clearly, that vision is drawing international talent.
8	linking v. + noun + typical	1	woefully few. But I appreciate these few. They make it clear that appropriates our response typical to such things (that is,

			saying something like, " We mus
9	(omission of linking v.) +typical	1	boy's story, which is, within this inhumane context, undramatic, even typical . Yes, he's gone days without eating. Yes, he and his
10	How + typical	1	does Geffen do? They sue him for not putting out commercial music. How typical . # And I learned that at that time Young was dealing with his severely

Note. linking v. = linking verb, sb = somebody, sth = something, v.inf = verb in the infinitive form, s. = subject, v. = verb, obj. = object, conj. = conjunction

Table 8 shows 10 grammatical patterns of *typical*; taken from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The structure *typical* + *noun* was found to occur with the highest frequency (242 times), followed by the second-highest *typical* + *of*, *linking v.* + *typical* + *of* (24 times), and the third-highest frequency, *linking v.* + *typical* (23 times). From the data, *typical* was found to be commonly placed after nouns because such structures show high frequency in the 300 concordance lines. However, it is interesting to note that the term *typical* is found with the preposition *of* in the second-highest frequency in the patterns *typical* + *of*, *linking v.* + *typical* + *of* which is a different observation from that of the patterns of *general* and *common* where no prepositional forms were found. Another point is that *how* + *typical* is found in the grammatical patterns of *typical* while the usage of *how* is not found in those of *general* and *common*.

The total grammatical patterns of *typical* from two sources of data are demonstrated in the following table:

Table 9: Grammatical Patterns of '*typical*' from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Data sources	Grammatical Patterns
The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary(10th edition).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>typical</i> + noun 2. linking v. + <i>Typical</i> + of 3. linking v. + <i>typical</i> 4. linking v. + <i>typical</i> + of +noun + to + v.inf 5. <i>typical</i>
The Corpus of Contemporary American English(COCA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>typical</i> + noun 2. linking v. + <i>typical</i> 3. <i>typical</i> + of , linking v. + <i>typical</i> + of 4. <i>typical</i> 5. linking v. + <i>typical</i> + for + sb. 6. linking v. + <i>typical</i> + that 7. noun + <i>typical</i> 8. linking v. + noun + <i>typical</i> 9. (omission of linking v.) +<i>typical</i> 10. How + <i>typical</i>
Shared grammatical patterns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>typical</i> + noun 2. linking v. + <i>Typical</i> + of 3. linking v. + <i>typical</i> 4. <i>typical</i>

Note. linking v. = linking verb, sb = somebody, sth = something, v.inf = verb in the infinitive form, s. = subject, v. = verb, obj. = object, conj. = conjunction

Table 9 demonstrates that the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) shows ten grammatical patterns, which is much higher than those shown by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition). It was found that there are four common patterns among two data sources: *typical* + *noun*, *linking v. + Typical + of*, *linking v. + typical*, and *typical*. It is interesting that *linking v. + typical + of* is also found to be consistent in both sources. It might be because the *typical* words are constrained by the collocation *of* and only occur with this word, so it shows up frequently in a group of words with the preposition *of*.

Another crucial criterion for distinguishing these synonyms is the grammatical patterns in which they tend to appear. More than any other words, the term "common"

appears in a larger range of grammatical patterns when comparing the sentence structures in both the two sources together. Although it was discovered that this word could be found to co-occur with the 12 most different patterns, when the sentence patterns from the two sources were compared to find the shared patterns, it was discovered that the term “typical” had the greatest common grammatical patterns from the two sources when compared to the other words being compared, as seen in Table 10.

Table 10: The Comparison of Shared Grammatical Patterns from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and from the 300 Concordance Lines of the Corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) of the Adjective Synonyms: ‘*general*’, ‘*common*’, and ‘*typical*’.

synonyms	possible patterns	FQ	%
General	general + noun	282	94
Common	common + noun	240	80
	linking v. + common	41	13.67
Typical	typical + noun	242	80.67
	linking v. + Typical + of	24	8
	linking v. + typical	23	7.67
	typical	4	1.33

Concerning the frequency of the words, the findings show that most of them from 300 concordance lines from COCA employ the patterns *general*, *common*, and *typical+n*. It implies that the targeted words are the adjectives normally placed before nouns as a modifier. This pattern is the only pattern that all three words share from the table above, and each word has different usage and frequency of patterns. It might be because of the fact that, frequently, an adjective comes right before a noun. Even when

there are other parts of speech, like an article, an adverb, or a preposition, that are a part of the pattern, it precedes the noun. This pattern is common for adjectives that describe people, places, or things.

When comparing the results of the study, each adjective has a different common sentence pattern as shown in the table below

Table 11: The different Grammatical Patterns of the Adjectives: ‘*general*’, ‘*common*’, and ‘*typical*’

General	Common	Typical
general + noun	common + noun	typical + noun
linking v. + general	linking v. + common	linking v. + typical
conj. + general	conj. + common	
v + obj + general		
as + general	as + common	
general		typical
	linking v. + common + for + sb.	linking v. + typical + for + sb.
	linking v. + common + to + v.inf	
	How + common	How + typical
	linking v. + common + for + sb + to + v.inf	
	linking v. + common + to + sb.	
	linking v. + common + to + sth	
	obj + s. + v. + common	
	noun + common	noun + typical
		(omission of linking v.) +typical

		typical + of , linking v. + typical + of
		linking v. + noun + typical
		linking v. + typical + that

Note. linking v. = linking verb, sb = somebody, sth = something, v.inf = verb in the infinitive form, s. = subject, v. = verb, obj. = object, conj. = conjunction

Several grammatical patterns in Table 11 revealed that the synonymous adjective "common" is different from other words in the set of synonyms, as evidenced by its occurrences in many patterns, while *general* tends to occur in the least number of patterns. All three terms, however, have identical grammatical patterns i.e., adjective + noun and linking v. + adjective. However, in terms of the employment of patterns that contain prepositions, *typical* is distinct from the other two.

4.3 Collocations

A group of synonyms may have the same core meaning yet differ in collocations. The study focused on the collocations of *general*, *common*, and *typical* to determine if the three synonyms differed in terms of collocation. The study focused on *adjective + noun collocations* since these synonyms are adjectives. The information was gathered from the 10th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The study's findings are as follows: The concordance lines provide each synonym in relation to its noun collocations in both single and plural forms.

4.3.1 General

Table 12: Top Five Nouns Collocate with the Adjective 'general'

Rank	Noun Collocates	Frequency	%
1	public	19	6.33
2	population	15	5
2	election	15	5
4	manager	14	4.67
5	assembly	13	4.33

The first five most frequent noun-collocations of the word *general* are *public*, *population*, *election*, *manager*, and *assembly* from COCA, as in the excerpts (1)-(5).

COCA data

(1) Temples are also used to perform marriage ceremonies that promise the faithful eternal life with their families, a belief of central importance to members. The **general** public is invited to participate in educational tours of the interior of

(2) decisions are complex. Interventions may be chosen to maximize **general** population health, to reduce health inequalities of disadvantaged or vulnerable

(3) continue to be the major war critic in this **general** election campaign and acknowledge some calming of the violence over

(4) room beneath the NHL salary cap to do so, **general** manager Chuck Fletcher said at a postseason news conference Monday,

(5) A Maryland sheriff is working with the state's **general** assembly to try to make it easier for citizens to

From Table 12, the first rank of nouns that collocate with *general* is *public* which co-occurs in the highest frequency (19 times), followed by *population* and *election* at an equal frequency (15 times). *Manager* is in fourth place in terms of frequency with 14 times of occurrences, and *assembly* comes in fifth place with 13 co-occurrence frequencies

4.3.2 Common

Table 13: Top Seven Nouns Collocate with Adjective ‘*common*’

Rank	Noun Collocates	Frequency	%
1	sense	24	8
2	law	7	2.33
3	core	6	2
3	ground	6	2
3	knowledge	6	2

The first seven most frequent noun collocates of the word *common* are *sense*, *law*, *core*, *ground*, and *knowledge*, as in (6)-(10).

COCA data

(6) think there are many missed opportunities for clarity and **common** sense in grounded meanings and references and storytelling. # That

(7) that some rights under the convention have now entered **common** law and judges would continue to uphold them here whether

(8) of generic strategies. # Tom: I agree that how the **Common** Core State Standards will play out is an enigma but

(9) the world. # Both Palestinians and Israelis need to find **common** ground and end the violence that has already resulted in

(10) you know all of these things? Well, it's **common** knowledge. Well.. Oh, I'm going to Japan. An exhibition

From Table 2, the first rank of the collocates of common is *sense* which co-occurs with the greatest frequency (24 times). The second rank is *law* (7 times), followed by *core*, *ground*, and *knowledge* at the same frequency (6 times).

4.3.3 Typical

Table 14: Top Five Nouns Collocate with Adjective 'typical'

Rank	Noun Collocates	Frequency	%
1	American	5	1.67
2	day(s)	5	1.67
3	response	5	1.67
4	family	3	1
5	student(s)	3	1

The first seven most frequent noun collocates of the word *typical* are *American*, *day(s)*, *response*, *family*, and *student(s)* as in (11)-(15) respectively.

COCA data

(11) which requires household lighting to be 27 percent more efficient. The **typical** American, home contains, more than 40 standard lightbulb fixtures, so

(12) energy, financial services, health-care, media and technology. On a **typical** day, reporters will file three stories, including updates on

(13) question, what will we become as a sovereign nation? The **typical** response is, another Haiti: poor, disorganized, and politically corrupt;

(14) activity. # Clinton's Project Success, started in 1989, is a fairly **typical** Family Support Act effort. Unlike its work precursor, it

(15) communicate less frequently with the school than parents of more **typical** students. Teachers recalled students whose parents were incarcerated, had

From Table 13, the first ranks of collocates of *typical* are *American* and *day(s)* at the equal highest frequency(5 times) followed by *response*, *family* and *students(s)* at the equal frequencies(3 times).

Table 15: The Comparison of five Nouns' Collocation of Adjective Synonyms: 'general', 'common', and 'typical'

General			Common			Typical		
	FQ	%		FQ	%		FQ	%
public	19	6.33	sense	24	8	American	5	1.67
population	15	5	law	7	2.33	day(s)	5	1.67
election	15	5	core	6	2	response	5	1.67
manager	14	4.67	ground	6	2	family	3	1
assembly	13	4.33	knowledge	6	2	student(s)	3	1

According to MaCarten (2007), collocation refers to terms that are frequently used together and co-occur with the highest frequency of noun collocation. It is worth noting that the term "*general*" appears to be often employed in the political and academic sectors. This is due to the fact that the data context from the COCA corpus, uses the most frequent noun collocates and their meanings are mostly found in the political and academic sectors. Also noteworthy are the numerous political and intellectual contexts in which the example was used. However, the term "*typical*" tends to be used in conjunction with noun collocations that are classified in general/daily sectors. Although the term "*common*" is used in many different contexts, there is no specific section like the other two words.

Table 16: The Comparison of the Possibility of Noun Collocation in each Word

General	Common	Typical
public	-	public
population	-	-
election	-	-
manager	-	-

assembly	-	-
sense	sense	sense
law	law	-
-	core	-
-	ground	-
-	knowledge	-
-	American	American
-	-	day(s)
-	-	response
-	-	family
-	-	student(s)

In comparison, the study's findings strongly imply that these three synonyms cannot co-occur with all of the same noun collocations, depending on the context. There is not a word that has all three identical adjectives: *general*, *common*, and *typical*.

4.4 Degree of Formality

The information provided in dictionaries and the corpus-based contexts in which each synonym appears can be used to determine degrees of formality. Despite having the same underlying meaning, the three words: *general*, *common*, and *typical* have varied degrees of formality, as indicated in the findings presented below.

4.4.1 General

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) does not specify whether "general" is a formal or informal word. However, the dictionary identifies that the term can be classified as part of The Oxford Phrasal Academic (OPAL), which is the English language spoken by professors and is different from daily conversation between friends. In other words, it can be said that the word "general" is used for academic purposes (EAP). According to the dictionary, the word can be used in formal

contexts, but it can also be used in informal ones in a particular situation. Formality does not depend only on the text type or genre, but sometimes on the mode of text. However, the examples from the dictionary suggest that *general* can be used in both formal and informal contexts.

- (a) I know how it works in **general** terms. (informal)
- (b) We shall keep the discussion fairly **general.** (informal)
- (c) The building was in a **general** state of disrepair. (formal)

As for the data derived from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the 300 concordance lines present that *general* occurs in both formal and informal contexts:

Formal contexts:

- (1) criteria play a role and decisions are complex. Interventions may be chosen to maximize **general** population health, to reduce health inequalities of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, ad/or to
- (2) of the cosmic expansion, was that the cosmological constant? in the equations of **general** relativity should be excised. Einstein had originally introduced Λ , before the Hubble, expansion was
- (3) two vehicles and money that was seized at nearly \$550,000. # The Arizona Attorney **General's** Office is prosecuting the criminal case against the couple in superior court. The

Informal contexts:

- (1) that I have always loved to do and still do, but they're more **general** things, like reading, crafts, and playing games. But WHAT I read
- (2) not cost her \$500 to \$700 a month. # This shows how misinformed the **general** public is about the law. While it's not perfect, its faults have
- (3) community taking shape more and more every day, and as it does, the **general** public will be drawn more to us than anyone else. At the end of

As seen by the excerpts above, which were taken from COCA, the given adjective *general* can be employed in both formal and informal contexts for different purposes. The tone, the words used, and the way the words are placed together vary between the two different styles.

4.4.2 Common

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) does not specify whether *common* is a formal or informal word. However, the dictionary identifies that the term is classified as part of The Oxford Phrasal Academic (OPAL), which is the English language spoken by professors, and different from daily conversation between friends. To sum up, the word *common* is used for academic purposes (EAP). According to the suggestion from the dictionary, the word *common* can be used in formal contexts, but it can also be used in informal ones in a particular situation. Formality does not depend only on the text type or genre, but sometimes on the mode of text. However, the examples from the dictionary suggest *common* can be used in both formal and informal contexts.

- (a) You'd think he'd have the **common** courtesy. (informal)
- (b) I wanted a recording of the **common** cuckoo. (informal)
- (c) Suicide is the most **common** cause of death amongst men in this age group. (formal)
- (d) Allergies to milk are **common** in childhood. (formal)

As for the data derived from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the 300 concordance lines show that *common* occurs in both formal and informal contexts:

Formal contexts:

- (1) In other words, our region is a **common** space defined by a complex and common history of interaction and struggle, and, recently, a wave of contention that
- (2) Most measles-related deaths are caused by complications associated with the disease. Complications are more **common** in children under the age of five, or adults over the age of 20
- (3) during surgery. Exclusion criteria included acalculous cholecystitis, symptoms for > 5 days, **common** bile duct stones found during surgery, cholangitis, biliary peritonitis, acute pancreatitis,

Informal contexts:

- (1) whites is more than \$100,000, twice as high as for blacks. It's **common** for white students to grow up in families with two PhDs. On the other

(2) Then they're blasted to bits. # Yeah, this is kind of a **common** panic button with the media isn't it? Its at least the third time

(3) Are All Religions " Saying the Same Thing "? # It's a **common** enough question, and one that is often posed less as an actual question than

The given adjective *common* can be employed in both formal and informal contexts, as seen by the examples given above, which were taken from COCA. The tone, the words used, and the way the words are placed together vary between the two different styles.

4.4.3 Typical

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) does not specify whether *typical* is a formal or informal word. However, the dictionary identifies that the term is classified as part of The Oxford Phrasal Academic (OPAL), which is the English language spoken by professors and different from daily conversation between friends. To sum up, the word *typical* is used for Academic Purposes (EAP) According to the suggestion from the dictionary, the word *typical* can be used in formal contexts, but it can also be used in informal ones in a particular situation. Formality does not depend only on the text type or genre, but sometimes on the mode of text. However, the examples from the dictionary suggest *common* can be used in both formal and informal contexts.

(a) On a **typical** day, we receive about 50 letters. (informal)

(b) Draw up your own budget for a **typical** week. (informal)

(c) This is a **typical example** of Roman pottery. (formal)

As for the data derived from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the 300 concordance lines present *typical* occurrences in both formal and informal contexts:

Formal contexts:

(1) were successful or why they failed. However, the techniques are usually limited to **typical** behavioral strategies with specific, measurable behavioral outcomes.
Role playing is also used

(2) more complex. Instruction for these students should go beyond the rote learning that is **typical of** traditional spelling instruction. Some word activities which would engage students at high levels

(3) foot and mouth disease, an illness caused by the coxsackie virus. A **typical** case of hand, foot, and mouth involve fever and fluid-filled, oval blisters that

Informal contexts:

(1) who earlier this evening had fired on American positions. Just one incident on a **typical** night here, and this night is still young. MAJ. MIKE SILVERMAN,

(2) apparently too small for a guitar! This is so typical. This is so **typical** You're constantly doing something for you and then saying that it's for

(3)She was very taken with the weapons they had on display.' # **typical**,' Nick answered. ' No, this isn't a social call.

The given adjective *typical* can be employed in both formal and informal contexts as seen by the examples given above, which were taken from COCA. The tone, the words used, and the way the words are placed together vary between the two different styles.

After individually analyzing each synonym for its degree of formality, the comparisons between these three synonyms are displayed in the following table:

Table 17: The Comparison of the Overall Number and Percentage of 'general', 'common', and 'typical' Concordance Lines

Synonyms	Total concordance lines of each synonym (300)					
	Formal		Informal		Other	
	Number of lines	%	number of lines	%	number of lines	%
general	149	49.67	146	48.67	5	1.67
common	158	52.67	140	46.67	2	0.67

typical	137	45.67	162	54	1	0.33
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One of the criteria for identifying synonyms is the degree of formality, since one term in a set of synonyms can be used in formal settings while the others cannot.

According to Table 17, it is obvious that *general*, *common*, and *typical* occur in both formal and informal contexts. However, it is interesting that the number of concordance lines in formal and informal contexts derived from each synonym term differs. However, when the ratios were compared, the differences were not significant, which was an intriguing finding. Of the 300 concordance lines of each synonym, the number of concordance lines of *common* in a formal context is the highest, reaching 158 lines (52.67%), which is higher than that of *general* (49.67% or 149 lines), and than that of the term *typical* (137lines, 45.67%). By contrast, as for informal contexts, the occurrences of ‘common’ words in informal contexts is in the lowest number (140 lines, 46.67%), while the highest rate of occurrences is that of *typical* (162 lines, 54%), accounting for more than half of the total number.

According to the information provided above, the word *common* is employed in the majority of formal contexts. However, there was little difference in the rates of difference between formal and informal usage of the three target terms.

However, it should be taken into account that some concordance lines cannot be treated as formal or informal since the information received from COCA is just part of a phrase or context. As a result, they are unable to be classified or related to the degree of formality. In this regard, the data is divided into ‘other’ categories to ensure that the analysis is accurate.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of this study. Furthermore, it also covers a discussion regarding the main results. The next section will present the conclusion of this study, followed by recommendations for further studies and the limitations of the study.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The objectives of the study were to compare and contrast the information on the synonymous adjectives: *general*, *common*, and *typical*, found in The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and corpus data (Corpus of Contemporary American English), as well as using three criteria; noun collocations, grammatical patterns, and formality to distinguish the targeted words.

Initially, the fundamental information for the three synonyms was taken from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, an online dictionary. Then, the concordance lines in the Corpus of Contemporary American English, which served as the core corpus database for comparison, were also used as research tools. AntConc was utilized as a helpful tool to boost accuracy while assessing the collocation of each word. The information acquired from the online dictionary in this regard comprised the usage pattern and definition of each synonym.

The corpus data from 300 concordance lines of these synonyms were then compiled to compare the information about the meaning, collocation, the degree of formality, and grammatical patterns across that from the online dictionary and COCA. The data was manually examined with AntConc software in a systematic manner. The frequency was employed as a statistic to get to the study's conclusions.

5.2 Summary of the Main Findings

The three synonymous adjectives: *general*, *common*, and *typical* can be distinguished systematically by the four major criteria mentioned earlier, and the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Definitions or Meanings

With regard to the meaning of the words, it can be noted that *general* is commonly used in the meaning '*normal, usual, and affecting all or most people, places, or things, which includes the most important aspects of something; not exact or detailed.*'. This means that the term is used in a broad and detailed context, which is the most common use in all cases, true of the entirety of anything, dealing with the whole of something, and being accountable for the whole. While the words *general* and *common* have close meanings, they are not interchangeable. They are distinct in terms of the context in which they are used. *Common* conveys the meaning of '*ordinary, up to standard, occurring frequently, existing in large numbers or numerous locations, and shared by or belonging to two or more persons or a group.*' The word *common* is commonly used in a narrower context and the number of people in the group is lower, such as '*common usage*' and '*common defense*'.

The meaning of *typical* is '*having the usual qualities or features of a particular type of person, thing, or group, used about individuals or things that are precisely like what most people assume they are like, used about people or things that are exactly like what most people imagine they are like*'

Therefore, the results of the synonyms being compared show that they share the same core meaning as "*being or serving as a representative example of a specific type, including, applying to, or participating in by all or most of the members of a group, or belonging to a type or representative*". It can be observed that the senses of each synonymous adjective are not exactly identical, and it can be observed that the senses of each term's meanings are not the same.

5.2.2 Grammatical Patterns

Adjectives are generally put before nouns as modifiers, according to the rules of grammar. Not surprisingly, the statistics performed in the analysis demonstrate that "adjective + noun" is the grammatical pattern with the highest frequency for each synonym. It reveals that this pattern is used by more than half of the 300 concordance lines. It can be shown that the word *probable* is more likely to appear before nouns than other patterns, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: The Common Patterns Having the Highest Frequency

Synonyms	Possible patterns	Frequency	%
General	general + n.	282	94
Common	common + n.	240	80
Typical	typical + n.	242	80.67

Consequently, the findings show that a common grammatical pattern for the adjective synonyms: *general*, *common*, and *typical* is linking v. + **ADJ**

Based on research into meaning, the core meanings of these words: *general*, *common*, and *typical* are comparable. They might not completely all be the same, though. Consequently, it was determined that these words are loose synonyms, they may share certain grammatical patterns, so they cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts. For example, '*general + noun*', as in '*general manager*', *is relative to your performance, " says Beane, the A's general manager, who wisely resisted the temptation to trade Zito. "* It may not be substituted in this context by *common* or *typical*, as in *common manager* or *typical manager.*" However, in some contexts, these adjective synonyms have the same grammatical pattern. For example, *It + linking v. + adj.*

In contrast, when comparing the grammatical patterns of each synonym, there are some differences in usage, which means they may not share the same grammatical pattern in every context. The word *common*, on the other hand, employs the most varied grammatical patterns, implying that it is used more frequently than others. At the same

time, the usage of the term *general* from the presented data has more restrictive grammatical patterns, i.e. the least frequency when compared to the target words: *common* and *typical*.

Another point to consider is the grammatical pattern of the term "*common*" being used with prepositions, namely, the prominence of the usage of '*for*' or '*to*' when compared to other words, such as *linking v. + common + for + sb.*, *linking v. + common + for + sb + to + v.inf*, *linking v. + common + to + sb.*, and *linking v. + common + to + sth.*

When the usage of the word "typical" was compared to the use of the other two terms, the findings revealed that the use of only one word independently had the highest usage, i.e., "typical". It can be inferred that the term is commonly used in situations where a brief and direct response is required. In addition, the findings of concordance lines were employed in informal language. Another notable usage of this term *typical* is the use of the pattern in conjunction with the preposition *of*. It is worthy to focus on the fact that 'adjective(typical) + of and 'linking v. + adjective(typical) + of' occur just only with typical, not with *general* and *common*.

5.2.3 Collocation

According to Palmer (1997), certain words are constrained by their collocations and only occur with specific words. The results from grammatical patterns illustrate that nouns are the main collocates of those three adjective synonyms. The findings show the top five lists of each adjective as follows:

General collocates with *public, population, election, manager, and assembly*, respectively. The noun collocates commonly convey the meaning of "*normal, usual, and affecting all or most people, places, or things, including the most important aspects.*"

Common collocates with *sense, law, core, ground, and knowledge* respectively. The noun collocations commonly convey the meaning of "*ordinary, up to standard, occurring frequently, existing in large numbers or numerous locations, and shared by or belonging to two or more persons or a group.*" Significantly, the highest frequency of noun collocations were, *sense/ common sense, which refers to "ordinary good judgment; sound practical sense among people in the society(group)"*

Typical collocates with *American*, *day(s)*, *response*, *family*, and *students* respectively. *Typical* conveys the meaning of “*happening in the usual way; showing what something is usually like*”.

From these findings, it can be inferred that noun *sense*, *law*, and *American* are weak collocations that can co-occur in more than one adjective of general, common, and typical. Otherwise, some nouns, e.g. *population*, *election*, *manager*, *assembly*, *core*, *ground*, *knowledge*, *day*, *response*, *family*, and *student*, appear with only one adjective. According to the occurrences of the three target adjectives, as well as the frequency with which they appear, some of them may be considered as strong collocations of the adjectives *general*, *common*, and *typical* as in *general population*, *general election*, *general manager*, *general assembly*, *common core*, *typical day(s)*, *typical response*, etc.

In terms of noun collocation, the finding implies that according to the study and sample data, each term has a unique collocation noun, and each pair of synonymous adjectives (*general-common*, *general-typical*, and *common-typical*) only has two instances of the same collocation noun. This means that all three target words are similar in terms of functionality and meaning on all levels. This is in line with what Phoocharoensil (2010), Chung (2011), Cai (2012), Li and Kim (2018), and Li (2016) discovered through their studies: words in a set of synonyms, despite having the same basic meaning, cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts because they typically co-occur with other words.

5.2.4 Degree of Formality

In terms of the style or formality of the context in which these synonyms *general*, *common*, and *typical* occur, it is likely that *common* is employed in more formal settings than *general* and *typical*. In the frequency of use in formal contexts, it is followed by *general* and *typical* respectively.

The three target adjectives are employed in formal and informal contexts in quantities that do not differ considerably, according to the statistical statistics from the study. The term *typical* is used more frequently in informal situations than in formal ones, but the other two words are used more frequently in formal circumstances. According to the data shown in the previous chapter, these three words, which are

general, *common*, and *typical*, can be employed in both formal and casual contexts. Although the terms *general* and *common* have been used in more formal contexts, the other word, *typical*, is slightly more often used in more informal contexts.

This finding is in line with what the earlier studies by Phoocharoensil (2010) and Jackson and Amvele (2000) who revealed that words in a set of synonyms, although sharing the same core meaning, can be different in terms of formality — some of the words tend to be found in formal contexts, whereas the other words tend to be found in informal ones.

5.3 Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

1) The findings have shown that *general*, *common*, and *typical* share the same core meaning in some contexts. Depending on their content, grammatical patterns, collocation, and formality, they cannot be completely interchangeable in all instances.

2) In terms of grammatical patterns, they are considered adjectives, commonly used with nouns. *Common* provides the highest frequency of using this pattern. *General* mostly tends to use this pattern. *Common* provides more varieties of patterns than others.

3) *General*, *common*, and *typical* are loose synonyms, not perfect or absolute synonyms, in the sense that they cannot be used interchangeably in all situations, as seen from the analysis showing their differences in meaning, grammatical pattern, and formality.

4) Regarding collocation, the adjectives *general* and *common* as in *general public* and *common sense*, may be considered strong collocations.

5) In terms of formality, the three words: *general*, *common*, and *typical* are used in both formal and informal contexts. However, it appears that the words *general* and *common* tend to be used in more formal than informal contexts. *Common* tends to be used in a more formal context than the others.

As a result, the findings could be used for English language instruction, particularly for EFL students. In order to utilize synonyms appropriately or naturally,

we need to bring out these variations in the idea of synonyms in English to learners. We should also employ corpus data, such as concordance lines, so that we may observe more information beyond what is provided in the dictionaries. Hopefully, the findings and explanation of the many meanings, usages, and patterns may be useful to English learners and anyone interested in improving their English skills.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This corpus-based analysis concentrated on adjective synonyms. There are, however, other criteria for distinguishing near-synonyms that are not discussed in this study. Due to time constraints, this corpus-based analysis examines the three synonyms only in terms of meanings, formality, collocation, and grammatical structures; the other criteria recommended, such as dialects and connotation, are not included in this study. Further study on related themes should use dialects and connotation as two more criteria to fill in the research gap. It is suggested that detailed research of dialect and connotations be done in order to close this gap. More concordance lines should be investigated in future studies to improve the chances of detecting linguistic associations of adjectives in COCA. To compare the occurrences of adjectives and adjective plus noun collocations, other well-known corpora such as the British National Corpus (BNC), the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), or the TIME Magazine Corpus might be utilized so that different collocations and linguistic features associated with the pragmatic use of these three words studied in this research could be revealed.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

1) This research only examines the three synonyms using just 300 concordance lines in the corpus. Therefore, it may not cover all possible occurrences of the target terms beyond these concordance lines, which are beyond the scope and scale of the study. Due to the size of the data, there is a restricted number of tokens, and the resources used in the study were quite small and limited for quantitative and qualitative analyses and findings to cover all of the targeted and additional possible patterns. Therefore, the patterns found in the sample data in this study might not reflect the complete representatives of all population groups within a wider range of constraints or be conclusive thoroughly.

2) The focus of the research is on the Corpus of American English. The findings might not accurately reflect how these synonyms are used in other dialects of English.

3) The present study only employed and relied on two sources of data: the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This research will not include data from sources other than these, and the findings of this study might be limited when compared to other data sources.



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